

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE DECLINE OF THE SESOTHO  
LANGUAGE AMONG GRADE 4 LEARNERS IN EKURHULENI  
SOUTH DISTRICT**

by

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**10 October 2024**

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## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my pillars,

my mother,

*Lydia Khukuzane Motaung*

and my daughter,

*Tlholo Mokoena*

who believed in me when I doubted myself.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative case study explored teachers' perceptions on the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District. Six Sesotho teachers from six public primary schools were purposively selected. The socio-cultural theory and the interpretivist perspective guided this study. Data were collected through interviews and observations and transcribed and arranged into codes and themes, using the thematic data analysis method. The study found out that the promotion of the home language within a multi-cultural society is dependent on the incorporation of cultural activities into school curricula for learners to learn about their cultures, gain knowledge and develop new skills. The study also found out that during the teaching of the Sesotho Home Language, teachers focused on areas such as reading and viewing, listening and speaking, writing and presenting, and language structure and conventions to ensure the development of Sesotho proficiency. Teachers supported learning with resources such as reading books, flashcards, and speaking grammatically correct Sesotho. However, it was established that teachers lack CAPS strategies knowledge which could assist in curbing the decline of the Sesotho language. The study further established that teachers did not explore innovative methods such as integrating technology into the Sesotho lessons. The study also identified several factors contributing to the decline of Sesotho in Grade 4 classrooms, such as parents not speaking the language with their children, intermarriages, urbanisation, misplacement of teachers, poor quality of Sesotho books, overcrowding, ineffective subject advisors and time constraints. It is recommended that policymakers work with teachers in reviewing policies, the Department of Basic Education review Sesotho learner textbooks and readers, ensure that native speakers teach Sesotho, encourage the integration of ICT into lessons, and parents should be encouraged to speak Sesotho with their children at home.

**KEYWORDS:** Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, teaching strategies, Indigenous languages, Sesotho language, Language of Learning and Teaching.

**MAIKUTLO A MATITJHERE A PHOKOTSEHO YA PUO YA  
SESOTHO HARA BARUTWANA BA KEREITI YA 4 BA  
EKURHULENI SETEREKENG SE KA BORWA**

**KGUFATSO**

Boithuto bona ba boleng bo hlahlobile maikutlo a matitjhere mabapi le phokotseho ya puo ya Sesotho hara baithuti ba Kereiti ya 4 Seterekeng sa Ekurhuleni Borwa. Ho ile ha kgethwa matitjhere a tsheletseng a Sesotho a tswang dikolong tse tsheletseng tsa mathomo tsa setjhaba. Teori ya setjhaba le setso le tebello ya mofetoledi di tataisitse boithuto bona. Dintlha di ile tsa bokellwa ka dipuisano le ditebello mme tsa ngolwa le ho hlophiswa ka dikhoutu le dihlooho, ho sebediswa mokgwa wa ho hlahloba dintlha tsa sehlooho. Boithuto bo fumane hore phahamiso ya puo ya ka hae ka hara setjhaba sa ditso tse fapafapaneng e itshetlehile ka ho kenya diketsahalo tsa setso lenaneong la thuto la sekolo hore barutwana ba ithute ka ditso tsa bona, ba fumane tsebo, le ho hlabolla bokgoni bo botjha. Boithuto bona bo boetse bo fumane hore nakong ya ha ho rutwa Sesotho Puo ya Lapeng, matitjhere a ne a tsepamisitse maikutlo hodima dikarolo tse kang ho bala le ho shebella, ho mamela le ho bua, ho ngola le ho fana ka puo le sebopeho sa puo le melawana ho netefatsa ntshetsopele ya bokgoni ba Sesotho. Matitjhere a tsheheditse ho ithuta ka disebediswa tse kang dibuka tsa ho bala, dikarete tse kganyang, le ho bua Sesotho se nepahetseng ka sebopehopuo. Leha ho le jwalo, ho ile ha hlaka hore matitjhere a haellwa ke tsebo ya maano a CAPS a ka thusang ho thibela phokotseho ya puo ya Sesotho. Boithuto bona bo boetse bo bontshitse hore matitjhere ha a batlisisa mekgwa e metjha e kang ho kopanya theknoloji dithutong tsa Sesotho. Boithuto bona bo boetse bo supa dintlha tse mmalwa tse tlatselletsang phokotseho ya Sesotho diphaposing tsa borutelo tsa Kereiti ya 4, tse kang batswadi ho se bue puo le bana ba bona, manyalo a bona, ho fallela ditoropong, ho se be teng ha matitjhere, boleng bo bobo ba dibuka tsa Sesotho, tshubuhlellano ya batho, baeletsi ba dithuto ba sa sebetseng hantle le ditshitiso tsa nako. Ho kgothaletswa hore baetsi ba melawana ba sebetse le matitjhere ho hlahloba maano, Lefapha la Thuto ya Motheo le hlahlobe dibuka tsa baithuti le babadi ba Sesotho, ho netefatsa hore batho ba buang puo ya matswallwa ba ruta

Sesotho, ba kgothaletsa ho kopanngwa ha ICT dithutong, le hore batswadi ba kgothalletswe ho bua Sesotho le bana ba bona.

**MANTSWE A SEHLOOHO:** Setatemente sa Leano la Kharikhulamo le Kelo, maano a ho ruta, dipuo tsa matswallwa, puo ya Sesotho, Puo ya ho Ithuta le ho Ruta.



## ACRONYMS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHE	Department of Higher Education
DL	Dominant Language
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FET	Further Education and Training
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HoD	Head of Department
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IIAL	Incremental Introduction of African Language
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MEC	Member of Executive Committee
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
MTBE	Mother Tongue Based Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
PCK	Pedagogical Knowledge Content
POPI	Protection of Personal Information
SASA	South African School Act
SGB	School Governing Body
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



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# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Imagine a world where humans do not possess a home language, where there is no human communication or connection and where there is no sharing of knowledge, cultural values, thoughts and feelings, where questions will not be answered. This would be a very lifeless and uninspiring world. Children first comprehend what is around them through their home language as they hear a lot of spoken words from their mothers communicating with them even before they are born (Nishanthi, 2021). In this view, the home language has brought life and colour to the world, affording people an opportunity to come together, listen, and learn from each other and a sense of belonging.

In South Africa, there are different cultures with 12 official languages. Each culture speaks its own language and is known as an Indigenous language. Thus, the decline of South African Indigenous languages together with other languages spoken in Africa and around the world has drawn much attention in recent years (Kamal, 2018). Kamal (2018) further states that approximately half of 6 000 or more languages spoken worldwide are threatened with many indigenous languages being in danger of extinction, disappearing at an alarming and steady rate, especially in America and Australia. In this study, Indigenous language is used interchangeably with the home language.

The dialect that people first learn to communicate in is known as the 'home language' and is typically the dialect of the parents and the community (Dixon, 2018). There is more to a home language than just any language; the nature of mankind, along with values and identity, is embedded in the home language (UNESCO, 2018). This implies that home language is not just a mere way of communicating, but it goes much deeper in identifying who people are. It allows people to express themselves, share ideas, convey messages and showcase their culture, values and beliefs. The home language is a personal identity and people who know who they are, develop personal identity (Nishanthi, 2020). Knowing a home language is a matter of pride, it enhances one's

confidence and also assists people in connecting with their cultural identity (Morake, 2018).

I am an Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 6) passionate Sesotho home language teacher in one of the public primary schools in the Ekurhuleni South District, who believes in language and cultural preservation. The South African language policy aims to promote all 12 official languages in the country and to ensure that every learner in the intermediate phase has access to education in a language they better understand. Although, I have observed over the years how the Sesotho language has been slowly declining in the Grade 4 classrooms. Sesotho-speaking learners are finding it difficult to comprehend basic words and speak fluent Sesotho. Therefore, I felt compelled to embark on this study, which was conducted in selected public primary schools in Ekurhuleni South district in Gauteng. My observation was supported by Morake (2018) who highlighted that when learners possess good home language skills and knowledge, they will develop a better understanding at school and will be more comfortable in learning additional languages, which leads to successful communication.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The Sesotho language like any other Indigenous Languages has always been the vehicle for cascading knowledge from the older to the younger generations. It is through their home language that the forefathers passed on cultural values and beliefs, societal norms and morals to their children, entertained young ones through stories and folktales and also communicated important messages to their ancestors (Pullen, 2018). Although our forefathers could not read or write, oral tradition, using their home language, as a form of communication ensured that knowledge, art, ideas and cultural material was passed on.

It is of concern that many Indigenous languages like Sesotho are dominated and swallowed by popular languages such as English because of modernisation and globalisation. UNESCO (2018:18) states that “it is a great concern that every second week, one Indigenous language disappears taking with it an entire cultural and intellectual heritage”. To mitigate the crisis, UNESCO (2018) recommends that every learner ought to be afforded education in their home language, to ensure language preservation and great learning outcomes.

In provinces such as Freestate, Gauteng and some parts of Eastern Cape, the home language, Sesotho, is viewed as a basic human right as well as an official language (Sibanda, 2019). Hence, Section 29 (8) of the South African Constitution clearly states that “every child possesses a legal right to pursue their education in their native tongue”. Research has shown that the Sesotho language has an abundance of benefits as far as children’s learning is concerned (Dixon, 2018; Cekiso, Meyiwa & Mashige, 2019). It is understood that Sesotho as the home language, is necessary for holistic child development (Morake, 2018). Children who are fluent in their home language develop relatively faster cognitively and intellectually (Thabethe, 2022). Research also indicates that an improved understanding of the curriculum and having a good perspective toward schooling are some of the advantages of having a strong home language foundation (Savage, 2019; Omidire, 2020). The South African Language policy states that language used in the classroom needs to be an official language and that to which the learner is accustomed to (Nugraha:2019). Therefore, home language is very important in ensuring that learners understand what is being taught in the classroom.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) provided by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2011:8) stipulates that home language competency should represent fundamental social communicative skills necessary in social interaction and intellectual abilities that are beneficial for one to learn throughout an entire schooling system. This suggests that the Sesotho home language should also be given attention so that learners are be able to socially communicate and use it effectively in their learning. Having a strong home language foundation, learners would be able to achieve better results at school and also enjoy themselves while learning (Savage, 2019).

Against this background, the next section outlines the theoretical framework of the investigation.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework serves as a frame to assist the research endeavour (Freytag & Young, 2018). The socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1962) underpins this study. Under this theory, social interaction, language as a tool in learning and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) concepts serve as the basis of this investigation. The

socio-cultural theory is founded on the idea that social interaction, especially with those who have more knowledge and experience like teachers, parents, or peers, is essential for learning. The theory also believes that culture influences a child's mental development. According to Vygotsky (1978), how people engage with others and the culture to which they are exposed, influences one's mental capability.

### **1.3.1 Social Interaction**

Social interaction is Vygotsky's theory, founded on the notion that the process of constructing learning takes place in a social environment that incorporates the learner to-learner and accomplished adult-to-learner, working together on real-world tasks that are based on an individual's linguistic, technical and experiential background as well as their cultural background (Vygotsky, 1978:102). Vygotsky believes that acquiring knowledge is an interactive activity. This demonstrates how crucial it is for the community, parents, guardians, teachers and peers to seize every opportunity for interaction and use it to impart the Sesotho home language knowledge.

### **1.3.2 Language as a Tool in the Learning Process**

Vygotsky (1978) considers language a powerful tool when it comes to the cognitive development of a child. Vygotsky believes that it is through language and interaction with others, that children acquire vocabulary and discover that words have meanings and realise that these meanings are shared within the language community, and, as a result, children begin to use these words to fulfill their needs (Allman, 2022).

### **1.3.3 The Zone of Proximal Development**

Vygotsky (1978:86) describes the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as the distinction of a person's overall growth stage, as appraised on how well they can solve problems independently, without being assisted by an adult or working alongside a more knowledgeable peer. The ZPD is thought to be a place where mentoring should take place and where the child can learn skills to utilise independently to develop higher cognitive performance (Hurst, 2021). This implies that parents at home can model the home language behaviour by pronouncing Sesotho words properly and speaking grammatically correctly while the teacher also builds on what has been learned at home. As a result, the child will copy their parents and teachers, thus

improving their Sesotho vocabulary. More information on the socio-cultural theory and its elements is provided in Chapter 2.

#### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Sesotho language proficiency has become a problem among Grade 4 learners in most of Ekurhuleni South District schools. Koopman (2020) found that the majority of learners do not know how to speak their home language fluently and lack oral proficiency. This has had a negative impact on their academic progress (Gordon & Harvey, 2019). With my seven years of experience in my teaching career, teaching the Sesotho home language in Grade 4, it has been clear that nearly all the learners in class are unable to speak the Sesotho language fluently and are also struggling to comprehend basic Sesotho words. As a result, it is disturbing to see how Sesotho-speaking learners, from a predominantly Sesotho-speaking community in a school where Sesotho is a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in the Foundation Phase, are unable to articulate themselves using the correct Sesotho language. They even find it challenging to understand basic Sesotho words such as *tlhafu*, meaning a leg, which I believe that every Foundation Phase learner should know because it is a body part, and it is one of the basic words that Foundation Phase learners are taught. Home language gives one a personal identity, which emerges from people who know who they are (Ayad & Hassan, 2018).

If this problem is not properly dealt with, not only there is a risk of the Sesotho language slowly declining and eventually becoming extinct, but young people will not know who they are. They would not know their culture, their heritage and where they belong. Eventually, the youth will be labelled as a lost generation (Morton, 2020). Maya Angelou famously remarked, “One cannot know where they are heading if they do not know where they are coming from” (Emily, 2020). Therefore, this study explores teachers’ perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District. This is what triggered the researcher to conduct this study in order to find out the contributing factors to the decline of the Indigenous Languages in South Africa, particularly in Sesotho Language in Ekurhuleni South District.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The primary goal of this investigation is to provide answers to the central question and the sub-questions. The following is the study's main research question:

*What are teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho Language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District?*

To assist in answering the main research question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. How is the home language promoted in a multi-lingual society?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the strategies outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language?
3. What strategies do teachers use to teach Sesotho as a home language?

## **1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho Language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District.

The objectives were to:

- explore how home language is promoted in a multi-lingual society,
- investigate teachers' perceptions of strategies outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language,
- identify strategies teachers use to teach Sesotho as a home language.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is described by Patel and Patel (2019:48) as "a procedure for systematically solving a research challenge". Research methodology can be viewed as a science that explores the manner in which the investigation is conducted scientifically (Patel & Patel, 2019).

### **1.7.1 Research Design**

Sileyew (2019:28) defines the research design as "a detailed plan" that details the methodology to be followed when conducting the study, including the paradigm

supporting the study, the research approach and the strategy. The research design that was used in this study was a case study

#### **1.7.1.1 Research paradigm**

According to Khatri (2020:4), a research paradigm is a basic and inclusive belief system for understanding the research phenomenon. Khatri (2020:4) further states that a research paradigm gives the researcher a precise framework and directions on how to conduct the research. With regard to this study, the interpretivist paradigm was used as a lens to analyse the data gathered through interviews and observations. The interpretivist paradigm is viewed as qualitative research that is based on the belief of seeking an understanding of the world (Creswell, 2018:8). According to this paradigm, people develop purpose, meaning and understanding when they engage with the world or surroundings they are analysing. As a result, I deemed it befitting to use an interpretivist paradigm in this study to better comprehend the phenomenon and gain new knowledge as I engaged with participants through interviews and observations.

#### **1.7.1.2 Research approach**

Research has three approaches, which are the quantitative approach, mixed methods approach and qualitative approach. When evaluating objective theories, a quantitative method is employed to evaluate the relationship between variables. These variables are then quantified using an instrument to provide numbered data for analysis. (Creswell, 2018). The mixed methods research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches which may include theoretical frameworks and philosophical assumptions. Creswell (2018:44) describes the qualitative approach as a technique for understanding the significance of individuals or organisations attached to a social or human issue. The approach employed in this study is the qualitative approach because it emphasises gathering data naturally, and as a result, various data collection methods were explored until a deep understanding was achieved (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:31).

#### **1.7.1.3 Research strategy**

The research strategy used in this investigation to generate and produce the most trustworthy, accurate and compelling conclusion possible from the research findings was the case study. Mohajan (2018:33) states that a case study is utilised while studying and characterising a person for his or her activities, personal circumstances,

and a group of people, such as schools or teaching staff, and others. Yin (2018:46) describes a case study as “an analytic method that carefully examines what is currently happening in the setting of everyday life, especially in situations where it could be challenging to differentiate between the phenomenon and the context”.

As a result, a case study was the perfect strategy to apply to this study because it allowed me as a researcher to properly and holistically explore the teachers’ perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners and be able to devise convincing, reliable and sound understanding of the root cause. As a result, the exploratory case study research design was the most applicable for this study as data were gathered to understand why the Grade 4 learners are unable to understand and speak fluent Sesotho.

## **1.7.2 Research Methods**

Research methods can be described as techniques utilised when gathering and interpreting data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Research methods can also be defined as strategies, processes or techniques that are used in data gathering, analysis and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) including how data are to be gathered, what instruments to be employed, how they will be utilised as well as how data are examined. The following are research methods adopted in this study.

### **1.7.2.1 Selection of participants**

According to McMillan and Schumacher, (2014:6), sampling is a technique used to choose people, usually representative of a certain population, from whom data are obtained. This study makes a distinction between probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is a form of sampling in which subjects are drawn from a large population and it is helpful if the researcher wishes to draw generalisations because it aims to represent a broad range of the population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Non-probability is a sampling procedure that aims to represent a specific subset of the general population (Cohen et al., 2018:214). A non-probability type of sampling, which is purposive sampling, was used to select the participants in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Purposive sampling is a technique used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of participants who can provide in-depth and detailed information about



an investigated phenomenon (Scholtz, 2021). These selected participants could purposefully explain and comprehend the main phenomenon under investigation and the research problem (Creswell, 2018:125). Therefore, in this investigation, a purposive sampling method was utilised. The reason for choosing purposive sampling was that it allowed the researcher to identify and select participants who could provide in-depth and detailed information about an investigated phenomenon (Scholtz, 2021). Thus, six Grade 4 Sesotho teachers were purposively selected from six schools in Ekurhuleni South District. Their selection was based on the fact that they have extensive experience in teaching the Sesotho language in Grade 4 and I believe they have enough knowledge that could help in unpacking what could be the cause of the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners in the Ekurhuleni South District. The teachers were interviewed and observed teaching Sesotho in their classrooms. The selection of participants is fully discussed in Chapter 3.

#### **1.7.2.2 Data collection**

Sileyew (2019:31) defines data collection as a methodological process of gathering information about a particular subject. Sileyew (2019:31) states that data collection makes certain that relevant and trustworthy information is acquired for research, so that decisions about the direction of the research may be made. For gathering data in this investigation, the research techniques that were employed were interviews and observations.

- **Interviews**

Interviews are the most common tool used as a data-gathering method in qualitative research. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:3) define in-depth interviews as deliberate conversations that use a broad interview guide and a few carefully chosen subjects.

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:3) define in-depth interviews as intentional discussions using a generic interview manual with some chosen topics. In this study, the type of interview employed was the semi-structured interview. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018:511) define a semi-structured interview as an interview where topics and questions are provided, but the nature of the questions is open-ended and questions may be asked without following a specific sequence. The reason for choosing in-depth, open-ended individual interviews was to probe and explore

participants' thoughts and feelings about the topic at hand to gain deep insight. Semi-structured interviews were utilised when Sesotho Grade 4 teachers were interviewed.

- **Observations**

Sileyew (2019:31) defines the observation method as a data-gathering technique in which the person conducting the investigation observes and describes the participants' behaviour in a particular setting. The non-participant type of observation was used in this study. As a researcher, I took a more distant role, and I did not interact with the participants. I was a non-participant. I sat at the back of the classroom and observed how Grade 4 teachers presented their Sesotho lessons and how learners responded to the teachers' instructions and questions.

### **1.7.2.3 Data analysis**

Data analysis is primarily a logical process for sorting data and identifying patterns and making connections between categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Mohajan (2018:37) states that the process of analysing data involves looking at information and finding correlations, trends or patterns by employing logic and critical thinking. Thematic data analysis was employed in this investigation. Braun and Clarke (2006:6) state that thematic data analysis is a technique for interpreting qualitative data that involves exploring data, sets to find, analyse and report recurring patterns. The reason for choosing this type of data analysis was that it provided a practical and theoretically adaptable method for analysing qualitative data, by organising the data set simply and providing comprehensive detail.

## **1.8 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Bennet, Kajamma and Stenfors (2020:597 citing Lincon and Guba, 1985) state that the trustworthiness of qualitative research is widely evaluated using four criteria and they are: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

### **1.8.1 Credibility**

Bennet et al. (2020:597) define credibility as research findings that are believable and accurate. In order for research to be credible, the researcher needs to adopt a technique that is clearly explained and supported (Bennet et al., 2020). Triangulation, reflexivity and member checks were employed to ensure trustworthiness.

### **1.8.2 Transferability**

Anney (2014:277) states that transferability relates to the extent to which other respondents may use the conclusions of qualitative research. Nassaji (2020:428) states that transferability is concerned with the scope in which the researcher's interpretation and conclusion are transferable to other similar contexts. In this study, transferability was used as it provided a rich and extensive set of details that demonstrated the study's suitability in various contexts beyond a reasonable doubt (Anney, 2014). Shenton (2004:69) suggests that without a thick description, the reader of the final account may find it challenging to judge how much the overall findings hold up. To ensure transferability in this study, a detailed description of the topic under study was provided.

### **1.8.3 Dependability**

Nassaji (2020:429) states that dependability refers to the reliability of data collection tools. According to this principle, the research should be articulated in a way that enables others to draw the same conclusions after reviewing the data. To ensure dependability in this study, triangulation and a thorough explanation of the research site were done.

### **1.8.4 Confirmability**

Shenton (2004:72 cited Baxter & Eyles 1997) defines confirmability as the extent to which the investigation's conclusions could be corroborated by additional research. Confirmability is focused on demonstrating that the findings and interpretive conclusions are unquestionably data-driven results, not the researchers' creative imagination (Anney, 2014). An in-depth description of the methodology, triangulation and research method limitations were explained to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 5 presents more detail about this study's trustworthiness.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A set of principles, 'ethical considerations', governs how research is designed and carried out (Bhandari, 2021). In essence, ethics are rules that guide the researcher in gathering data and adhering to a particular code of conduct. When conducting the study, I ensured that before participants agreed to be part of the study, I fully explained the reason for the study and why they were approached to take part. I did not coerce

anyone to be part of the study, and every participant took part of their own free will. As this study took place in schools, I ensured that no harm was posed to participants during interviews or observations. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identities. All participants were treated fairly and equally. I also conformed with the University of South Africa's (UNISA) requirements, including asking for permission at Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), Ekurhuleni district as well as schools to carry out the study.

## **1.10 KEY CONCEPTS**

The key concepts used in this study are explained below as follows:

### **1.10.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced by the DBE in 2011 and is a singular, precise and concise set of guidelines, which covers every subject mentioned in the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R–12 (DBE, 2011). CAPS clearly states that the home language should be taught in the initial schooling years of the child (three years), and it requires that learners get 50% in their home language to progress to the next grade (DBE, 2011). CAPS provides the annual teaching plan (ATP) for each quarter. In this study, CAPS

### **1.10.2 Teaching Strategies**

Teaching strategies are techniques used by teachers to assist learners in acquiring knowledge of the needed material and preparing them to achieve set goals (Redford, 2022). Teaching strategies, according to Sarode (2018:58), are unique methods used to aid learners in learning the necessary material and obtaining their set goals. In this study, strategies mean measures put in place to come up with solutions to alleviate the diminishing use of the Sesotho language in Grade 4 classes.

### **1.10.3 Indigenous Language**

Any language that is spoken by a group of locals who live and originate from a specific region, with the same culture is known as the indigenous language (Cable, 2019). An indigenous language can also be defined as a language that has not migrated from its origins, and it is still spoken the way that it has always been spoken over centuries (Stewart, 2018). For this study, indigenous language refers to the Sesotho language that a certain group of people speak as their home language.

#### **1.10.4 Sesotho Language**

The Sesotho language, also referred to as Southern Sesotho, is one of the first languages translated into writing by European missionaries (Keats, 2022). It is the fifth most prevalent home language in South Africa. Additionally, it is the primary language of the kingdom of Lesotho (Setaka, 2020). Many South African township schools utilise the Sesotho language as one of their official languages of learning and teaching (Balfour & Cromarty, 2019). In the context of this study, Sesotho is the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in the Foundation Phase and the Home Language in the Intermediate Phase of selected schools in the Ekurhuleni South District.

#### **1.10.5 Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)**

The language that is determined by the school's governing body (SGB) in conjunction with parents in schools is known as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) (Kaschula & Kreutzer, 2019). The DBE (2011) describes the language of learning and teaching as a tool through which learning and teaching, as well as examinations, take place. For this investigation, Sesotho is used as LoLT in the Foundation Phase. is used to indicate how the document supports the use of the home language.

### **1.11 CHAPTERS DIVISION**

*Chapter 1* presented a general description of this study. This included the rationale, background and theoretical framework. A problem statement is included, with the research question, aims, and objectives. The chapter concludes with the research methodology which guided the study. Key concepts used in this study were given, including their definitions. The chapter came to an end with an outline of the thesis and a chapter summary.

*Chapter 2* reviews the literature what has been researched on the Sesotho Home Language, how the CAPS mitigates the decline of the Sesotho language, how teachers' strategies mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language, and the outcomes of intervention strategies. The socio-cultural theory's concepts of social interaction, language as a tool in the learning process and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) were dealt with in detail and demonstrated how the study was guided.

*Chapter 3* offers a thorough explanation of the research methodology employed in this investigation. The research paradigm, research approach, research type as well as

research methods, such as sampling, data collection and data analysis are described and justified. In addition, the trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations are covered.

*Chapter 4* discusses data analysis and interpretation empirical data. This entails a thorough analysis of the information gathered throughout the data gathering procedure in addition to a comparison of the outcomes with existing research.

*Chapter 5* provides an overview of the research and draws conclusions based on the analysed and interpreted data. Recommendations are offered for practice and for further investigation. Limitations to this research are also discussed. The contribution which this investigation could have in the field of home language and future research are presented. The chapter ends with some final comments.

## **1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter provided an overview of the entire study. It gave detailed information about the purpose of the study of investigating teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District. The next chapter presents a review of literature based on the teachers' perceptions with regard to decline of the home language

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study. The review of the literature, which draws on current topics from international, African and South African contexts on the teachers' perceptions for the decline of the home language, how home language is promoted in a multi-lingual society and intervention strategies to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language is discussed in this chapter.

Snyder (2019:333) defines a literature review as a more or less organised method of gathering and summarising prior research. A literature review can also be defined as an analysis of academic publications on a specific subject that provides a synopsis of the current state of knowledge and makes it possible to identify relevant theories, methodologies and knowledge gaps that could be later applied to the dissertation (Karas, 2023).

An examination of scholarly materials on a particular topic that offers a summary of the state of knowledge and enables one to pinpoint pertinent theories, approaches and gaps in the body of knowledge that could be subsequently applied to the dissertation (Mc Combes, 2023). A literature review aims to provide a basis of knowledge and avoid plagiarism by citing sources while summarising the work of other researchers (Karas, 2023). The author further states that a literature review assists in detecting gaps, identifying the need for additional research and placing the research within the framework of the existing literature, arguing for the necessity of the study. In a nutshell, a literature review is the backbone of the research because it helps the researcher better comprehend the topic at hand and gain in-depth understanding.

#### 2.2 HOME LANGUAGE

The significance of home language preservation and protection continues to be a burning issue globally as well in South Africa. A push for home language education was supported by many organisations, countries and scholars. In this study, the home language is also called the mother tongue and indigenous language. It is projected that 40% of the global population does not get an education in a language they are

familiar with (Tshuma, 2021:167). In the world, there are about 7 000 languages that are spoken, but linguistic variety is at risk of disappearing at a rapid pace (UNESCO, 2018).

Through a resolution, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) urged member nations to support the safeguarding and protection of every language spoken by people worldwide. This was to ensure that no one language dominates other languages (Chiradza, 2023). As a result, Mother Tongue Based Education (MTBE) was introduced as a language of instruction to raise the standard of education by utilising the expertise and experiences of both teachers and learners (International Institute for Educational Planning of UNESCO, 2018). To further highlight the importance of home language, in November 1999, UNESCO decided that 21 February would be set aside annually as an 'International Mother Tongue Language Day', where the home language will be celebrated (International Institute for Educational Planning of UNESCO, 2018).

Research and many scholars suggest that learning should take place in a familiar language because the home language is an influential tool in promoting learning (Nishanthi, 2020:1). Having a solid home language foundation leads to a much better understanding of the curriculum and more positive attitudes toward schooling (Savage, 2019:1). Both scholars reiterate the fact that when children start school, it is crucial that they keep using their home language. Using a 'foreign language' can create confusion in the minds of children, and this leads to children not being able to master neither their first language nor their second language (Numertayasa, Suardana & Adiwijaya, 2020:312).

In their study, Van Staden, Bosker and Bergbauer (2020) found out that when compared to English, assessing learners in African languages indicates a far lower passing percentage. Findings from studies discovered that when a solid foundation in a home language is not established, learners are at risk of being disadvantaged (Van Staden, et al., 2020). The above statement clearly shows that learners, especially in the townships, are unable to speak and understand their home language. With the new policy that is in the pipeline where learners will be compelled to do other subjects (for example, Technology, Natural Science, Geography) in their home language, that



is going to be a further disadvantage. This may affect their academic progress causing high dropout rates due to their inability to comprehend what is being taught.

Scholars like Savage (2019) and Numertayasa et al. (2020), believe using home language as LoLT in the first three years of children's schooling will not have any positive effect as far as home language proficiency is concerned. Krause (2018:1) states that outside influences tint people's perceptions of their mother tongue. According to Krause (2018) what is considered today in our written books is not our pure mother tongue. European missionaries transcribed the language as they understood it, but in many cases, it is not how the language is spoken. Krause (2018) further states that research shows it is critical to refute the widespread belief that 'home language education' is beneficial, essential, and empowering for African language speakers. Kumar, Ritonga and Julhadi (2022:822) argue that home language could be an obstacle particularly using it as a LoLT which could result in learners being unable to converse in English which makes it difficult for learners to compete with the global world. The authors from Indonesia further claim that their country received a permanent gift in the form of the English language from their colonisers (Britain) and they cannot afford to lose that treasure as they are able to participate through a global language.

Tsebe (2021) states that there is a language problem in South Africa, arguing that one of the issues underlying the language challenges facing South African education is the idea of home language and its use in the classroom. The author states that many learners struggle with speaking and understanding their home language. As a result, many learners are at a disadvantage when it comes to learning and understanding concepts. The author recommends that it could be necessary to shift focus towards an alternative concept of home language, which is a 'dominant language' (DL) of a learner where learners could be taught in a language of interaction with their peers and those around them.

Sibanda (2019:1) states that learners' home language appears to be a hindrance to their success in their early education. Sibanda (2019) goes on to say that given migration and changing landscapes, the idea of home language has grown increasingly ambiguous and flawed. The author recommends that it would be more appropriate to advocate for local language education since it would acknowledge

urban *lok'shin lingua* as a regional dialect. Sibanda (2019) also believes that it could be more practical to implement a complete home language education for learners in urban areas. Sibanda advocates the scrapping of home language in schools especially in urban areas, as he sees that learners cannot fully speak and understand their home languages.

Without disputing the culture of multilingualism, which might have an influence on how people speak in the cities, my concern is still on disposing of our home language, Basotho and replacing it with *lok'shin lingua* and dominant language. Sibanda (*lok'shin lingua*) and Tsebe (dominant language) believe that ignoring the problem and replacing it with something unknown, is a solution. However, this will result in the decline of the home language, which in this study is Sesotho. Bornman, Alvarez-Mosquetra and Seti (2018:39) have already found evidence that black languages in South Africa are losing their status. Such statements are very concerning and worrisome.

I believe that we should emulate what the Afrikaners did through Afri-Forum, where they took UNISA to court when the university decided to stop using Afrikaans as a language of learning and teaching (Malanga 2021:1). They showed conviction, courage and passion for their home language. They could not allow seeing their language slowly disappearing, they took the matter to the highest court in the land, the constitutional court and the UNISA decision was invalidated.

### **2.2.1 Strides Made Internationally to Promote Home Language.**

Organisations such as the RUTU (roots) Foundation were established in the Netherlands in 2013. Its mission was to make home language education a norm rather than an exception (RUTU Foundation, 2022). To ensure that no language dominates the other, Hennberg and Sved (2019:29) explain that in Finland, regarding citizen rights, language and culture are stated under basic human rights, giving everyone the right to use his/her own language before the court of law. This was to ensure that no language dominates the other. In Turkey, a civic initiative called Living Languages and Dialect was formed in 2012. Children, who belong to minority communities, study in their home language for a few hours a week (Minority Rights International, 2022:1). In Indonesia, the home language is prioritised in classrooms until learners have acquired fluency in their home language. Learners only begin learning and using a second language after they have perfected speaking, reading and writing in their home

language (Numertayasa et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important that learners develop home language proficiency to pave the way to learn other languages.

### **2.2.2 Strides Made in Africa to Promote Home Language.**

With UNESCO's recommendations, a shift has been seen in some African countries (UNESCO, 2023). Banda and Mwanza (2019:7) state that in Zambia, some of the national languages were to be used as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) from Grades R to 5. For instance, local languages such as Tonga, Bemba, Nyanja, Lunda, Lozi, Kaonde and Luvale are to be used as the LoLT in Grades R-5, depending on the area in which the school is located (Banda & Mwanza, 2019:7). In Zimbabwe, it was stated that Shona, Ndebele and English should be used until Grade 3 depending on the learner's language preference. Mose and Kaschula (2019) state that the Commission on Education in the East African Protectorate in Rwanda, advised that the home language be used in the initial school years of children and Swahili in Grades 6 and 7. Mose and Kaschula (2019) further state that teachers and learners supported the policy shift of 2011, from the use of English to Kinyarwanda in primary schools. Sibanda (2019) states that between 1984 and 2000, studies conducted in Mali revealed that learners who received education in their home language saw a 32% increase in pass rates compared to those taught in French.

In Kenya, six of the Kenyan indigenous languages have become extinct and seven are considered endangered because the Kenyan government uses English and Kiswahili (both foreign languages) as their official languages in schools and other government departments (Mandillah, 2019:1) To curb this, in 1998 for the first time in the history of Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) approved the development of home language learning material (Nyarik, 2021:1). Additionally, Nyariki (2021) states that under the new curriculum, home language is taught at a preprimary level from nursery to Grade 3. Nyaraki (2021) further states that 18 other indigenous languages are being fully developed so that learners can be afforded the opportunity to select their preferred language up to university level. Even though Nigeria is an English-speaking nation where English is utilised in the media, schools, businesses and government, the Nigerian government's policy ensures that the home language is used as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT). According to the Nigerian

government policy, the home language of the child must be the LoLT in primary education (Sembiate, Cavallaro & Troyan, 2020).

### **2.2.3 Strides Made in South Africa to Promote Home Language.**

In 1976, many young black people were killed by the apartheid regime, under the white Afrikaners who were pushing for the preservation of their home language (Afrikaans) to be used as LoLT in South Africa. Many young people were brutally murdered because they were protesting the idea (Alexander, 2021). For centuries South African official languages were those of their colonisers (Bostock, 2018:29). After the African National Congress (ANC) took power in 1994, the language policy was enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996. From having just two official languages (English and Afrikaans), 11 official languages were recognised. Nine languages (isiNdebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiSwati, Venda, isiXhosa, Xitsonga and isiZulu) which are indigenous languages now recognised as official languages (Bostock, 2018:30). This was done to protect all the languages spoken within the country and also provide them with equal status. The South African Act 59 of 1995 established the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) to encourage and foster guidelines that all languages should be official (Walker,2022). The National Heritage Council was also established in February 2004, as it aimed to focus on all South African languages and preserve their heritage (National Heritage and Cultural Studies, 2019:2). The establishment of organisations like these was to ensure that the home languages are safeguarded.

With the dawn of democracy or new dispensation in South Africa, post-1994 national elections, many changes took place. With the finalisation of a new constitution in 1996, the introduction of new policies gave way to the new language policy development. The National Report of Systematic Evaluation states that the South African Department of Education was pro-home language (DBE, 2005). In response, the previous Minister of Education, Kader Asmal (1999–2004) stated that a systematic assessment of Grades 3 and 6 supported the global trend showing students who receive education in their home language perform better academically. (National Report of Systematic Evaluation, 2005). To show more support for home language-based education, the current South African Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga, speaking during a Parliament Question-and-Answer session on 19 May 2020,

announced that the Department will be making language changes, where home language will be taught past the Foundation Phase until Grade 6 (Nxumalo, 2019). The Minister indicated that subjects like Mathematics, Natural Science and Technology will be taught in the home language (Nxumalo, 2019). The Minister asserts that the Department has already had a successful home language-based education pilot project in the Eastern Cape province, where 2 015 schools are using isiXhosa and Sesotho as the LoLT and the learners' performance has been remarkable (Nxumalo, 2019). The implication is learning in the home language is easier than learning through an additional language.

#### **2.2.4 Strides made in Gauteng to Promote Home Language.**

Gauteng, as one of the South African provinces, is directly influenced by the decisions taken by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The former Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of education in Gauteng, Mr. Panyaza Lesufi (2014-2022), ensured that learners in schools would learn in their home languages. MEC Lesufi believes that all Gauteng schools should allow other languages to be taught in school and that no school should be a single medium school (Jordan, 2019:1). According to Maphanga (2019), the MEC 's wishes were that every school should have a minimum of three home languages, but he was defeated in that endeavour as it was not practical for one school to have three home languages. MEC Lesufi was quoted by Maphanga (2019) saying 'We want to protect all our 11 official languages in the province, and there will be no language that will be superior to the other' illustrating the need to implement the UNESCO resolutions tabled in 2018 regarding using the home languages at schools. On 16 February 2023, the PanSALB and the Ekurhuleni South District awarded certificates of excellence to 33 Matric Top Achievers in their home language (Khumalo, 2023). The aim was not only to celebrate excellence but also to encourage the use of the home language and its preservation.

### **2.3 HOME LANGUAGE POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

A policy is a term used to refer to principles that better guide decisions (Vishwaroop, 2022). In this study, policies are described as the guiding concepts and decisions that influence education and the regulations that control how an institution is established, set up and operates (Watts, 2022). Policies are intended to establish operational guidelines and uphold compliance. As a result, policies are in place to ensure that laws

are upheld and put into practice. Four home language policies in South African schools are addressed in this section.

### **2.3.1 The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) 1997**

The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) 1997 is founded on the idea that children should have access to multiple languages and receive education in their home language (Bostock, 2018:18). LiEP's primary goals were to make schools more multilingual and to ensure that local languages are considered when developing language policies and curricula (Kaschula & Kretzer, 2019). The School Governing Body (SGB) is specifically included in LiEP's enactment language and admissions policy (Balfour & Cromatry, 2019:298). This policy aimed to increase students' prospects of academic success by ensuring that students in Grades 1 to 6 are taught in a language they can better understand. LiEP has had much support, but unfortunately, it has not yet been fully developed or extensively used (Robertson & Graven, 2020:2). Robertson and Graven (2020) argue that many black parents remain skeptical about their home language as a means of communication regarding the socio-economic advancement of their children. Besides implementing LiEP and the advantages of the home language, parents and members of the SGB usually have a highly biased language attitude that only supports English, and these attitudes appear to be deep and persistent (Kaschula & Kretzer, 2019). Therefore, LiEP reiterates the importance of home language usage in the classroom, which is a Grade 4 Sesotho classroom in this study.

### **2.3.2 The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) in South African Schools Draft Policy 2013**

The goal of this policy is to encourage and reinforce the use of African languages by all learners in the education framework by gradually familiarising learners with acquiring and enhancing competency in the use of previously underutilised African languages (de Klerk, Palmer & Papashane, 2021). The goal of this policy was to give parents more confidence to choose their home language as their main form of communication (Duma, 2021:2). This policy is still being implemented at chosen schools, two in Northern Cape schools and the region of Kopanong in the Southern Free State (de Lange & du Plessis, 2020:1). The Incremental Introduction of African Languages was first introduced in 2015 in Grade 1 with the hope that it will be gradually

adopted until 2026, when it will be introduced and implemented in Grade 12 (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2022). However, the anticipated timeframe has not been met, since it has only been implemented up to Grade 3 (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2022). The group adds that IIAL has only been implemented in 842 schools across all the provinces in South Africa and has encountered difficulties ranging from a shortage of teachers to financial limitations.

### **2.3.3 South African School Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996b) Section 6**

The South African School Act (SASA) explicitly stipulates that every learner must receive equal access to a good education that is free from discrimination (Balfour & Cromarty, 2019:298). SASA (Act 84 of 1996b) states that the SGB should decide on a school's language, develop the language policy and initiatives to improve historically marginalised languages (Robertson & Graven, 2020:4). This Act aims to address language regulations in educational institutions and clearly states that in the event that a smaller group of students requesting that a specific language be used as their medium of instruction, the Director of the Provincial Education Department must determine how best to meet their needs by working together with the SGB and the principal to ensure this determination (Mweli, 2018:1). This Act reiterates that all 11 South African languages in all public schools will be given the same respect and attention, irrespective of how popular or unpopular the language. According to Balfour and Cromarty (2019:299), this policy is significant because it demonstrates the nation's dedication to multilingualism as a component of the transition. However, the policy seems to be giving too much power to schools and their SGBs regarding the LoLT of the school. Many schools continue to choose English and Afrikaans over African languages, which further perpetuates the problem that the South African government is trying to address.

### **2.3.4 The National Education Policy, 1996 (Act 27)**

The National Education Policy, 1996 (Act 27) was drafted and adopted to replace previous policies which were flawed by racial tension and put African languages at a disadvantage, to recognise different cultures and beliefs within the education sector and promote multilingualism. The policy encourages society's full engagement in education to promote and develop all official languages to facilitate the teaching and

learning of all additional languages required by learners, including languages used for religious purposes (Government Gazette, 2019).

Even though the Department must develop education policies to ensure that no language dominates another, South Africa is still faced with English being dominant in the corporate world, as it is a global language. According to Lwazi Mjiyako, a lecturer at the Department of African Languages at Wits University, career opportunities and education support linguistic proficiency in English rather than African languages (Koopman, 2020). Koopman further states that rather than being proficient in their home language, black children are urged by their parents to speak English in order to prepare them for competition in the global marketplace. This shows that because of the status quo, South African individuals still choose English over their home language for survival. Consequently, the Sesotho language will forever decline in our Grade 4 classroom, which eventually will go extinct.

#### **2.4 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE DECLINE OF HOME LANGUAGE**

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, the decline of the Sesotho language in Grade 4 classrooms has been an unsettling matter (*cf.* Chapter 1:1.5). Khanyile (2022) conducted a study on the perception of teachers on mother-tongue education being implemented in South Africa. The author revealed that many teachers in the UThungulu District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal stated that the current home language policy had learning benefits. However, its implementation faced numerous difficulties, including poorly suited terminology that made it challenging for teachers. As a result, it made it difficult for teaching and learning to effectively take place. Khanyile (2022:66) stated that teachers believe that the community had a negative perception of their home language and they do not consider indigenous language as a language that can be beneficial for their children. This implies that the indigenous languages might suffer because they are not fully supported by people who were supposed to ensure the preservation of African languages. Khanyile (2022:67) also highlighted that home language teachers are not adequately trained and that there was a lack of home language resources such as books. Teachers believe that lack of indigenous language books opens up a huge gap between English and African languages which hampers the teaching and learning processes.



### **2.4.1 Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT)**

With colonialism and other segregation policies, such as apartheid in South Africa, the global community deemed it important that indigenous languages were protected and not overshadowed by those of their suppressors. Many colonised countries were compelled to use the language of their oppressors, including schools. In the African continent, the majority of children began schooling using a language that was not their home language (Gordon & Harvey, 2019). In Zambia, English was the preferred language of teaching and learning (Kashimba, 2020:1). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, French was an official language, and it was also used in schools as the LoLT (Katabe & Tibategeza, 2023:2). In South Africa, the LoLT was English and Afrikaans, even though 80% of the South African population were not native speakers of those two languages (Bostock, 2018:26).

A child's ability to learn is negatively impacted when they begin school in a language other than their home language (Nishanthi, 2020). In the process of language acquisition, home language is crucial because it can affect the learners' capacity to learn (Numertayasa et al., 2020:311). Learners in developing nations tend to acquire very limited knowledge at school which could be attributed to using a language that learners do not fully comprehend (Nishanthi, 2020). Nishanthi (2020) further argues that this leads to little or no learning in the acquisition of knowledge and skills and contributes to high dropout rates and repetition of grades. According to Makgabo and Niipae (2022:497), if the learning process does not enable students to connect with their home language, it may promote rote learning and memorisation, and knowledge is likely to be forgotten.

In 2005, the World Bank indicated that it was costlier to educate learners who are not utilising their home language at school, as it results in grade repetition and eventually dropping out of school as compared to learners learning in their home languages (Shrestha, 2019:1). Nishanti (2020:78) quoted Thabo Ditsele saying, "There seems to be cognitive disruption and learning process interference when younger children are taught in a language other than their mother tongue". This refers to learners finding it difficult to understand the concept that is being taught in the classroom because of the use of a language with which they are not familiar.

Mohohlwane (2020:1) states that internationally as well as in South Africa, education policies recommend that attending school should begin with the language that the learner knows best. This is evident in various South African education policies such as the LiEP of 1998, which is founded on the notion that children possess the right to receive an education in their home language while also receiving access to other languages. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grade 1-12 calls for equal use of all 11 official languages and Section 29(2) of the Bill of Rights declares that every person has the right to get an education in their preferred official language (Bostock, 2018:27).

Therefore, it is mandatory in South African classrooms that the home language is used as the LoLT in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3). It is then in the Intermediate and Senior Phases (Grades 4-9) and FET (Grade10-12) where English is used to teach various other subjects. As a result, the above-mentioned policies highlight the importance of the use of home language not only in the Foundation Phase but the entire schooling system.

#### **2.4.2 Parental Influence on the Language**

Post-1994 elections, the South African government took a commendable decision to give all 11 official languages an equal status to ensure that everyone is allowed to access the information they best understand (Cele, 2021:2). Even with those strides of making sure that no language dominates the other, the majority of black parents choose English as the LoLT for their children across all levels of education and support (Gordon & Harvey, 2019). Gordon and Harvey (2019) cite the fact that many individuals oppose initiatives to encourage the teaching of African languages in South African schools and that many people are still unaware of the advantages of home language learning. This implies that South African parents think that the only language that can open doors for a better future for their children is English. Xhakaza (2020) highlights that many black parents choose English over their home language for their children because of fears that their children will not make good progress at school. Additionally, Xhakaza (2020) highlights the common belief that speaking English fluently is a sign of intelligence or, at times, accomplishment. The author further states that given the fact that there are not enough schools in the townships, where children can continue learning their home languages, some parents wonder why they should

even continue choosing African languages. Other parents are convinced that the African languages will do no good for the advancement and development of their children (Xhakaza, 2020). Black parents prefer their children to speak English because learning English is viewed as a form of being 'smart' (Hadebe, 2020). Parents believe that African languages are typically just helpful for religion and communication (Hadebe, 2020). Vygotsky believes that learning is a social activity and as a result, parents are missing out on a golden opportunity to interact and teach their children their home language, culture as well as heritage.

### **2.4.3 English as an International Language**

Academic and professional advancement are impacted by the main language of instruction in the classroom (Gordon & Harvey, 2019). Concerns about the economy may be the driving force behind the preference for English over the home language (Gordon & Harvey, 2019). Studies have indicated a relationship between socioeconomic progress and English proficiency in South Africa. Individuals speak a language for a purpose and growth indicating the most helpful, regardless of whether it is their home language or not (Hadebe, 2020). Hadebe (2020) further states for access to resources such as jobs, politics and information, many black people chose English over their home language, therefore, English dominates the South African discourse and economy. As a result, people choose what can benefit them and, in this case, English.

A person with English proficiency can survive anywhere across the world as the majority of people across the world use English (Poddar, 2018). Poddar (2018) states that many technologies such as computers and mobile phones require the use of English proficiency, and as a result, it becomes easier to work when one has extensive knowledge of the English language. Therefore, English will always dominate the African languages, which may result in the decline of the use of the Sesotho language. Language decline and death happen when a society stops teaching their children a certain language and prefers another for one reason (Hadebe, 2020). Therefore, when one loses their home language, they also lose their culture because language is not just a way of talking but a tool that teaches culture (Noviyenty & Putri, 2020).

#### **2.4.4 Migration of Ethnic Groups**

Migration has always been a way of life since the beginning of humankind. People will move from one area to the other in search of a better life. The UN has stated that the number of international immigrants across the world is continuing to rise rapidly (Kolancali & Melhuish, 2021:2). Authors continue to state that the rapid growth of immigration worldwide not only alters the language but can also bring about a totally new dialect. Many countries have suffered a huge mutation of their languages by the arrival of immigrants as migrants teach other people new words and phrases which usually leads to dilution of the language in the country (Uebelmesser, Sommerfeld & Weingarten, 2021).

South Africa has the largest economy in Africa, and this has led to an increase in migration after the democratic government came into power in 1994 (Peberdy, 2018:229). Noviyenty and Putri (2020:286) state that immigration has given rise to the intermediate language. Noviyenty and Putri (2020:286) define intermediate language as a symptom of learners not being able to fully leave the habits of their first language but not yet fully mastering the other language. Learners who are considered to be at the intermediate level of language proficiency are learners who are not fully at the fluency benchmark, and they rely on their own understanding of the language to put words together (Noviyenty & Purti, 2020). As a result, migration will further cause dilution of home languages because learners will not be fluent in their home languages. As a result, the mix of languages has negatively impacted the Sesotho language in the Thokoza township situated in Ekurhuleni district of Gauteng, South Africa.

Apartheid laws such as the Group Area Act, which placed South Africans according to their race and culture, were an advantage to the attainment of African languages (Evans, 2019). With the new dispensation in 1994, where everyone could now move freely without any restrictions (Booyesen, 2018), people from different races and cultures started to interact and live together in one area and that led to the weakening of African languages. Inter-cultural marriages and people's interactions have negatively affected the use of indigenous languages and the fluent speaking of African languages, particularly the Sesotho language (Ochonogor & Ikems. 2019; Tshibangu, 2019). Bandyadhyay and Green (2021:2) state if couples are from different races or

cultures, chances are new language will emerge. Most inter-cultural couples adopt English as the communication language to better understand each and the children of such relationships acquire language spoken at home as a first language (Ochnogor & Ikems, 2019). This further perpetuates the decline of African home languages, which in this study is Sesotho.

#### **2.4.5 Non-Native Sesotho Speakers' Teachers**

An indigenous language is one of the knowledge fields advocated by the Minimum Requirements for Teachers' Education Qualification (MRTEQ) (Madadzhe, 2019:211). For example, isiZulu has been made compulsory for both native speakers and nonnative speakers of the language for students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal because it is the dominant dialect in that region (Madadzhe, 2019). At Stellenbosch University, student teachers are encouraged to take isiXhosa even though it is not their native language to prepare them to teach isiXhosa, if needed (Xeketwana, 2021:16). This is because there is a greater supply of English and Afrikaans Foundation Phase teacher graduates than those of isiXhosa (home language) who move into teaching in public schools. For this reason, new teachers get employed to teach their non-native language in the Foundation Phase because it is reflected in their statement of the results, but in reality, they do not have enough knowledge of the language nor proficiency. The implication is that word pronunciation might be a problem.

A study by Cekiso et al. (2019:9) shows that teachers who participated in language acquisition in the Foundation Phase in the Eastern Cape revealed that they had never received training in using African languages for teaching across the curriculum. As a result, there is a predicament because the teachers who are responsible for developing learners' knowledge and skill, do not know the discipline-specific vocabulary needed to teach the subject. Therefore, Vygotsky's theory of social interaction can be used, where a skilled language teacher can mentor a new teacher by laying a good foundation of speaking fluent Sesotho and teaching while interacting. It is through interactions with the language teacher that a student teacher will develop the knowledge base for teaching language effectively (Gauvain & Munroe, 2020:4). Through support and guidance, novice teachers will acquire Sesotho language skills and become competent Sesotho speakers which means that they will be able to pass on their knowledge to the learners. Elyas and Alghofaili (2019) state that home

language learners are disadvantaged if the teacher is not a native speaker of the language. The authors further state that if non-native teachers are unable to fully connect with learners as well as transferring a particular culture to their learners, this will result in cultural barriers and learners will miss an opportunity to learn and know their culture. Alqahtani (2019:2) states that a non-native teacher of a home language will not offer the most efficient and accurate language delivery, and they are unable to impact learners' attitudes in a positive way as compared to native counterparts. Due to a lack of understanding of the language, non-native teachers are unable to achieve the expected results as they do not fully understand the language and they cannot fully engage with learners (Alqahtani, 2019). As a result, they will only explain what they know and understand and most probably leave some if not a majority part of the content that they do not know. This will further give rise to the decline of African home languages in the classroom. UNESCO (2018) recommends that teacher recruitment should be aligned with language and instructional approach and place teachers in schools where their language proficiency aligns with that of learners.

## **2.5 SESOTHO LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES OUTLINED IN THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS)**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document was developed to ensure that all learners get the quality education that is relevant to their needs and those of the country (DBE, 2011). It aims to provide learners with the knowledge, skills and values they need to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (DBE, 2011). It outlines what learners need to know and provides teachers with guidelines on how to differentiate teaching to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom (de Lange & Winberg, 2020).

The CAPS document that was published by the Department states that "home language proficiency in Intermediate Phase should reflect the key interpersonal skills needed for interacting with people and cognitive abilities which are useful for learning (DBE, 2011:8). Based on this, emphasis should also be placed on the Sesotho home language so that learners in the Intermediate Phase can utilise the language for their educational and social interaction. de Langer, Winberg and Dippenaar (2020:301) state that the CAPS document explains the methodology behind becoming a proficient speaker of the language, this methodology principle includes focusing on communicative skills. CAPS also stipulates that vocabulary development depends on

the amount of speaking learners are engaged in (de Lange et al., 2020). As a result, learners must be encouraged to speak the grammatically correct Sesotho language daily for them to become proficient in the Sesotho language.

However, the CAPS document has been met with criticism by other scholars as far as clear strategies for teaching the home language, which in this study is the Sesotho language. Balfour and Cromarty (2019:1 quoted Dampier 2014:37) stating that there is a lack of a clearly defined theory of how language is acquired in CAPS documents, arguing that pedagogical processes are unclear. Govender and Hugo (2018:25) state that topics in the CAPS document were not systematically presented and were not in a sequential manner, which led to teachers getting confused by CAPS. Balfour and Cromarty (2019:2) argue that CAPS gives minimal attention to teaching comprehension and further state that the CAPS document provides teachers with minimal guidance but considerable emphasis is placed on the prescriptive teaching plans and the planning of assessment. Section 2 of the CAPS document introducing home language in the Intermediate phase has only two mentions of teaching comprehension of the language, one is related to requirements while the other is related to a guide (Balfour & Cromarty, 2019:9). Therefore, lack of logical progression from principles to practice seems to be the main cause of policy failure (Balfour & Cromarty, 2020:5).

## **2.6 HOME LANGUAGE IN A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY**

South Africa is a diverse country, with diverse cultures and diverse languages, which is seen as an advantage because it promotes social interaction where people can learn from each other (Vygotsky, 1978:68) and should promote unity and tolerance amongst different people of different cultures (Nowek, 2022). Multilingualism is seen as a nation building exercise with plenty of positives. It was prioritised by the government of South Africa that every language is given equal status in a multilingual society (Bostock, 2018:27). This is evident with the acts and policies passed by government to ensure that every language in schools is promoted in the multilingual society of South Africa (*cf.* Chapter 2 Section 2.2).

To promote one's language and culture, the South African government also set aside a day as a public holiday, known as Heritage Day, which is on the 24 September of

every year. The day is about celebrating one's heritage where people share their language knowledge and showcase and celebrate their culture and tradition (O'Connell, 2022:2). In this instance, people use language as a tool through interaction to teach others from different cultures and languages about their way of life and heritage. The Department has also devised ways of promoting home language in the multilingual society by introducing indigenous games, where learners compete amongst themselves based on their heritage and the language they speak (Omidire, 2019). This is supported by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory because while learners compete and interact with each other, they learn how to be better Sesotho speakers from their peers. For example, learners would compete in '*dithoko*' which is a Sesotho 'praise' game, or a classical form of oral poetry inspired by tribal wars and battles fought by the Basotho people. In this manner, learners are inspired to love and speak their home language fluently and creatively. Such special days confirm that the South African government is ensuring that every language is promoted in our multilingual, multicultural and multiracial society.

According to the Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, social interaction in the child's surroundings is a key factor in promoting learning in children (Olanibi, Dahiru & Balogun, 2021:41). This implies that teachers in the classroom have a significant part to play in supporting the use of home language in a multilingual society, especially at school. Morrison (2022) maintains that teachers should serve as models to foster a positive and encouraging learning atmosphere that will lead to an excellent mind frame towards language learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), interaction is a useful method for skills development. He recommended cooperative learning as an activity where novice learners gain knowledge from more skilled individuals (Olanibi et al., 2021:41). The implication is when teachers work together with learners and strive to effectively promote fluency and literacy as far as language is concerned, learners are guided by using grammatically correct Sesotho while supporting and scaffolding learners' pronunciation and vocabulary development.

Communities also play a pivotal role in promoting languages in a multilingual society. For instance, Vygotsky's concept of language as a tool and social interaction is evident in the Western Cape province, where the coloured communities promote their Afrikaaps (patios of Afrikaans and English) language and still uphold their tradition by



celebrating '*Tweede Nuwe Jaar*', where in the first week of January, streets are transformed into a spectacle of extravagant costumes, dance and songs known as '*Kaapse Klopse*' (Carstens, 2019). In this way, society promotes its culture and language while teaching young people about their traditions and language through dance and songs.

## **2.7 STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE THE DECLINE OF THE SESOTHO LANGUAGE**

A strategy is a methodical plan of action that provides guidance to accomplish specific goals (Walia & Chetty, 2020). Strategies are important because they provide a roadmap and show a destination (Shaw, 2021). As a result, strategies are important because they allow one to set their own realistic and attainable goals.

### **2.7.1 Teacher Training**

To mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classroom, Cekiso et al. (2019:6) state that a teacher's performance in the classroom is probably influenced by their early training. However, Cekiso et al. (2019:6) affirm that in the Eastern Cape Foundation Phase, teachers were battling to deal with the demand of a home language curriculum as they were not equipped to teach home language subjects. The challenge was a lack of proficiency in home languages which harms the teaching and learning process because of incorrect language being used (Cekiso et al., 2019). This means that learners were adversely affected because they were taught in an incorrect accent, mispronunciation of certain words as well as most probably incorrect language, which further contributes to the decline of African home languages.

Steinke (2021:37) states that research indicates that the current pre-service teachers' training syllabus is not adequate to prepare teachers to effectively teach reading and language skills. The author further states that this lack of training results in teachers using inappropriate teaching methods. Steinke (2021:38) recommends that mentoring in the form of coaching be considered additional training. This supports the Vygotsky socio-cultural theory, where the more knowledgeable other (coach) is able to provide guidance to the aspiring teacher until such time as they have mastered the skill of teaching language effectively.

Effective teacher training, especially in the Foundation Phase, is very important. It is unfortunate that some teachers did not have proper training to teach in the Foundation

Phase and that has had an influence on learners' performance (Cekiso et al., 2019). The study conducted by Maphalala and Mpofu (2019:58) found that overall, student teachers were not fully equipped and not confident enough to teach home language. The Department of Higher Education (DHE) has noted that student teachers who have an African language as their home language are lacking fundamental language proficiency and skills like basic reading skills that they should have acquired at school (Government Gazette, 2018). Maphalala and Mpofu (2019:67) recommend that there should be specialised language knowledge for content teaching so that student teachers are fully equipped when it comes to teaching an African home language. This means that with specialised training, student teachers will acquire Sesotho language skills such as sentence structure, vocabulary and phonics which will assist in the teaching of their learners. Therefore, teachers will likely learn and share ideas during their interaction in this zone. Subsequently, this will help in mitigating the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classroom.

Cekiso et al. (2019:9) recommend that the Department needs to support and encourage in-service teachers to participate in short-term, ongoing in-service training programmes. Authors further state that those courses should be made compulsory for all Foundation Phase teachers so as to ensure that students are fully ready and skilled to teach an African home language as expected. This will be beneficial for learners, and it will also help with the mitigation of the decline of African home languages, which in this study is Sesotho.

Cekiso et.al (2019:9) further that the Department should ensure that all Foundation Phase teachers are native Sesotho speakers and know how to speak the language fluently so that when they interact with learners, they can speak in a way that assists learners to become proficient Sesotho speakers. Tonio and Ella (2019) concur with the above scholar by stating that teachers whose home language is the same as the LoLT can express themselves more clearly, and they can, therefore, make lessons more engaging for learners. This suggests that native speakers should be prioritised in teaching the Foundation Phase to lay a strong foundation for learners in their early days of attending school

### **2.7.2 Parents Speaking the Sesotho Language with their Children**

According to Saneka and de Witt's (2019) study, parents in metropolitan regions choose to speak English with their children at home. A study reveals that 65% of parents of African descent prefer their children to study English. Many African parents have enrolled their children in former Model C (schools that were meant for wealthy parents before 1994) schools so that their children could speak fluent or better English (Gordon & Harvey, 2019). This is done to increase their children's chances of being employed because of their English proficiency. Vygotsky states that a language is a primary instrument for learning (1978:68). Therefore, black parents who choose to talk to their children in English rather than their home language are missing out on a fundamental tool to educate their children about their identity and heritage.

Many black parents consider English as a tool to access white privilege because the system was set up to favour those who master the Queen's language (Gqibitole, 2019). Therefore, black parents consider conversing in English with their children as a way of helping their children to access a better life. Gqibitole (2019) states that speaking broken English among black South African youth is considered a humiliation. As a result, black parents especially educated parents will therefore continue speaking English to their children and help them master the language so that they do not feel humiliated and ashamed in public. It is for the reasons mentioned above that there is erosion and decline of African home languages in the classrooms. The survival of any language lies in its acquisition and usage by the younger generation (Ochonogor & Ikems, 2019:1).

### **2.7.3 Promotion of Sesotho Language Reading Books**

Yusob (2018:149) states that learning grammar has been a part of developing language skills; however, if learners fail to understand grammar, they will fail to understand and communicate effectively in the target language (Yusob, 2018:149). Therefore, when learners fail to communicate effectively in their language it is certain that they will not succeed at school, because language is a learning tool that underpins all school subjects like Science, Mathematics and History.

Sibanda (2019:8) states that there is not enough literature available in South Africa for major African languages that can help in effective classroom teaching. Poor performance and poor proficiency in the home language can be linked to other issues

such as the non-availability of African language textbooks that facilitate effective classroom instruction (Sibanda, 2019:9). There is a high shortage of textbooks for beginner readers available in South Africa and a lack of textbooks in the language children know best (Reed, 2019:1). Although many publishers consider publishing books in their home language, they are expensive, and publishers do not present any creative approaches to produce affordable, visually pleasing works in home languages (Reed (2019). That is to say, learners will continue to lack knowledge, skills and proficiency in Sesotho due to the above-mentioned factors.

Zell (2018) states that there are not enough publishing houses that are dedicated to the African language, so those who write in African languages face significant challenges, they do not get support from the government and are left to fend for themselves. Most African languages, with the exception of isiZulu in South Africa, continue to have limited roles and have an inferior standing due to colonial legacies, the unfavourable impression of multilingualism, modernisation and economic development, and, as a result, many authors are uninspired to create works in African languages (Zell, 2018). The future and survival of African languages depend on the literature (Zell, 2018).

#### **2.7.4 Using Technology and Social Media to Create Awareness, Promote and Advocate the Sesotho Language.**

Technology has notably affected the way people live and do things and has created more opportunities for independent language learning (Wolff, 2021). With the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and technology advances globally, language learning tools are constantly being developed to help learners in a language context to become more fluent and efficient (Kim, 2020). This implies that Sesotho advocates also need to keep up, develop and use digital literacy to teach the language.

Studies indicate that the majority of young people enjoy learning using technology (Mahmood, Anjum & Shahid, 2020:382). Nowadays we witness many features that teach language learning using devices such as smartphones (Godwin-Jones, 2021:7). The use of smartphones has resulted in other gains such as easy-to-text, access to learning material, support services, translators and dictionaries. This implies that Sesotho teachers need to move away from traditional methods of teaching and

learning in the classroom and introduce innovative teaching methods that entice our young people to learn Sesotho.

Stereotyped methods of learning and teaching material make learning a monotonous activity and create disinterest among learners (Al-Jarran, 2019). The author further states that social media and text-to-speech software play a dominant role in helping learners learn and improve their vocabulary. Findings reveal that when participants used an electronic pop-up dictionary instead of looking up words in a word dictionary, their vocabulary learning was considerably better, this was determined by comparing the affordance of computerised versus manual dictionaries (van Lieshout & Cardoso, 2022:4).

Kohnke (2022:2) states that teachers indicated that learners completed given tasks successfully using Chatbot. Chatbot is an innovation that was developed to support and motivate second language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, to facilitate active out-of-class learning (Kohnke, 2022:2). Therefore, Sesotho language teachers could also develop their own software, similar to Chatbot, to assist learners to independently learn Sesotho language at home at their own pace.

Pienaar (2019) reported on Arthur Goldstuck's presentation shared at the Social Media Landscape Briefing 2019 in Cape Town on 18 October. The presentation outlined the dominance of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter as high-end space for connecting people, especially the youth locally and internationally (Pienaar, 2019). WhatsApp has proven to be one of the social media platforms where people use their home languages to communicate because the majority of people communicating know each other (Ligidima, Fulufhelo & Makananise, 2020). Teachers, tutors and even parents as knowledgeable people can influence change by interacting with learners on social media using WhatsApp and other forms of social media communication. This will allow learners to be connected to the World Wide Web for information dissemination in any language, including the Sesotho language.

### **2.7.5 Encourage University Students to Specialise in the Sesotho Language**

Many young people enter institutions of higher education with no intentions of studying or specialising in any of the African languages (Madadzhe, 2019:121). As a result, this has perpetuated the shortage of teachers specialising in African languages. Institutions of higher education treat home languages, particularly African ones, with

little to no importance (Government Gazette, 2018). The Department of Higher Education states that research shows African language learners' numbers are dwindling and do not show a positive growth, some language departments are threatened with closure, consequently, the threat exists even to sustain scholarships in African languages (Government Gazette, 2018). The Department has further identified that the majority of universities, especially those that were known as 'white' universities, continue to teach African languages in English or Afrikaans and it is concerning for the advancement of African languages.

With the problem being identified, few South African Universities are making strides in addressing the issue. Madadzhe (2019:121) states that the University of Limpopo has developed a programme that is offered in both English and Sepedi. The University has in recent years begun teaching all its African language courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels either in English or African language. The University is applying Vygotsky's ZPD, by assisting students developing skills and strategies which in this case is learning their home language by bringing programmes that offer Sepedi to the university, and by doing this, students will eventually be able to speak their home language efficiently.

Cekiso et al. (2019) further add that South African teacher training institutions need to offer sufficient pre-service and in-service training as well as courses on the methodology of teaching-learning domains in the home language. This suggests that it is important that university students be encouraged to study African home languages so that there are vibrant and knowledgeable teachers who will teach African home language in an interactive, exciting and interesting way.

## **2.8 SITUATING THE GAP**

Even though many researchers have studied the perceptions of teachers using their home language or first additional language in the classroom, minimal research has been done about the teachers' perception of the decline of the Sesotho language. Researchers like Mohohlwane (2020), Kim (2020) and Makgabo and Niipae, (2022) have agreed on the importance of home language and its benefits, but there seems to be little, or no attention paid to the teachers' perceptions of the decline of Sesotho language in Grade 4.

Much research has been conducted on how language is being taught in the classroom and the strategies used. Aung (2021) conducted an investigation on the teachers' perceptions of translanguaging in township classrooms and found that there were numerous instances of improvised and unplanned translation in the classroom. Aung (2021) concluded that translanguaging was considered a successful method used by teachers in the home language and the first additional language classrooms. A study investigating teachers' perception of code-switching in the classroom revealed that the majority of teachers were comfortable using code-switching in their classrooms, especially if they had to explain the meaning of words, sentences and grammar (Yildiz & Su-Bergil, 2021)

The use of mother tongue in learning a further language or other subjects has been the focus of research as well. Reinsenbayeva (2020) conducted a study on using mother tongue in Kazakhstan with the aim of determining the reason that learners in secondary schools utilise their home language in English classes. Findings showed that many learners shied away from using a 'foreign' language for fear of being criticised by their teachers and teased by their peers. Reinsenbayeva (2020) suggested that steps be made to boost learners' self-confidence in using English. A study conducted by Osei-Boateng (2022) on the perceptions of teachers about the medium of instruction in learning English as a first additional language in Ghana's lower basic schools, concluded that it was a dilemma regarding the most suitable language to use in the classroom when teaching English to Ghanaian learners, as learners did not understand what was being said, therefore, many teachers had to use two languages (their native language and English) simultaneously during the class to ensure that learners understood what was being taught. This refers again to codeswitching or translanguaging.

As in South Africa, where there is a range of languages being used particularly in urban areas, the issue of which language to use is raised. Olanibi et al. (2020) conducted a study on the home language as an instructional medium in Nigeria's lower primary schools investigating the pros and cons of the Nigerian policy that states that LoLT at primary schools should be in their home language. The authors debated on whether home language should still continue to be used in schools as the LoLT. The findings were that different scholars and people interviewed had different opinions. The authors recommended that government should consider using mixed languages where the

home language is taught together with English. Botha (2022) conducted a study about home language, language learning and teaching dichotomy. The findings were that parents need necessary support from teachers, schools and communities to effectively help their children in learning their home language. Botha (2022) recommends that all education stakeholders work together with parents to equip them to support their children and ensure that parents are enabled to effectively support their children who are taught in a different LoLT that differs from that of their home language.

The above-mentioned studies which were undertaken by different researchers highlight different challenges faced by teachers regarding language use in the classroom. However, it is evident that many studies were conducted with regard to teachers' perception of languages in the classrooms as well as their home language, but none has been covered under the teacher's perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language in Ekurhuleni South district, Gauteng, South Africa. Therefore, I maintain that this study is unique as it will add to the body of knowledge in this field and will also open a new discussion on the decline of Indigenous African languages.

## **2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theoretical framework is a structure that intends to support or strengthen the theory of a research study. It introduces and defines the theory that describes why the research problem exists (Freytag & Young, 2018:1). Hassan (2024:1) defines a theoretical framework as a collection of ideas, hypotheses, belief and ideas that provide the framework for comprehending a certain issue or phenomena. The theoretical framework connects the researcher to the body of knowledge by giving the foundation for the study choices and hypothesis, as well as offering direction based on relevant theories (Gauvain & Munroe, 2020). Therefore, the theoretical framework provided a basis for this study, and it allowed me to systematically plan and organise my study so that I was able to answer the research question.

This study is underpinned by the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1962). The sociocultural theory is founded on the idea that social interaction, especially with those who have more knowledge and experience like teachers, parents, or peers, is essential for learning. The theory also holds the view that culture significantly influences the child's cognitive development. A person's cognitive capacity is shaped by their social interactions and the culture they live in (Vygotsky, 1978:101).



According to Gauvain and Munroe (2020:4), the socio-cultural theory relates to one's growth that occurs in a social environment, where there is social interaction with peers and linguistically competent people who speak the language (Sesotho). The theory explicitly states that language can be improved through connection with others and that knowledgeable people make it easier and possible for learners to learn (Xeketwana, 2019:15). The theory also holds that for learners to learn, they must actively participate in the process of teaching and learning (Gauvin & Munroe, 2020:4).

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory is also founded on the notion of language as a tool for the process of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), in fact, a primary tool for learning. As a result, teachers have a greater opportunity to utilise language as a tool to facilitate the learning of the Sesotho language, so that Grade 4 learners become proficient Sesotho speakers. Kurt (2020:1) states that language as a tool is an effective instrument because it is through language that learners can read, write, think and reason. This implies that if language could be effectively utilised as a tool to learn, there would be a positive and recognisable change in the Grade 4 classrooms and learners will learn how to speak grammatically correct Sesotho.

Socio-cultural theory is characterised by three core ideas, namely, social interaction, language as a tool in the learning process and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

### **2.9.1 Social Interaction**

Social interaction as part of socio-cultural theory, centres on the notion that knowledge building takes place in a social setting, which includes learner-to-learner working together on practical tasks based on knowledge formed by each person's culture, language and experience (Vygotsky, 1978:102) Social interaction plays a fundamental role in cognitive development. Gauvain and Munroe (2020:3) define social interaction as a situation where young children experience the everyday world through interacting with a more experienced partner. Vygotsky (1978:68) argued that social interaction between an adult and a child lays a foundation for a child to learn, thus illustrating that learning is a social activity. Godwin-Jones (2021:9) states that language is a social phenomenon and socialisation is a key component in language learning. This suggests the importance of the community, parents, guardians and peers using the opportunity for interaction and use it as a way to teach the Sesotho language and influence

change. Vygotsky (1978:69) states that it is through listening to a native speaker that children develop their ability to understand and comprehend events and the world around them.

### **2.9.2 Language as a Tool in the Learning Process**

Vygotsky (1978:85) considered language as a powerful tool when it comes to the child's cognitive development. Vygotsky further adds that language is a primary tool that adults use to transmit knowledge. According to Vygotsky (1978), adults primarily transfer cultural norms, values and belief systems to children through language, which in turn, children internalise and learn the desired behaviour, therefore enabling the development of society and its culture (Allman, 2022). Kurt (2020) states that Vygotsky believed that language is an effective learning instrument since activities such as reading, writing, thinking and reasoning depend on language. Furthermore, language is a tool that fosters critical thinking and logic and assists in activities such as writing and reading (Vygotsky, 1978).

### **2.9.3 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) according to Vygotsky (1978:86), is a range between the actual stage of development, assessed by independently solving the problem under the supervision of an adult, or working together with a more experienced peer. ZPD is based on the notion that people with fewer skills can learn more from those with more advanced skills through emulating their behaviour (Zhou, 2020:83). Sibanda and Venketsam (2021:253) define the ZPD as the range of abilities a learner can accomplish with the help of an experienced person. The ZPD enables the learner to learn skills and techniques that they can later use on their own in other situations, which is an indication of developing higher mental capacity (Vygotsky, 1978).

The core idea of ZPD is that a more experienced person can enhance learners' learning by leading them to complete an activity that is slightly challenging for them (Yetman, 2020:1). Vygotsky (1978:86) refers to the more experienced person as the more knowledgeable other (MKO). The MKO can be a parent, a teacher, or even a peer. The MKO is useful because he/she can help decrease the level of difficulty and find more suitable tasks, given the learner's skill level (Vygotsky, 1978). ZPD identifies

a developmental stage that falls between the child's present development as determined by problem-solving under an adult's supervision (Irshad, Maan, Batool & Hanif, 2021). It offers a strategy to evaluate the internal mental development of a child (Irshad et al., 2021). The ZPD is viewed as an area where mentoring happens and where a child can develop independent abilities to achieve higher cognitive functioning (Hurst, 2021). This implies that parents at home can model the behaviour by pronouncing Sesotho words properly and speaking grammatically correct Sesotho. As a result, the child will copy their parents and improve their Sesotho vocabulary. In addition, teachers, particularly in the Foundation Phase, where Sesotho is a language of learning and teaching (LoLT), are in a better position to model the language.

For Grade 4 Sesotho learners to learn and master the Sesotho language, they need to be taught language skills through support and guidance. The Grade 4 Sesotho learners are less skilled individuals who need people that are more skilled such as teachers or their peers, whom Vygotsky has labelled as the MKO. As a result, it was appropriate to use the ZPD for this study as it promotes the idea that learners can be assisted in constructing knowledge through scaffolding, where knowledgeable people can facilitate the learning process by offering support and guidance to learners so that they achieve a higher level of ability which in this study, means developing proficiency in Sesotho home language.

The choice of using the socio-cultural theory was motivated by the fact that this theory puts language and culture at the centre of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) and the centre of this study is about Grade 4 learners acquiring Sesotho language proficiency as their home language as to curb the decline of the language.

Language serves as a significant part of people's lives because it is not only a form of communication, but is also a reservoir of culture (Letsoalo, 2020:60). This implies that it is through language teaching that learners not only learn how to speak Sesotho competently, but they also learn about their culture which will ensure that the Sesotho language, along with its culture, is guarded. Hence Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory was the most appropriate for this study.

## **2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPIRICAL STUDY**

In this chapter, the review of literature focused on the use of the home language being used in schools around the globe, thus protecting the use of indigenous languages. The review looked at how the use of home language is promoted in schools, supported by national policies and frameworks. The second part of the review of the focused-on teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners from the international, African and South African context. The chapter also highlighted different challenges faced by teachers in the classroom as far as the teaching of home language is concerned as well as the importance of home language and its preservation. The conclusion that was drawn from this study was that there are challenges regarding home language and we need to ensure that home language is protected and promoted to curb its decline.

This review of literature revealed that there is a consensus among scholars that there is a crisis as far as home language is concerned in the classroom. However, the majority of scholars have put more focus on making sure that home language should be introduced as early as possible when children enter the schooling system, to ensure learners succeed in school. Other scholars focused on doing away with the home language because learners have challenges in speaking a fluent home language and fully understanding their home language in schools.

What scholars have not investigated is, what are the teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners. Scholars also did not explore why learners who are born into a particular home language, raised by parents who by origin speak the language, and who live in an area/community where the majority of residents converse in the same home language and attending the school where the medium of instruction is their home language but still, they are unable to speak that particular home language fluently and struggle to understand basic home language word the classroom. Hence, I undertook the study to seek answers and come up with solutions that could contribute to making sure that the Sesotho language is preserved not only for the current generation, but for generations to come.

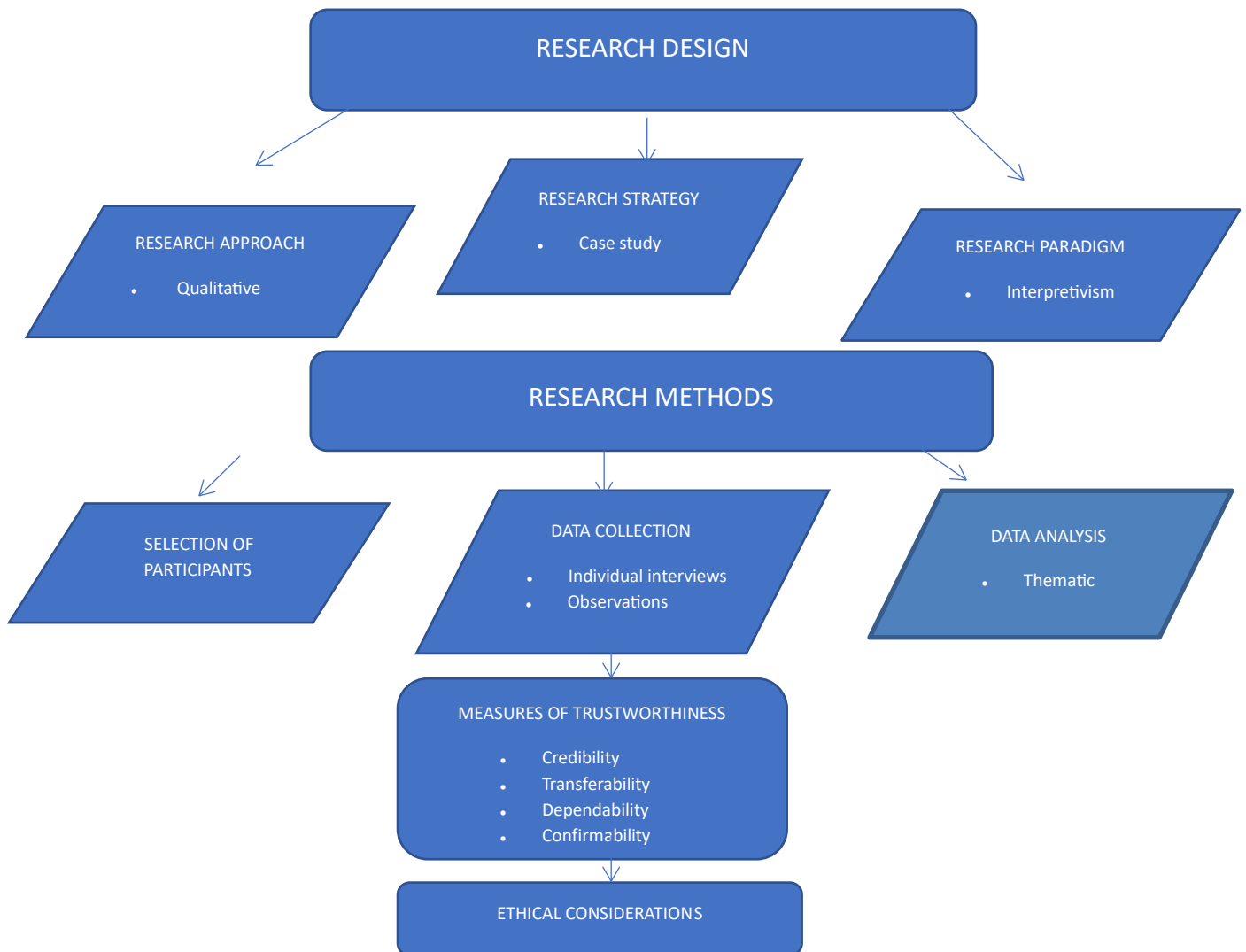
*Let us teach our children to love who they are and their heritage first before we  
introduce them to others - Harushimana*

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter reviewed literature pertinent to this inquiry and its frameworks. In the current chapter, the research process is outlined and how it is connected to the study of teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classroom in the Ekurhuleni South District is explained. The research processes of the study are presented in an illustration (Figure 3.1) which features the paradigm, approach and strategy, selection of participants, gathering of data, data analysis, measures of trustworthiness as well as ethical consideration.



**Figure 3.1: Flowchart of the research design process**

### **3.2 RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

Empirical research is a research process that is led by substantiated data and sources (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:14). The authors further explain that empirical research is guided in a manner so that rational thinking is meticulously explored. Bouchrika (2023) states that empirical research is founded on the view that direct observation of phenomena is the true way to measure reality and leads to the truth about the world. Cahoy (2023) further adds that empirical research is based on observed and measured phenomena and stems from knowledge from real experiences rather than from belief or theory. The main objective of empirical research is to permit the person conducting the research to get reliable and credible data (Bouchrika, 2023). As a result, empirical research ensures that the outcomes of the study are based on concrete and verifiable data from the participants.

As this study aims to look into the lived perceptions of Grade 4 Sesotho teachers, the use of empirical research was the most appropriate as it allowed me to learn more about the phenomenon by generating the truth behind the decline of the Sesotho language in Grade 4 classrooms in Ekurhuleni South District. This was done using interviews and observations when interacting with the participants.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Sileyew (2019:28) describes the research design as a systematic plan through which the investigation is going to be conducted. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:6) state that a research design is a strategy that a researcher has and outlines the conditions and line of action for gathering as well as evaluating data. The intention of research design is to establish a strategy and produce scientific data which will be utilised to address the research query (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:28). In addition, Sileyew (2019:28) explains that the main basis of research design is to make data address the research problem as clearly, precisely, and as impartial as possible.

When conducting research, there are three possible research approaches: mixed methods, qualitative approaches, and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2018:5). Depending on the research approach, the research strategy is chosen and could be a case study research design, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography or narrative biography research designs (Creswell, 2018:6). In this investigation, the

qualitative research approach was used with a case study research design to probe teachers' perceptions of the decline of Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classroom in the Ekurhuleni South District.

### **3.3.1 Research Paradigm**

A paradigm also known as a worldview, is a collection of beliefs that guide an action (Creswell, 2018:19). Khatri (2020:4) defines a research paradigm as a fundamental and complete worldview through which to see the study's occurrences. Khatri (2020:4) further states that a research paradigm gives the researcher a precise framework and directions on conducting the research. The interpretivist paradigm was used to guide this study. I believe the interpretivist paradigm, which shares most aspects with constructivism, was appropriate for this study because it is grounded in the idea that learning is a collaborative activity and all learning is socially created (Vygotsky, 1978:102). This implies that parents, teachers, peers and society need to play an active role in influencing change by teaching children grammatically correct Sesotho language skills through interaction and Grade 4 teachers can interpret this view by relating their perspectives.

There are other paradigms such as positivism that hold the assumption more of quantitative research, which recognises the need to identify and evaluate the factors that affect the results of experiments (Creswell, 2018:7). The other paradigm is the transformative/advocacy paradigm, which believes that in order to combat social injustices, research inquiry must be linked with politics and political agenda (Creswell, 2018:10) and the pragmatic paradigm that does not conform to any philosophy but applies to mixed methods research (Creswell, 2018:11) to find an innovative and dynamic solution to research problems. Taking the above into consideration, the interpretivist paradigm was deemed suitable for this study since the qualitative approach allows participants to air their perspectives on the phenomenon under study.

#### **3.3.1.1 Interpretivist paradigm**

The interpretivist paradigm is seen as a perspective that is based on the belief of seeking an understanding of the world (Creswell, 2018:8). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:4) state that the interpretivist paradigm uses systematic procedures with multiple socially constructed realities. This paradigm holds the view that human beings

generate meaning as they interact with the world they understand. As a result, interpretivism gives direct access to reality, which allowed me to collect data in the natural setting, where I was able to understand teachers' realities and their world. Therefore, I was able to collect honest and reliable data.

### **3.3.1.2 Rationale for choosing the interpretivist approach**

For this study, I have chosen the interpretivist paradigm because it holds the view that the underlying formation of meaning is social, and it arises from interactions with individuals who want to fully understand the society in which they live and work (Creswell, 2018:40). Therefore, by employing the interpretivist paradigm, it afforded me with an opportunity to interact with the participants and I was able to gain an insight of the perception of teachers of the decline of Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South.

The research paradigm consists of three components, and they are:

- **Ontological perspective**

Ontology or a theory of reality, examines philosophical ideas on the foundations of existence or reality (Khatri, 2020). The author further states that ontology focuses on the claims people make to support their idea that something exists. As a result, it gives the researcher an opportunity to investigate social phenomena so as to be able to comprehend the components that make up the world as it is. Creswell (2018:20) states that ontology is founded on the fact that there are multiple realities and that reality can be investigated. As a result, using both interviews and observations to collect data, I was able to explore realities, seek answers and be able to make sense of the Grade 4 teachers' perspectives on the decline of the Sesotho language, how home language is promoted and strategies to mitigate the decline of this language.

- **Epistemology perspective**

Epistemology, simply known as a theory of knowledge (Khatri, 2020:6), is explained as a technique by which the researcher learns the facts and reality, and how they know what they know (Kamal, 2019). Creswell (2018:20) states that epistemology poses the question "What is the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched?" Creswell (2018) adds that in epistemology, researchers attempt to minimise the distance between himself/herself and what is being studied. As a result,



through interaction with the participants during data collection at their respective schools, I was able to close the gap between the participants and me which assisted in gaining a deeper understanding and knowledge of their perspectives.

- **Methodological perspective**

The term methodology is used broadly to describe the research design, methodologies, approaches and processes used in a research study, according to Khatri (2020:6). The author adds that methodology is the science of reasoning and the flow of the structured process when conducting research to acquire knowledge. Kamal (2019:3) states that the primary question related to methodology is “How does one go about acquiring knowledge?” As a result, a qualitative perspective was utilised to explore teachers’ perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District.

### **3.3.2 Research Approach**

There are three research approaches in research design that are quantitative approach, mixed methods research and qualitative approach. When evaluating objective hypotheses, a quantitative approach is utilised to examine the connection between variables. These variables are then quantified using an instrument to analyse numbered data (Creswell, 2018:42). Mixed methods research employs a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods that may include theoretical frameworks and philosophical presumptions. A qualitative approach is a way to investigate and fully comprehend the significance of the roles that different persons or groups play in each social or human issue (Creswell, 2018:44).

The qualitative approach was employed in this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:334) state that utilising a qualitative approach enables the researcher to observe and analyse data by looking for themes and patterns and report findings. The reason for choosing the qualitative approach for collecting data is that it gives the researcher an opportunity to collect data directly in the participant's natural setting and focuses on participants' perspectives. Therefore, I was able to study the phenomena while it happened and gained a better insight into the teachers’ perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners through interviews and observations. A qualitative approach is also process-orientated and focuses on why or

how, and, as a result, it was a perfect approach to use as it allowed me to investigate why Grade 4 learners are not fluent in their Home Language, which is Sesotho.

Creswell (2018:4) states that this research approach involves new questions and techniques that are often gathered in participant settings. By collecting data in the participant's setting, this approach can elicit an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In this study, schools were the participants' settings (site). These sites provided an opportunity to gather enough data through interviews and observations.

The qualitative approach offers a comprehensive, complex and complete comprehension of meanings, actions, non-noticeable events, attitudes, intentions and behaviour (Cohen et al., 2018:287). Cohen et al. (2018) further state that the qualitative approach recognises the individuality and significance of individuals, places, things, behaviours and occurrences. As a result, the researcher needs to consider all factors when conducting research so that the researcher has full comprehension of the phenomenon being studied.

One of the advantages of the qualitative approach is to give voice to participants, therefore it gave the researcher an opportunity to probe matters that lay beneath the surface of presenting the behaviour and actions (Yin, 2018). As a result, by employing this kind of approach, it enabled me to unearth the cause of the action, and I was able to understand why Grade 4 Sesotho learners in Ekurhuleni South District are unable to comprehend and speak their home language (Sesotho) fluently.

Creswell (2018:409) states that the flexibility of the qualitative approach allows data to direct the researcher's analysis with the goal of finding emergent patterns. Creswell adds that a qualitative approach encourages the researcher to examine many perspectives, which allows the researcher to have a better grasp of issues. The author goes on to state that a qualitative approach also increases the accuracy of the study by making sure that findings are founded in evidence.

The use of a qualitative method has its own set of drawbacks (Creswell, 2018:41). Creswell (2018:41) adds that utilising a qualitative approach can be tedious and costly as it requires the researcher to travel to the natural setting of participants and spend

many hours in the field examining the phenomenon and writing lengthy paragraphs because the evidence must corroborate the statements. Creswell (2018) continues to add that the qualitative approach analysis may be distorted and influenced by preconceived notions of the researcher. The author goes on to say that using the qualitative approach, it may be difficult to strike a balance between immersing oneself in data and remaining focused on the research issue.

Some of the pitfalls of using a qualitative approach in collecting data have been acknowledged, but that did not deter me as a researcher from continuing to use the qualitative approach to gather data. Some of the disadvantages mentioned, such as spending lengthy hours in the participants' settings and interacting with participants, helped me to gather rich and reliable data to make sense of Grade 4 teachers' perceptions for the decline of the Sesotho language.

### **3.3.3 Case Study Strategy/ Design**

The research strategy that was used in this investigation is a case study. Creswell (2018:73) states that a case study is a qualitative research approach in which a researcher analyses a case or cases over time by obtaining substantial and detailed information from several sources such as observations, interviews, multimedia, documents and findings, including case descriptions and case-based themes. Therefore, a case study enables the researcher to widely investigate the phenomena while interacting with participants. This paves the way for the researcher to gather reliable data and increase the validity of the study. A case study is based on a comprehensive study of specific events, groups or subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:370). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:32) define a case study as a qualitative inquiry that comprehensively analyses a limited system over a period of time while utilising a variety of data sources that are found in the setting. This permits the researcher to have ample time to investigate the occurrences and using a case study be able to fully understand the cause and come up with answers to the problem. In this study, I focused on a specific group which were Grade 4 Sesotho teachers in the Ekurhuleni South District.

Yin (2018:35) describes the case study as a method of investigation that deeply examines the issue in the context of real-world practice. The exploratory case study

research strategy was the most suitable for this study, as it was used to gather data in a school setting to fully understand the real-world case within its context. As a result, a case study was the perfect strategy to apply to this study because it allowed me as a researcher, to properly investigate teachers' perception of the decline of the Sesotho language in Grade 4 Sesotho learners in Ekurhuleni South District. Using a case study as a research strategy in this study was beneficial. The case study research design allowed me to use various methods of collecting data such as interviews and observations as well as various tools such as tape recorders and field notes to collect data. Case study research allows the researcher to collect data in the natural setting of the participants (Yin, 2018) therefore I was able to obtain detailed and concrete data from within and gain a holistic picture the phenomenon under study.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODS**

Research methods can be defined as techniques employed to gather and interpret data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Research methods can also be described as strategies, processes or techniques used in data gathering, analysis and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The following section covers the research methods used in this research which includes participant selection, data collection and data analysis.

#### **3.4.1 Selection of Participants**

The appropriateness of the sampling approach used determines whether a piece of research is of high or low quality. (Cohen et al., 2018:202). As a result, researchers need to ensure that they choose the appropriate sampling of participants to produce research findings that are reliable and valid. Factors such as time, resources and accessibility usually place limits as far as data collection is concerned, especially from large populations. Therefore, in order to learn about the representative of the community being studied, researchers must gather data from a smaller segment of the population (Manion et al., 2018:202).

#### **3.4.2 Sampling Techniques**

Sampling is a technique for choosing individuals from whom data are to be obtained, commonly one that is typical of a particular group (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:6). The study distinguishes between probability-based sampling and non-probability-based sampling. Probability sampling is a form of sampling that selects participants

from a sizable community. It is helpful if the researcher wants to draw inferences because it aims to represent a larger population (Cohen et al., 2018:214). Nonprobability sampling aims to represent a specific segment of the larger population (Cohen et al., 2018:214). Non-probability sampling was utilised for this research and includes sampling strategies such as purposive sampling, snowball sampling, convenience sampling, dimensional sampling and quota sampling (Manion et al., 2018:2017). However, this study employed purposive non-probability sampling methods. Purposive sampling was chosen because it helps the researcher to find and select people who can provide in-depth and extensive information about a studied issue. (Scholtz, 2021). Grade 4 Sesotho teachers were purposively selected from six primary schools in the Ekurhuleni South District. I am working as teacher in one of the Sesotho primary schools in the Ekurhuleni South District; to avoid conflict of interest, my school will be excluded in the study.

### **3.4.3 Selection Procedure**

With the help of purposive sampling, researchers can select individuals or small groups who are likely to have knowledge and insight into the topic under study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:5). Thus, Six primary Sesotho teachers were intentionally selected from six primary schools in the Ekurhuleni South District. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:377) mention that the person conducting research should choose a venue or location that is proper for the research problem and practical given their time, mobility and skill constraints. A list of Ekurhuleni South District primary schools was requested from the district office. From the list, six primary schools teaching Sesotho as a home language were selected as research sites. In each school, one Grade 4 Sesotho teacher was selected. The selection process of Grade 4 teachers was guided by the fact that the study needed to explore whether there is a decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 Sesotho classroom as I have observed in my Grade 4 classroom. The selection process was also guided by the need to find an understanding of the teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. Therefore, teachers who have vast experience in teaching the Sesotho language were selected. The total number of participants was six.

### **3.4.4 Data Collection**

Sileyew (2019:31) defines data collection as a methodological process of gathering evidence around a particular subject. Sileyew (2019:31) states that data collection guarantees that full and trustworthy data is gathered for analysis, allowing research decisions to be made. In this study, interviews and observations were used as data collection instruments.

#### **3.4.4.1 Interviews**

Interviews are the most common tools that are used as a data-gathering technique in qualitative research. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:3) define interviews as deliberate interactions that follow a generic interview framework and focus on a few predetermined subjects. They indicate that interviews allow researchers to probe and obtain extensive and reliable data from participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:381). A greater understanding of how people perceive the world and how they interpret and make sense of the significant occurrences in their lives can be gained through interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:381). Interviews help the researcher to guide the flow of questioning (Creswell, 2018:218). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018:508) state that interviews permit the researcher to understand, and evaluate in some way, an individual's circumstance, or incident. Interviews are thus a versatile tool for data gathering that permit the use of multisensory channels such as verbal, non-verbal, observed, articulated and heard (Cohen et al., 2018:506).

McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 381) state that qualitative interviews consist of three forms: the unstructured interview, where questions are asked as they arise from the immediate context without the topic of the question being predetermined, the structured interview in which all participants must answer predetermined questions which reduces flexibility during the interview and semi-structured interviews in which the subjects are chosen prior to the interview but the researcher chooses the order and language of the questions as they are asked.

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study. Cohen et al. (2018:511) define a semi-structured interview as an interview where topics and questions are provided. However, the type of questions is posed in an open-ended manner and questions may be asked without following a specific sequence. Semi-structured interviews give a researcher an opportunity to probe further so that participants can provide rich

information (Creswell, 2018:220). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used during all the interviews that were conducted with sampled Grade 4 Sesotho teachers. The reason for choosing this type of interview is that it provided some flexibility and, as a result, I was able to probe and explore participants' thoughts and feelings about the topic at hand to gain deep insight.

One-on-one individual semi-structured interviews were carried out. Before commencing the interview process, I established a rapport with the participants. Rapport is defined as being able to develop a connection with people in such a way that it fosters an environment of mutual confidence and compassion (Lonchzak, 2021). I visited the sampled schools a week prior to the interview and introduced myself to the participants. I explained the basis of the research as well as the duration to complete the interview. I also ensured the participants that after the study had been concluded, the findings would be made available to them. Sesotho teachers who agreed to be part of the study were asked to complete the consent forms. They were not coerced to take part in the study. The participation was of their own free will (Creswell, 2018:221).

I used open-ended questions to explore the research topic, to get clear participant responses. Open-ended questions are questions that cannot be answered by simply saying yes or no, they allow the person being interviewed to elaborate more on the question posed (Tasker & Cisneroz, 2019:119). The benefits of employing open-ended questions are that they are more flexible, clear any misunderstanding and permit the researcher to thoroughly investigate, so that the researcher may go deeper if he/she wishes to do so. As a result, open-ended questions helped to elicit more data from the participants which helped to find answers to research questions.

An interview schedule (*cf.* Appendix H) was used to guide the process of the interview, ensuring that questions are asked in the same sequence and that no questions is left out (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:383). I rehearsed the questions with a colleague before the interview to minimise making mistakes during the actual interview. Even though the study was about the Sesotho home language, English was used to conduct the interviews for academic purposes. The teaching and learning process was not disrupted as the interviews took place after school hours for 30-45 minutes in a quiet staffroom. A tape recorder was utilised to record all the interviews. A tape recorder

allows the researcher to concentrate on important points of the interview without worrying about missing important information (Rutakumwa et al., 2020:566). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:386) state that having the interviews on tape ensures that all the verbal exchanges are captured and gives researchers the data they need to conduct reliability analyses. As a result, tape recordings reminded me of what was said during the interview process.

During the interview process, non-verbal communication was taken into consideration, such as eye contact and facial expressions and were jotted down to assist during the data analysis. I was able to pick up on certain underlying messages that participants never uttered. These field notes were taken during the interview to document what was observed during the interview process. Field notes are recordings of what has been seen or heard as well as what has occurred during the interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:376) Field notes were helpful in reminding me of the occurrences and later used in the interpretation of data. Upon completion of the interviews, all participants were thanked for agreeing to be part of this study, and they were also given an assurance that their responses would be treated as a matter of confidentiality.

#### **3.4.4.2 Observations**

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:376) define observations as a way for the researcher to understand what occurs naturally at the research location. Sileyew (2019:31) defines the observation method as a data-gathering method in which the researcher observes and describes the participants' behaviour in a particular setting. Sileyew (2019:31) further adds that observations involve using the human sense, especially looking and listening in a systematic and meaningful way. The type of observation that was used in this study was a non-participatory observation, where the researcher did not actively participate in the study. Ekka (2021:18) states that the benefit of employing the observation method in one's study is that it allows the researcher to directly observe what people do, rather than depend on what people say. Smit and Onwuegbuzie (2018:1) state that observations give the researcher first-hand experience of the environment that allows the researcher to learn more about the environment inductively rather than speculatively. Smit and Onwuegbuzie (2018:1) further state that observation as a tool, allows the researcher to observe and find out about things that participants would not divulge during interviews. As a result,



observations are important because they were able to provide the most accurate information about the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners in the Ekurhuleni South District.

In this study, observations helped in collecting empirical data regarding the phenomenon under study. The consent to conduct observation and record the events was given by participants before the commencement of the observations. This was done through the signing of consent forms by the participants earlier. I took a distant role as a non-participant observer and sat at the back of the classroom and observed the Grade 4 teachers' usage of the Sesotho language when presenting their Sesotho lessons, the classroom environment, the teaching strategies and the interaction in the learning process. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:376) define a non-participant observer as a person who completes the observations but is not actively involved in the activities of the group being observed. The observation protocol (*cf.* Appendix J) was used to record the information. Before the observation process, participants were asked to fill in consent forms. The observations took about 30 or 60 minutes and depended on whether the lesson was a double or single period. During the observation process, I followed the suggested guidelines by McMillan and Schumacher as negotiating access, taking notes slowly withdrawing from the site, and thanking the participants for taking part in the study.

### **3.4.5 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is essentially an empirical process for categorising data and finding trends and connections between categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). According to Mohojan (2018:37), data analysis is the process of summarising data and interpreting it using reasoning that is analytical and logical to uncover patterns or trends. Thematic data analysis method was employed in this study. Thematic data analysis is described as a technique for interpreting qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006:6). Thematic data analysis comprises exploring data sets to find, analyse and report common patterns. The reason for choosing this data analysis process is that it provides a practical and theoretically adaptable method for analysing qualitative data, by organising the data set simply and providing comprehensive detail about it (Caulfield, 2019). Thus, there are six phases for analysing data and are discussed in details below:

*Phase 1: Familiarisation:* In this phase, I accustomed myself to data by carefully listening to each recorded interview, before the recordings could be transcribed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I attentively listened to each participant's responses; I replayed parts that were not clear until I was able to hear what was being said by the participant. No note-taking was done so that I could fully identify areas that needed to be worked on before transcribing the interviews. After carefully listening to the recordings repeatedly, I transcribed each participant's interview responses manually in my notebook. Upon completion of transcribing, I then went over the transcription on repeated occasions. All the notes that were taken during the interview and observation process as well as the exact participant's response were then added to the transcripts.

*Phase 2 Generating initial codes:* Caulfield (2022:2) states that coding entails marking passages of texts that contain repeated words or phrases and developing abbreviations or codes to designate the main point of those passages. This phase started after I had accustomed myself to the data and I was able to come up with an initial summary of what I found interesting (Braun & Clarke, 2006:18). When generating codes, I showed the phrases that have the same ideas and highlighted them with identical colours. Identical phrases were put together with the same colours and assigned the codes. Codes are important because they assist the researcher in making sense of the data and being able to make important conclusions at a later stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I then started with the coding of data during the process when field notes were read together with the observations. Thereafter, identical topics were given a definable name.

*Phase 3: Searching for themes:* This phase started after all the data had been coded. During this phase, various codes were spread out and organised into possible themes. I used a notebook to record these possible themes by copying similar codes to matching themes. Codes with similar meanings were then recorded on different pages of the notebook. These recorded potential themes were able to inform me about something helpful and significant about the phenomenon under study. Where the participant's responses were vague, I employed member checking to ensure data analysis credibility.

*Phase 4: Reviewing themes:* This stage started when I came up with a review of themes, which entails perfecting those themes. To categorise themes in this stage of

the study, I went over the collected data as indicated by Braun and Clarke (2006). Triangulation was used to evaluate the consistency of answers from the participants' answer consistency. This was done by reviewing recorded interviews and observations notes. To determine the participants' meaning behind each response, field notes were employed. I left out some themes while refining the procedure. Potential themes and the raw data were regularly compared. As a result, this gave me meaningful comparisons between themes. In the end, established themes were classified into sub-themes.

*Phase 5: Define and name of themes:* This phase began when I was satisfied with the data. At this stage, themes were identified and given names based on participant answers as well as research questions. This process produced the statements that were utilised to present the research findings.

*Phase 6: Writing the report:* This is a phase where the meaning of themes is interpreted. In this phase, I presented the analysis of data gathered from participants during the collection of data. The final narrative report and conclusions were then put together.

### **3.5 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness is described as a criterion that is used to assess the standard of the research design (Adler, 2022). Trustworthiness involves assuring those participating in the study that the study findings are significant enough to be taken note of (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Bennet et al. (2020:597 citing Lincoln & Guba, 1985) stated that when conducting a research study, four criteria for trustworthiness should be followed and they are: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

#### **3.5.1 Validity and Credibility**

Bennet, Kajamma and Stenfors (2020:597) define credibility as research findings that are plausible and truthful. For the research to be credible, Bennet et al. (2020:597) explain that the methods the researcher uses must be well justified and explained. To ensure that the study is truthful, justified and well-explicated, triangulation was employed. This was done by using different data collection methods, such as interviewing teachers and conducting classroom observations. To ensure the credibility of this study, the engagement field was also utilised, where I spent a

specified time in each school to to gather enough accurate data. Reflexivity was also used to ensure credibility, I kept a reflective journal as part of my field notes, where I would write down the events that took immediately after withdrawing from the research site. Frequent contact sessions were also made between my supervisor and me, through emails and TEAMS meetings to bring her expertise to the table and ensure the credibility of the study. I also employed member checking. Member checking involves presenting preliminary findings to the participants who were interviewed during data collection for their input and elaboration so that they could check if what I have reported is exactly their point of view and that nothing has been misrepresented (Bennet et al., 2020).

### **3.5.2 Transferability**

Anney (2014:277) states that the point at which the outcomes of qualitative research can be transferred to other participants is referred to as transferability. Nassaji (2020:428) states that transferability is concerned with the scope in which the researcher's analysis and conclusion are applicable to other comparable situations. In this study, transferability was used as it provides a rich and extensive set of details that demonstrate the study's suitability in various contexts beyond a reasonable doubt (Anney, 2014). Shenton (2004:69) argues that without a thick description, the reader of the final account will find it challenging to judge how much the overall findings hold up.

To ensure transferability in this study, a detailed description of the topic under study was provided. This was done to allow the reader to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. As a result, this makes it possible for people to compare the events of the phenomenon described in the study's concluding report. Another aspect to ensuring transferability is that it includes purposive sampling. Anney (2014:278 citing Teddlie & Yu, 2007) defines purposive sampling as a process of selecting people, a group of people or organisations based on a certain goal related to a research study question. Purposive sampling helps the researcher to pay attention to important informants who have in-depth expertise on the topic at hand (Anney, 2014). Therefore, to ensure transferability, six Sesotho primary teachers in Ekurhuleni South District were purposely sampled and I was able to extract rich data that provided greater in-depth findings that ensured trustworthiness.

### **3.5.3 Dependability**

Nassaji (2020:429) states that dependability relates to the trustworthiness of the data collection tools. This principle implies that the study should be framed in such a way that others reviewing the data arrive at the same conclusion. To ensure dependability in this study, triangulation was done through the use of interviews and observations to ensure that I got first-hand verbatim information. A thorough explanation of the site where the research study took place was also given.

### **3.5.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability, as defined by Baxter and Eyles in 1997, is the degree to which the outcomes of a research study may be reliably validated by other scholars (Shenton 2004:72). To show that the evidence and analysis of the research findings is founded on facts and not the investigator's ideas, confirmability is important (Anney, 2014).

To ensure confirmability, a comprehensive methodological description was done to allow the validity of the research findings to be examined and verified. (*cf.* Chapter 3). The research method limitations in this study were also explained, where it was mentioned that the qualitative method of gathering data may be limited with regards to the small sample size which limits the generalisation of research findings. Another way of ensuring confirmability for this study was that it involves triangulation, triangulation was done to lessen the impact of researchers' prejudice Shenton (2004:72).

## **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations in research are a set of guidelines that are set to direct the research design and practices (Bhandari, 2021). In essence, ethics are rules that guide the researcher on how to gather data and adhere to a particular code of conduct (Bhandari, 2021). Before the data collection commences, permission was applied from UNISA ethical review committee (*cf.* Appendix B), the Gauteng Department of Education (*cf.* Appendix C), the Ekurhuleni South District (*cf.* Appendix D), the principals of selected primary schools (*cf.* Appendix E) and the Sesotho teachers (*cf.* Appendix F). I ensured that throughout the research process, I abided by the ethical guidelines.

### **3.6.1 Voluntary Participation**

Before the participants agreed to be part of the study, I fully explained to each one of them the reason for the study and why they had been approached to take part. No one was coerced to be part of the study. Letters were given to participants to read so that they have a full understanding of the process. Participants were given a chance to ask questions that they do not understand. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:363) state that the protocol requires informed consent to be signed by each participant. As a result, participants were presented with consent forms to sign showing that they agreed to be part of the study (*cf.* Appendix G). I explained to the participants that there would be no repercussions if they decided to withdraw from the study.

### **3.6.2 Protection**

The UNISA policy on research ethics 2023 puts emphasis on the protection of participants from harm during the data collection process. As the study took place in a school setting, before the beginning of data collection, I assessed every risky possibility and made sure that all safety precautions were followed to guarantee that participants were only minimally exposed to the hazards. This was done by ensuring that all the participants were not asked questions that were culturally, religiously, politically or gender-based. There was no interaction between the observed learners and me and no insensitive materials were brought to their classrooms during observations. As a result, I assured the participants that during the interviews and the observations they would not come to any harm.

### **3.6.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

The Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act is South Africa's federal data protection law, and its main aim is to protect people's privacy, which is considered a human right (Olsen, 2022:1). McMillan and Schumacher (2019:363) emphasise that the location and participants should not be made public in print. Therefore, all participants in the study were assured that the research process would be confidential. No names, age or gender should be mentioned. In this study, names, ages and gender were required, but pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants. I also ensured that before the study could be published, the report would be given to the participants to go through to check if their responses were not altered and it is what they said during the interview process.

### **3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter explained the research methodology before discussing the justification for conducting empirical research. By focusing on the ontological, epistemological, and methodological viewpoints, the research design and paradigm of this study were discussed. The research approach and the research strategy which is the case study were also addressed. In the scope of the research methods, the choice of subjects and data collection were generally discussed. Data analysis that used thematic analysis was also presented. Measures of trustworthiness, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were discussed in detail. In conclusion, the ethical consideration of this study was discussed by paying attention to voluntary participation, protection, confidentiality and anonymity. Chapter four introduces data analysis and interpretation of the findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The methodology for conducting this research was discussed in the preceding chapter. The data analysis and study interpretation presented in this chapter address the primary research question: What are teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho Language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District? The chapter begins with the participants' biographies, followed by an analysis and interpretation of the empirical data. To accomplish the study's objectives, the findings are provided in accordance with the following sub-questions:

1. How is the home language promoted in a multi-lingual society?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the strategies outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language?
3. What strategies do teachers use to teach Sesotho as a home language?

#### **4.2 PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

This section of the chapter gives details about those who consented to take part in the study and completed the consent forms before the interviews and observations. The six purposively sampled participants, as shown in Table 4.1, were drawn from the six primary schools located in the Ekurhuleni South District that use Sesotho as a home language. The participants were Grade 4 Sesotho teachers. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants, as indicated in Table 4.1.



**Table 4.1: Participants' biographical information**

<b>School</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Qualification/ Specialisation</b>	<b>Experience in teaching</b>	<b>Number of learners in the classroom</b>
A	T 1	Female	50-60	Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) with specialisation in Mathematics & Physical Education	20 – 30	52
<b>School</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Qualification/ Specialisation</b>	<b>Experience in teaching</b>	<b>Number of learners in the classroom</b>
B	T 2	Male	50 - 55	Bachelor of Honours in Education (B.Ed. Hons) with specialisation in Sesotho and English	11 -15	41
C	T 3	Male	50-55	Bachelor of Honours in Education (B.Ed. Hons) with specialisation in Sesotho and Mathematics	20 – 30	43
D	T 4	Male	50 - 55	Diploma in Primary Education No specialisation	20-30	38
E	T 5	Female	30-39	Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree, specialising in Sesotho & Life Sciences	6-10 years	41
F	T 6	Male	50-55	Bachelor of Honours in Education (B.Ed. Hons) with specialisation in Sesotho and Social Sciences	11-15 years	41

(Source: Field data, Motaung, 2023)

Many young people enter institutions of higher education with little intention of studying or specialising in any of the African languages (Madadzhe, 2019:121). As a result, this has perpetuated the skill shortage of teachers specialising in African languages. This is evident in Table 4.1, where the majority of the teachers were over the age of 50 years, and no young teachers entering the field of teaching were available for interviews in the sampled schools. This is a concern because it seems as if when older teachers retire, the Sesotho learners will be left without teachers which will further spread the decline of the Sesotho language.

According to the table, the majority of teachers have significant teaching experience. The data clearly shows that the majority of teachers specialised in Sesotho during their training and have deep knowledge of and experience in teaching the language. Table 4.1 also demonstrates the number of learners in each participant's classroom which is in most cases, well over the recommended teacher-learner ratio and class size for primary schools of 1:40 (Venketsamy, 2023). Therefore, with many learners in the classrooms and lack of resources, teachers are challenged to work effectively and offer individualised support to learners who need support in learning the Sesotho language. Such an issue could be a reason for the decline of the Sesotho language in the classrooms.

### **4.3 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION DATA**

According to Mohajan (2018:37), data analysis summarises data and entails the interpretation of gathered data using logical and analytical reasoning to identify patterns or trends. As a result, by using this approach, I was able to identify the causes of the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District. Six phases for analysing data suggested by Braun and Clarke, (2006) were followed to help in analysing collected data. As indicated in Chapter 3, this was done by familiarising myself with the data by listening to the interviews over and over again and taking notes, coding similar phrases to generate codes, developing themes, reviewing, and establishing themes, naming themes, and writing down the findings. Table 4.2 presents the themes and sub-themes that were generated from the analysis of data gathered from semi-structured interviews and observations.

**Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes**

Research Questions	Themes	Sub-Themes
How is the home language promoted in a multi-lingual society?	Promotion of the home language in a multi-lingual society	1.1 Sesotho cultural activities in schools 1.2 Heritage month to promote Sesotho in communities
What are teachers' perceptions of the strategies outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language?	Teachers' perceptions of the strategies outlined in the CAPS for mitigating the decline Sesotho language	2.1 Lack of teachers' knowledge of CAPS Sesotho Home Language
What strategies do teachers use to teach Sesotho as a home language?	Strategies used by teachers to teach Sesotho Home Language	3.1 The usage of Sesotho language 3.2 Listening and speaking 3.3 Reading viewing 3.4 Writing and presenting 3.5 Language structure and conventions
What are teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District?	Teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language	4.1 Parents not speaking the language with their children. 4.2 Inter-marriage 4.3 The urbanisation 4.4 Wrongly placed teachers in the Foundation Phase 4.5 The quality of Sesotho books. 4.6 Over-crowding 4.7 Sesotho subject advisors' competency 4.8 Class time constraints

The findings emerging from the analysis of data supported by participants' responses from the interviews and observations during the Sesotho lessons findings provide a

clear explanation of the decline of Sesotho among the Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South.

Grade 4 Sesotho teachers were probed to provide their perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho among the Grade 4 learners. In addition to other questions asked, participants shared the strategies they used to mitigate the decline of the use of Sesotho. During the observations, the use of the Sesotho language by teachers, the classroom environment, teaching strategies and interaction in the teaching and learning were observed and documented. The raw data from the interviews were recorded, transcribed, analysed and interpreted while the same procedure was followed with the observation data.

#### **4.3.1 Theme 1: Promotion of the home language in a multi-lingual society**

Promotion and preservation of the Sesotho home language has always been important and there are still ways to ensure its survival. Savage (2019:1) states that Sesotho home language should be promoted and given attention so that learners are able to socially communicate and use it effectively in their learning. As a result, this theme explores teachers' views of how Sesotho can be promoted within multilingual communities.

##### **4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Sesotho cultural activities in schools**

It emerged that Sesotho cultural programmes can be included in the curriculum. When participants were asked about how home language is promoted in a multi-lingual society, these were their responses.

*The curriculum must play a role in promoting Sesotho and include cultural activities such as 'mohobelo'<sup>1</sup> and 'mokgibo'<sup>2</sup>, just like life skills where learners will go and be taught cultural activities. (T2)*

*Firstly, we need to recognise our cultural activities and try to stimulate them. Have people who are prepared to start all over again teaching our young ones. (T3)*

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<sup>1</sup> The more traditional *mohobelo* is a men's stomping dance that consists of synchronised movements and high kicks. Women perform their own dance by kneeling in a line and beating the ground with their knees.

<sup>2</sup> The *mokhibo* dance is performed at weddings and at Christmas. This dance is accompanied by ululation and the pulsating movement of the dancers' shoulders.

T4 and 5 had similar views regarding the matter.

*Unless we come up with certain programmes that will make these children aware that Sesotho is important. Come up with Sesotho cultural activities that will teach these learners about who they are and where they come from.*

The majority of participants indicated that schools need to take the initiative in promoting Sesotho by introducing cultural activities into the school curriculum. This implies that the participants yearn to see a change in the current curriculum, where Sesotho programmes are incorporated for further promotion of Sesotho which could extend to the communities as well as at schools.

The study found out that there is a need for cultural activities to be taught in schools so that learners learn about their cultures, gain knowledge and develop new skills. Skills such as knowing how to perform 'mokgibo', which is a dance performed by young girls and 'dithoko', which are clan praises done by boys. By teaching learners' cultural activities, this will be a collaborative learning, where learners are guided and supported by the MKO, in this instance the teachers, to learn things about their cultures. This concurs with Sibanda (2019) and Venketsam (2021) who state that the ZPD allows the learner to acquire a range of abilities that learners can accomplish with the help of an experienced person. Learning, developing and mastering the skill will allow learners to eventually apply it on their own in the future. In this way, not only will the use of Sesotho be promoted but learners as well will also teach others, as a result, there will be a snowballing effect of knowledge which will ensure the continuation of the use of Sesotho.

#### **4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Heritage Month to promote Sesotho in the communities**

Heritage Month, which occurs annually in September and Heritage Day, celebrated on 24 September, showcases South Africa's diverse culture and heritage. This could be used to promote the home language at school and in the communities. Here are the participants' responses:

*In our community, every year during the month of September, the Basotho cultural event is held in our community stadium where Basotho showcases their Sesotho culture. Even in my school, we have a heritage week where learners come to school dressed up in their traditional attire. (T1)*

*Every year in September, we go to the stadium as Basotho and celebrate our language and culture so that other cultures can see how Basotho speak, sing and dress. (T2)*

T3 and 6 Shared similar sentiments with other participants, but they felt that promoting Sesotho during the heritage month was insufficient.

*To promote Sesotho in a multilingual society, Basotho usually hosts an event during Heritage Month to showcase and promote Sesotho, but I do not think that is enough. We cannot wait for one month in a year to promote Sesotho. What are we doing during the other 11 months? (T3)*

*We do host Heritage Day in our school to promote Sesotho during September, but it is not helping that these children will come wearing other nations' outfits [throwing hands in the air]. (T6)*

All participants mentioned that Sesotho is promoted during Heritage Day which is held annually in South Africa on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September. However, some participants felt that one should not wait for a certain day or certain month to promote Sesotho. They felt that Sesotho promotion should be a continuous event and not be done only on a certain month.

What emerged from this study is that cultural events in the communities hold the key to promoting the Sesotho language. This aligns with Carstens (2019) where in the Western Cape the coloured communities promote their language and still uphold their tradition by celebrating 'Tweede Nuwe Jaar' in the first week of January. This supports the theory of social interaction, that knowledge construction occurs within a social context. Heritage Day celebrations present opportunities for adults to teach young people about their cultures, language as well as societal morals and values while interacting with each other. Godwin-Jones (2021:9) states that human language is a social phenomenon and socialisation plays a significant role in learning a home language. As a result, social events such as the Heritage Day celebration hold an important role in promoting Sesotho in a multi-lingual society and ensuring that learners learn the language for future generations. Even though participants mentioned that during Heritage Day celebration at their schools, learners are allowed to showcase their Sesotho culture by dressing in their Sesotho outfits, such as

'*seshwe*' Sesotho dress and '*dikobo*' Sesotho blankets, it was observed that majority of learners in that particular Sesotho school were wearing isiZulu outfits. This became unsettling as to why Sesotho parents opted to buy other culture's outfits instead of those relating to the Sesotho culture. We do live in a multicultural and multilingual society and we need to embrace other cultures; however, it should be a priority to promote our own culture and language when we are allowed to do so and, in this case, to ensure that the Sesotho culture and language do not disappear.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Teachers' perceptions of the strategies outlined in the CAPS to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language**

As indicated earlier, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced by the DBE in 2011 and is a singular, precise and concise set of guidelines, which covers every subject mentioned in the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R–12 (DBE, 2011). For the teaching of Sesotho language, the CAPS documents what learners need to know and provides teachers with guidelines to ensure the development of Sesotho proficiency. This theme discusses teachers ability to teach Sesotho home language.

##### **4.3.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Lack of teachers' knowledge of CAPS Sesotho Home Language**

CAPS is a document that offers detailed and accurate curricular guidelines as well as instructions on how to teach, study and assess learners within the South African educational system (Ajani, 2021). Its aim is to give clarity on the requirements of what to be taught and learned on term-by-term basis in the classroom (DBE, 2018:7). DBE further states that the principles of the CAPS document were to encourage active and critical learning. The CAPS document provided by the Department stipulates that "home language competency should represent the fundamental social-communicative skills necessary in social interaction and intellectual abilities that are beneficial for learning throughout the curriculum" (DBE, 2011:8). This suggests that the Sesotho home language should also be given attention so that learners are able to socially communicate and use it effectively in their learning. Therefore, teachers need to familiarise themselves with the contents of this document for effective teaching and learning to take place in the classroom.

When participants were asked if the CAPS document has strategies to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language in the classroom they responded as follows:

*I..... think so. CAPS document speaks about what teachers must teach from Term 1 to Term 4. I think it addresses the issue because it is written in Sesotho, which I believe is enough. (T1)*

*Ehhh.... [scratching the head], CAPS document encourages learners with vocabulary, but yaah... it is not enough. (T2)*

*Haai, I would not say, but I have strategies that I implement in my classroom. (T4)*

*Haai.... I don't want to lie. Though I have my strategies that I use they are not that effective. (T5)*

*No..... I do not think so {taking time to think about this}. (T6)*

Participants displayed uncertainty in their responses. Some participants stated that they came up with their strategies as CAPS does not provide any strategies. This suggests that participants were unsure if there are such strategies in the CAPS document.

The study's findings showed that the participants did not have enough knowledge of strategies outlined in the CAPS document that could address the decline of the Sesotho language in the classroom.

It was revealed that participants use CAPS documents to access content-based materials. Participants were not aware that the CAPS document offers guidelines on how to help a learner who experiences difficulties in learning, such as verbal prompts for longer, individualised support plans, drilling and repetitions of what has been taught, etc (*cf.* Chapter 2, section 2.4.3). The curriculum in conjunction with the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge should be used to teach learners the Sesotho language so that they become proficient in speaking and understand the Sesotho language. Therefore, it is challenging for scaffolding to occur because tools that have been put in place to assist learners are not known by the MKO. As a result, it becomes challenging for teachers to help learners develop Sesotho proficiency and also prevent the decline of its use in the classroom



### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Strategies used by teachers to teach Sesotho Home Language**

With concern of the decline of the Sesotho home languages in recent years, the role of schools is significant in ensuring the preservation and survival of African indigenous languages. UNESCO (2018:18) states that “it is a great concern that every second week, one indigenous language disappears taking with it an entire cultural and intellectual heritage”. As a result, teachers need to devise strategies that will mitigate the decline of the use of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. Teaching strategies according to Sarode (2018:58) are unique methods used to aid learners in learning the necessary material and reaching their set goals. Participants mentioned strategies such as the usage of the Sesotho language, reading and viewing, listening and speaking, writing and presenting, as well as language structure and conventions.

#### **4.3.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: The usage of Sesotho language**

The use of grammatically correct Sesotho by the teachers in the classroom is imperative. Teachers are considered to be the MKO, therefore they should model good language skills so that learners can copy them and become proficient Sesotho speakers as well. Participants mentioned that it is very important that teachers in the classroom use Sesotho in a way that it promotes the language and brings excitement to learners when listening. Participants mentioned that:

*The manner in which teachers use the Sesotho language in the classroom can make or break learners to be good Sesotho speakers. Teachers need to be aware of how they use the Sesotho language in the classroom. (T2)*

*To make our learners know, enjoy and want to use the Sesotho language not only in the classroom but at how as well as in their communities, teachers need to use the Sesotho language in an exciting and creative way. (T4)*

*I always strive to use proper Sesotho when interacting with learners, so that they can copy the way I speak. (T1)*

Participants made it clear that the MKOs must speak clear and grammatically correct Sesotho so that learners can imitate what is being said and how is being said for learners to learn how to speak Sesotho competently.

During observations, all participants presented their lessons with ease using grammatically correct Sesotho. The participants' pronunciation was of a high standard,

this was evident during giving of instructions, lesson presentation and reading of short stories. Participants were also able to explain the new vocabulary with ease during the lessons.

This indicated that there are still good Sesotho language teachers in the schools who speak proper Sesotho and can share the rich knowledge that they have with the younger generation. It has emerged from this study that it is not at all doom and gloom, there are still capable teachers (MKO) who can teach, guide and support young people to learn Sesotho while interacting with them in the context of the classroom.

According to Vygotsky (1978:85), adults primarily transfer cultural norms, values and belief systems to children through language, which in turn, children internalise and learn the desired behaviour. Therefore, with the proficiency of Sesotho language teachers in the classroom, learners will not only learn how to speak proper Sesotho but are also afforded the opportunity to learn about their traditions. With the fluency and proficiency of Sesotho teachers in the classroom, there is still hope that the Sesotho language survives. Letsoalo (2020:60) states that language is vital to human existence because it is not only a means of communication but also a reservoir of culture. As a result, the survival of the Sesotho language is also the survival of the culture, traditions, values and beliefs of the Basotho nation. However, it has been observed that even though teachers were proficient in Sesotho, the majority of learners had some challenges concerning understanding what the teacher was saying. Teachers on numerous occasions had to code-switch and use English to explain the meaning of the Sesotho words. T6 had to explain to learners that '*sememo*' is an invitation in English, while T3 had to explain the word '*tshehla*' is yellow. It was also observed that when learners were asked questions about the theme birthday party, learners were observed saying '*birthday cake*', T1 had to correct the learners and say it is '*Kuku ya letsatsi la tswalo*'. This confirms the study conducted by Aung (2021) that concluded that there were several instances of unintentional and impulsive translation in the classroom, and teachers regarded translanguaging as a successful method in the home language classroom.

It was observed that the Grade 4 Sesotho teachers are doing their best in terms of developing competent Sesotho speakers. They were using scaffolding by correcting the pronunciation, teaching and explaining new words, and going as far as using

English in Sesotho lessons to ensure that learners become proficient in Sesotho. This finding concurs with that of Yildiz and Su-Bergil (2021) indicating that the majority of teachers were comfortable using code-switching in their home language classrooms, especially if they had to explain the meaning of words, sentences and grammar. This finding makes it clear that there is a crisis in home language classrooms, as learners are struggling with comprehension, and teachers have to code-switch to English in Sesotho classrooms.

It was also observed that many learners pronounced Sesotho words incorrectly with an English accent during the clan praise activity and corrections activity. Frustration was evident in some participants when they had to interrupt reading often to correct the pronunciation. Sometimes the participant had to correct learners twice or more before they could properly pronounce the word. These findings also confirm the study conducted by Sibanda (2019) that learners, especially in urban areas, cannot fully speak their home languages. There seems to be a dilution of the Sesotho language in communities which then has an effect of the use of Sesotho in the classroom.

#### **4.3.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Listening and speaking**

A classroom that allows learners to interact with each other as well as the teachers, brings knowledge (Al-Jarran, 2019). The author further states that when learners are given an opportunity to speak, voice their opinions and share ideas it becomes a well for learning. CAPS document (2011:9) states that listening and speaking are central to learning and Intermediate phase Sesotho teachers must ensure that learners use listening and speaking to interact and negotiate meaning. As a result, teachers need to tailor speaking opportunities to every learning to ensure that learners become proficient Sesotho speakers. The majority of the participants mentioned that they used listening and speaking as a strategy to teach Sesotho as home language to curb the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. Participants mentioned that:

*To help my learners to speak the proper Sesotho language, I always try to engage with them about the topic at hand during the listening and speaking skills. (T1)*

*After reading a story to my learners, I always ask my learners to tell me what they thought about the story and what it is that they learned from the story. In this way,*

*I can assess how fluent my learners are and intervene, if necessary, especially with pronunciation. (T4)*

*I take an opportunity to teach my learners the proper pronunciation during the reading period. After a reading activity, we always discuss unfamiliar words and learners will make sentences using those words. (T2)*

It was observed that teachers in the classrooms used listening and speaking skills as a strategy to encourage learners to speak the language. It was observed that learners actively participated in their learning process. T3 posed a question that allowed learners to respond by saying their clan praises, in this way while learners were reciting their clan praise, the teacher would sometimes ask learners to pause to correct with articulation and pronunciation. As a result, through speaking, learners became actively involved in their learning.

T6 asked a learner to ask questions about the story that the teacher had just read. By asking them questions, this provided an opportunity to encourage learners to communicate freely with each other and share their answers. Thus, teachers recognised that language learning is a social activity, and language can be learned through interaction with other people, in this regards learner-to-learner and teacher-to-learner teaching strategies were practised. This was confirmed by Gauvain and Munroe (2020) who found that for learners to learn, they must be actively involved in the teaching and learning process.

The findings in this study revealed that teachers do try to come up with strategies to teach Sesotho by using what is stipulated in ATPS, however, exploring various and unconventional methods of teaching is still a challenge. It has been revealed by the study that teachers may lack pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Teachers do not go beyond the knowledge of the subject to formulate subject matter to make it easily understandable to learners (Shulman, 1986).

It has also been found that teachers prefer using what they know and are familiar with and are not yet comfortable exploring and using other strategies such as using audio as another form of teaching or role-playing. Al-Jarran (2019) states that stereotyped methods of and teaching learning make learning a monotonous activity and create distaste among learners. Consequently, by not exploring other methods of teaching

and learning, such as listening through headphones connected to computers/speakers, learners will find the subject boring and eventually lose interest in learning Sesotho as a subject. As a result, it is challenging to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms because teachers tend to use prescribed traditional methods of teaching, which are unlikely to yield positive results for the young learners of the twenty-first century

#### **4.3.3.3 Sub-theme 3.3: Reading and viewing**

The CAPS document (2011:10) states that learners develop proficiency in reading and viewing literary and non-literary texts. Reading and viewing was another strategy used by teachers to curb the decline of the Sesotho language in the classroom. Teachers mentioned that they used books and flashcards for learners to view the pictures and read. This is how participants responded:

*During reading and viewing skill, I start my lesson by allowing my learners to view the pictures of what they are going to read about, in this way my learners get to predict of what they are going to read about. This gives me an opportunity as a teacher to correct they pronunciation as well as their vocabulary in general. I'm sure you witness during the lesson I asked my learner what the picture was about, and majority said "cake" others said, "birthday cake", therefore this gave me an opportunity to teach them that it is called "kuku ya letsatsi la tswalo" in Sesotho. (T1)*

*Ehhh.... Yes, one of the strategies that I am implementing is reading in the first ten minutes of my period, to help my learners with pronunciation and learning of new words. (T3)*

*During reading, I encourage my learners to pick new words that they do not understand and then try to explain them. I also encourage them to read so that I can help with pronunciation. (T4)*

T2 and T5 stated that they use flashcards.

*I use flashcards pasted on the walls to serve as continuous learning, but still..... [shaking and brushing his head gently] (T2)*

*I use flashcards and teach phonics and spelling tests, but it is tough. The district should develop programmes that will help these learners because for me it is really tough. (T5)*

Participants stated that they use posters and pictures in books, while others use flashcards to help learners, especially with pronunciation. This implies that the pronunciation of Sesotho words is a challenge in the classroom.

It was observed that the majority of the classrooms did not promote reading and learning of the Sesotho language in the classroom. The walls had no pictures, posters, flashcards or models that promoted the Sesotho language. This was contrary to what was reported by some of the participants that they use flashcards posted on their classroom walls as one of their strategies to promote Sesotho in their classrooms.

Subsequently, the classroom environments were not stimulating enough and did not offer continuous learning where learners are able to constantly see Sesotho words and pictures on the walls.

Therefore, it emerged from this study that readers were mainly used to teach reading and viewing, and other teaching and learning materials were underutilised or never utilised at all in the classrooms. This aligns with the study conducted by Khanyile (2022:67) that there is a lack of home language resources available in classrooms. As a result, this hampers the process of teaching and learning because, without any reinforcement of what is taught, learners are bound to forget.

It has been revealed by the study that teachers do not explore enough in terms of coming up with various strategies to help learners in the classroom. The majority of teachers concentrated only on reading materials as a strategy to mitigate the Sesotho language decline in the Grade 4 classrooms. Teachers missed the mark of using technology in the classrooms, such as audio and visuals, as strategies to teach and mitigate the decline of the use of Sesotho.

The study also revealed that teachers are not using current technological strategies such as providing learners with an opportunity to view a story or picture using an overhead projector or a computer and capture learners' attention or make the lesson interesting. This concurs with the study conducted by Filita and Thuthukile (2021) that

Sesotho teachers are not integrating ICT when teaching Sesotho, attributing this to a lack of ICT knowledge by Sesotho teachers.

The use of various teaching strategies (differentiation) allows teachers to meet all the needs of different learners in the classroom, as a result, teachers could use interactive programmes created with technology to construct knowledge within the social context, which is the classroom.

#### **4.3.3.4 Writing and presenting**

Frequent writing practice enables the learner to communicate functionally and creatively (CAPS, 2011:11). The CAPS document further states that writing forces the learner to think grammar and spelling and encourage the learner to process the language, speed up language acquisition and increase accuracy. Writing and presenting was one of the strategies mentioned by participants that they are using to teach Sesotho in the Grade 4 classroom. Participants mentioned that:

*I usually follow what ATP stipulates and use it, for example, when doing writing and presenting, I allow my learners to write three paragraphs about the theme that we are busy with in that two-week cycle, edit it and present what they have written in front of the class. In this way, I can assess how far each learner is in terms of Sesotho proficiency so that I can assist them where assistance is needed. (T3)*

*I use writing and presenting to check my learners' writing skills and language knowledge, for me, language skills are not only about speaking but also about writing. (T4)*

Participants stated that they used writing and presenting skills as they appear in the ATP as one of the strategies to teach Sesotho in their classrooms. This became evident during observations that all participants strictly followed the ATPs, and some often had a glance at the ATP while presenting the lesson.

Therefore, it has emerged that teachers use writing and presenting as a strategy to teach Sesotho to mitigate the decline of Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms. Marlina (2018:7) states that learners should go beyond listening and speaking to emulate how native speakers speak, learners should be allowed to discover and express their own voice through writing. As a result, teachers not only consider speaking as a way of

learning a language but also use writing and presenting as an influential role in teaching the language.

#### **4.3.3.5 Language Structure and Conventions**

Language structure and conventions are one of the most important building blocks of the language, and it is a communicative approach to learning (van de Walt, 2018). Therefore, for learners to fully develop their vocabulary and become proficient language speakers, language structure and conventions have to be taught. Participants mentioned that they use language structure and conventions as a strategy to teach Sesotho in their classrooms. This is how participants responded:

*I believe if you want to teach a child language, language structure is the most important skill. After all, it contains all the elements of spoken language such as “maele” (idioms) which I believe is what we call pure Sesotho because it was a language spoken by our forefathers. (T3)*

*Language structure and conventions are what I consider to be teaching learners real Sesotho language. Don't get me wrong, other language skills are still important but teaching language structure and conventions allow me to teach learners real spoken language that I know they can apply in their daily interactions with others. (T6)*

*I use language structure in my classroom to help my learners acquire basic language skills so that they can be able to be proficient Sesotho speakers. (T2)*

This study found that teachers used language structure to teach their learners the Sesotho language. Teachers expressed that language structure and conventions incorporated the language skills needed to teach language as they believed that it is a skill that teaches learners pure Sesotho language and also helps learners to communicate correctly in different life situations. This concurs with Minshew (2023:1) stating that language structure and conventions support fluency and comprehension of the language.

Even though participants were drawing on language structure and conventions to teach Sesotho in the classroom, the study found that participants felt as if they were on their own in this and these strategies were not yielding any positive results because learners were still struggling with comprehension of the language and fluency.



However, without disregarding the teachers' concerns and frustrations, it is the responsibility of the teachers to make it a point they devise strategies that will ensure that learners speak and understand the Sesotho language not only in the classroom but also in their communities.

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: Teachers' Perceptions of the Decline of the Sesotho Language**

Home language preservation and knowing the home language (Sesotho), especially in growing children has been of great importance in recent years. Research has shown that having a strong home language foundation leads to a much better understanding of the curriculum and more positive attitudes toward schooling (Savage, 2019:1). Thabethe (2022) states that children who are fluent in their home language develop relatively faster cognitively and intellectually. As a result, learners must be able to develop fluency in their home languages not only for their academic success but also for their identity. Tsebe (2021) states that many learners are challenged when it comes to their home language because they struggle to speak and comprehend their language. Therefore, this theme is centred around understanding the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners and it is mainly based on teachers' perceptions. The sub-themes emerged from this theme are as follows: Parents not speaking the language with their children, inter-marriage, urbanisation, wrongly placed teachers in the Foundation Phase, the quality of Sesotho books, over-crowding, Sesotho subject advisors' competency, class time constraints and lack of teachers' knowledge of CAPS.

##### **4.3.4.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Parents not speaking the language with their children**

To elicit information about the primary research question of the investigation, participants were asked what they thought were the reasons for the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners, and their responses were as follows:

*Parents do not speak Sesotho with their children at home, they do not encourage their children to speak the language. Therefore, learners are unable to speak fluent Sesotho because they do not speak Sesotho at home. (T1)*

*Learners are unwilling to speak the Sesotho language because it has been reduced to a language of insignificance by the same people who were supposed to promote it, the parents. (T3)*

T4 cited that:

*Most parents do not speak Sesotho with their children. You will find parents saying, “My child cannot understand Sesotho, please speak English”. You will hear a parent talking to his son saying “Ek sé my laaitie, kom hierso”, so parents are contributing to the decline of the Sesotho language in the community and the classroom. They do not value Sesotho, they cite that when their children are looking for employment, they will not be using Sesotho, and it is of no use.*

*Parents should be blamed. They do not instil pride in their children as far as Sesotho is concerned. (T5)*

Participants emphasised the importance of parents in promoting the Sesotho language. Participants highlighted the fact that parents themselves do not speak the language. As a result, it will be difficult for learners to know, speak and understand the language fully because parents do not show passion and interest in the Sesotho language.

The findings revealed that parents are reluctant to use their home language when talking to their children. This was confirmed by the study conducted by Saneka and de Witt (2019) indicating that parents would rather speak English to their children at home. Parents feel that by communicating with their children in Sesotho, they will be disadvantaging them because Sesotho does not feature anywhere when their children are looking for employment. This is supported by Hadebe (2020) who states that many black people chose English over their home language to have access to resources such as jobs, information and politics; therefore, English dominates the South African discourse and economy. The implication is parents mostly choose to communicate with their children in English because English is seen as a language that offers better chances in life. This concurs with Xhakaza (2020) that other parents are convinced that the African languages will do no good for the advancement and development of their children. It was also revealed that children are now seeing their home languages as insignificant since parents have failed to instil pride of speaking their home language. As a result, children started looking down, losing interest and choosing not to speak Sesotho because of no encouragement at home. As a result, parents who opt to speak English to their children rather than their home language miss out on a vital tool for teaching their children about their sense of self and origin because

language is not just a way to converse, but it is a primary tool for learning. Consequently, children are being deprived of the only tool that they were born with, which is their home language to further develop and expand their knowledge.

#### **4.3.4.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Inter-marriage**

Participants further highlighted that marriages between two parents from different cultures as one of the causes of the decline of the use of the Sesotho language.

*Different languages are spoken in one household because of parents' mother tongue. (T2)*

T 3 further mentioned that:

*A mixture of languages also plays a role, you will find majority of households these days a mother is a Zulu, the father is Mosotho, and the children speak a mixed language.*

More Participants shared similar sentiments as far as inter-marriages are concerned.

*What I have noticed is that where these children live, they live with parents who do not speak one language, maybe the mother is Xhosa, and the father Mosotho so, children often speak the mother's language and not the father's but attend a Sesotho school because the father is Mosotho. (T5)*

*Inter-marriages are playing a role in the decline of Sesotho in our classrooms. Learners are required to speak two languages in one household. (T6)*

Participants stated that marriages between two people from different cultures, tribes, and languages are also contributing factors in the decline of the Sesotho language. This implies that it becomes a challenge for children to master their one particular home language due to the different languages spoken by their parents.

It has emerged from this study that intermarriages have a role in the decline of home languages. With children having to speak two different languages, that of the father and the mother in one household, that has contributed to children not being fluent in any of the languages spoken at home. Ochonogor and Ikems, (2019) confirm that inter-cultural marriages have negatively affected the use of indigenous languages. It has also emerged from the findings that some children attend a school where Sesotho is medium of instruction because the father is Mosotho even though they spend the

majority of their time communicating in a different language which is that of the mother. That also becomes a challenge for a learner to be a fluent Sesotho speaker and fully comprehend the language in the classroom. Bandyadhyay and Green (2021:2) concur with the authors by stating that if couples are from different races or cultures, chances are that new languages will emerge. As a result, social interaction in this regard between parents and their children becomes a barrier to learning the proper indigenous language like Sesotho because children are unable to master any of the languages spoken by parents.

#### **4.3.4.3 Sub-theme 1.3: Urbanisation**

Among other reasons, participants pointed out that urbanisation is a further contributing factor to the decline of the use of the Sesotho language. This is what they said:

*Many different types of languages are spoken in the township due to multiculturalism in one area. So, it is the influence from outside, that these learners bring these languages into the classroom. (T2)*

*Uhhh..... as far as I see, our society is mixed, we inter-mingle too much with other nations and Sesotho is fading because it overpowers our learners. (T3)*

T 4 and T6 also added that:

*Our Sesotho language is clouded because these learners speak township language like “ntwana ha revaye”. When they interact with each other, they do not speak their home language. (T4)*

*We go to our townships, and the language that these learners use is mixed. (T6)*

The participants' responses pointed out that because of urbanisation or movement from other areas into the cities, there is much interaction of different cultural groups in the townships which has a negative effect on the use of the Sesotho language. Participants felt that many people coming from outside the province and other countries searching for a better life and settling in the townships have diluted the Sesotho language. They highlighted the fact that many people, including learners, have now adopted or learned other people's way of talking which has contributed to learners not being fluent in the Sesotho.

It was found in this study that the population shift from rural areas and other African countries into townships has negatively impacted Sesotho as a home language. Because human language is a social phenomenon, social interaction of different people, from different cultures and speaking different languages has brought about the dilution of many home languages in the townships. As a result, for communication purposes, people from urban areas have come up with their language of communication, so that they can be able to understand each other. This language would be a mixture of Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana, Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans and English or slang. Therefore, due to interacting in harmony and understanding each other a new language has emerged in urban areas. As a result, learners bring this language into the classroom, which means that learners are challenged in comprehending and speaking Sesotho fluently. These findings confirm the study of Sibanda (2019), stating that the idea of "home language" is becoming more and more vague and problematic due to the movement of people and the changing landscape. Sibanda (2019) calls for a regional language, where learners in the classroom will be taught in accordance with the language they speak in that region. The author suggests that acknowledging the urban *lok'shin lingua* as a regional dialect in education would be more suitable.

#### **4.3.4.4 Sub-theme 1.4: Wrongly placed teachers in the Foundation Phase**

Participants suggested that the placement of teachers in the Foundation Phase who have not been trained to teach this phase, exacerbates the problem of the decline the use of Sesotho in the classroom. Participants stated the following:

*I believe if learners have a good foundation in the Foundation Phase, it will be easier for learners to know the language. I believe some Foundation Phase teachers are not trained to teach Foundation Phase. You will find a Further Education and Training (FET) trained teacher teaching Foundation Phase. Do you think that teacher is skilled enough to teach Grade 1 learners the basics of reading and writing? (T1)*

*You will find that Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners and foundation teachers do not speak fluent Sesotho and are not trained to teach the language. So, these children are losing Sesotho at a very early age. (T2)*

T 4 also added his view and stated that:

*For me, it becomes a challenge when you say Grade 4 classes. If a learner had a good foundation from the Foundation Phase, learners would not struggle as they do now. The Foundation Phase is not taken seriously in some schools. When they hire Foundation Phase teachers, they do not take into cognisance whether the person is a native Sesotho speaker or qualified to teach that phase. If learners' foundation is not well laid, those building blocks will crumble and they will not be able to sustain the knowledge. When a learner gets to Grade 4, where he/she is expected to have the basic knowledge of Sesotho, the learner encounters problems [ showing annoyance].*

*Foundation Phase teachers have a role to play in this issue. I believe they are partly contributing to this crisis. I always ask myself why my learners are struggling with phonics, fluency and naming basic Sesotho things yet they are in Grade 4. Clearly, some Foundation Phase teachers are not competent to teach in the Foundation Phase. (T5)*

*I think teaching methods in the Foundation Phase is somehow a problem, Foundation Phase teachers are concerned with learners knowing and identifying letters or vowels and numbers, leaving behind the cores that teach language. When the learners get to Grade 4 where they are expected to be fluent and be able to construct their own sentences in Sesotho, they encounter challenges. My view is that only competent and Foundation Phase-trained teachers should be placed to teach the Foundation Phase. (T6)*

Participants voiced their displeasure in terms of some of the placements done when hiring teachers as well as the competency of some teachers in the Foundation Phase. They felt that incorrect placement also contributed to the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. This suggests that some Foundation Phase teachers may be a barrier to learning as far as teaching the learners the Sesotho language.

The study found that the Department's placement system may be somewhat flawed. It has emerged that some if not most, hired teachers were just placed without considering their qualifications and competency in that grade. The Foundation Phase is the most important in the schooling system, it is a phase where a good foundation needs to be laid, but what happens if the more knowledgeable other (MKO) is not

competent enough to lay a strong foundation? The core idea of the ZPD is that a better experienced individual can improve learners' learning by supporting them through an activity slightly beyond their ability (Yetman, 2020). But in this regard, participants felt that the more knowledgeable persons, that is unqualified Foundation Phase teachers with a qualification to teach using the Sesotho language, were unable to provide guidance, enhance learning and were also unable to help with the challenges the participants were facing in the Sesotho classroom. The findings are aligned with those of Cekiso et al. (2019:6) that teachers who participated in language acquisition in the Foundation Phase in the Eastern Cape indicated that they were never trained to use African languages for teaching across the curriculum. As a result, learners are in a predicament because the teachers whom they depend on to give them knowledge, do not know some of the vocabulary they are supposed to be teaching. In this regard, social interaction does not take place with the learners' home language, which results in the lack of the correct use of Sesotho vocabulary among the learners and teachers. It was also found that the placement of teachers who have not been trained to teach this phase, may be attributed to the shortage of Foundation Phase Sesotho teachers. This concurs with Xeketwana (2021:16) stating that there is a higher supply of English and Afrikaans in the Foundation Phase teacher graduates than those with indigenous language qualifications in public schools. For this reason, new teachers get employed to teach their non-native language in the Foundation Phase. With language being a tool for learning, during teacher-learner interaction, learners will not be taught or learn the correct way of speaking Sesotho because teachers are unable to speak and teach grammatically correct Sesotho.

#### **4.3.4.5 Sub-theme 1.5: The quality of Sesotho books**

Many participants were concerned about the quality of Sesotho books that are being used in their classrooms, citing spelling errors, the structure and the language used.

Here are the participants' responses:

*Another contributing factor to the decline of the Sesotho language in our classrooms is the quality of our Sesotho books. There is this book called Learners' DBE book [sighs]. The book is poorly structured. I wonder how the book was approved. If our Department of Basic Education (DBE) and our district were*

*serious about promoting Sesotho, they would not be forcing us to use the book daily in our classrooms because of its poor Sesotho quality. (T1)*

*I am not sure if our education system is taking our Sesotho language seriously enough because lots of Sesotho books that we are using lately do not have rich Sesotho vocabulary. Even though the mandate comes from the Department of Basic Education on which books should be used, our district should have recognised that most of Sesotho's books are flawed. (T3)*

T4, T5 and T6 also voiced their disapproval of the books that are being currently used for learning and teaching. They stated that:

*Even the books that we are using now are not helpful. They have lots of errors and not enriching learners, I am not happy with this DBE book, even the way questions are asked they are not enriching. I asked myself how the district had approved this DBE book {showing the book}. This book looks like a translation of another English book. What happened to the books that were written by Sesotho authors? (T4)*

*Have you seen books that we are using [laughing sarcastically.....]? Haai.... [claps her hands once]. They are empty, they don't have rich vocabulary like the books we use to read. How do you expect teachers to effectively teach and learners to learn Sesotho while they are given such poor-quality books to use? Our current books are slowly killing our language. (T5)*

*Our Sesotho language is disappearing and books that we are currently using are another reason for the decline of our language. There is this one book that frustrates me which is DBE (brushing and shaking his head). You see Mam that book is something else, it is full of mistakes, you find names such as Jabu, Anna, and Mandu which are not in the Sesotho language. I bet the book was directly translated into Sesotho by people with no knowledge of the Sesotho language. Then when the Sesotho advisors visit schools and find that I don't use the book, I get a negative report. That book is been pushed down our throats by the district and I believe they are also aware that the book is flawed but they are doing nothing about it. (T6)*



The following photographs taken from the Grade 4 Sesotho Learners' DBE book, according to the participants, confirm the poor-quality language that was used in DBE learner books.



**Figure 4.1: Illustration 1 from Grade 4 Sesotho Learners' DBE book**

According to T4, Figure 4.1 shows how the English word 'chick pompom' was used in a Sesotho book, the correct word that was supposed to be used is '*popo ya tsuonyana*'.



**Figure 4.2: Illustration 2 from Grade 4 Sesotho Learners' DBE book**

T4 indicated that the title in Figure 4.2 is incorrect. In the Sesotho language, the word '*Mafofora*' does not exist and when looking at the picture, there are pancakes, even the recipes show pancake ingredients, which means that the title was supposed to be '*Ho etsa kuku ya pane*'.



**Figure 4.3: Illustration 3 from Grade 4 Sesotho Learners' DBE book**

T6 indicated in Figure 4.3 that there is a white ice cream truck with 'Aesekhrimi' written on its side. There is no such word in Sesotho. The correct word that should have been used is 'lebejanapo'.



**Figure 4.4: Illustration 4 from Grade 4 Sesotho Learners' DBE book**

T5 stated that in Figure 4.4 the word for peanut butter was written as 'pinabatha'. This word does not exist in Sesotho, was directly translated into Sesotho. The correct word that should have been used was 'botoro ya matokomane'.

Participants highlighted that the Sesotho books that were used in the classroom were slowly eroding the Sesotho language and lacked a rich vocabulary that teaches good language skills. They were concerned whether the Department and the Ekurhuleni South District were serious about the preservation and promotion of the Sesotho language.

What emerged from this study is that Sesotho teachers were disgruntled with the Sesotho reading books that were being used for learning the language. All participants were not pleased with one book called DBE Learner's Book. They highlighted that the book is poorly structured, has a lot of grammatical errors and does not promote the

Sesotho language. The book was modernised, with few Sesotho names and does not mention or promote any cultural activities. As a result, there is a shortage of good books that can facilitate learning and teaching in the Sesotho classrooms.

These findings are in accord with those of Sibanda (2019:8) who states that key African languages in South Africa have limited books that can be used to support successful teaching in the classroom. Poor performance and poor proficiency in the indigenous languages can be linked to other issues such as lack of African language textbooks and poor understanding skills of majority of the schoolbooks (Sibanda, 2019:9). Books are important tools for learning the language. Therefore, if the trusted tool is full of discrepancies for promoting learning, it does not serve the purpose. Participants were aggrieved with the usage of poor-quality books in teaching the Sesotho language and felt helpless stating that they were forced to continue using such poorly written books because they were mandated to do so by their subject advisors. It is unsettling because participants mentioned that the Ekurhuleni District is aware of the poor quality of books, especially the DBE book, but nothing is being done about the matter, instead, subject advisors insist that learners continue to use the book daily. This implies that there will be a slow decline of the Sesotho language due to the shortage and poor quality of books that are made available to learners. Zell (2018:1) states that the future and survival of African languages depend on its literature (*cf.*

Chapter 2, subsection 2.7.3).

#### **4.3.4.6 Sub-theme 1.6: Over-crowding**

Having a manageable group of learners in the classrooms allows the teachers to work effectively and be able to help each learner when needed. As previously mentioned, the recommended teacher-learner ratio and class size for primary schools in South Africa is 1:40: (Venketsamy, 2023). One of the participants stated that classroom overcrowding is one of the reasons for the decline of the use of Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms.

*It becomes challenging for me to move freely to attend and assist each and every learner in the classroom because there is not enough space to do so, so I am unable to properly assist learners struggling with comprehension of the Sesotho language. (T1)*

It was evident that the classroom spacing was not only an arrangement of seats but that it impacted teaching and learning. As a result, the participants were not able to carry out their duties, which were to work with all learners to ensure that they develop competency in the Sesotho language because of overcrowding.

Observations revealed that the majority of classrooms were overcrowded with an average ratio of 1:43, and in one of the classrooms there were 52 learners. For this reason, teachers were not able to move freely in the classroom amongst learners as there was not enough space to do so. Poor seating arrangements and improper spacing has a negative effect on the teaching and learning process. Teachers find it difficult to effectively interact with their learners. This finding concurs with those of Venketsamy (2023) stating that overcrowding in the classrooms may create a stressful atmosphere that may have a detrimental effect on the standard of teaching and learning. This hampered the MKO's ability to guide and offer needed support to learners. Thus, overcrowded classroom inhibits learning and contributes to the decline of the use of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms.

#### **4.3.4.7 Sub-theme 1.7: Sesotho subject advisor competency**

Participants stated that subject advisor competency is a factor relating to the decline of the Sesotho language because of their inability to support the teachers.

Here are the participants' responses:

*The subject advisor is not skilled enough as far as Sesotho is concerned. She could speak Sesotho ... she was not a native speaker and sometimes we were ill-advised. To promote Sesotho, our district needs to ensure that when filling vacant posts, they hire Sesotho native speakers with extensive knowledge and understanding of Sesotho. (T1)*

*You will find one Sesotho subject advisor is responsible for advising all the schools in the Intermediate Phase. (T3)*

*To be honest, the Sesotho subject advisor is partly contributing to the decline of Sesotho. I am saying this because nothing is done to curb the decline of Sesotho. During school visits, I will give the subject advisor learners' books, and see that learners are struggling. I would explain the challenges I am facing in the classroom, but nothing is done [touching her forehead showing defeat]. (T5)*

*Sesotho's subject advisor is concerned with teacher development, not any other issues. The subject advisor visits schools to make sure that teaching and learning take place, there are enough activities in learners' books and educator files are up to date. (T6)*

Many participants voiced their concerns about the Sesotho subject advisor's competency and how they were supported. Participants felt that the subject advisor was not doing enough to help them with learners struggling with language fluency and comprehension. This suggests that Sesotho's subject advisor was not doing enough concerning the mitigation of the decline of Sesotho in Grade 4 classrooms.

This study revealed that some of the Sesotho subject advisors are not native speakers of the language, they were hired because they could speak the language, but they do not have extensive knowledge of how to teach the language. This means that in some cases, they are unable to give good advice on the teaching and learning process. It was also found that Sesotho subject advisors do not fully offer support to teachers struggling with learners' inability to speak and comprehend the language. It was revealed that during school visits, subject advisors check learners' books and teachers' files and compile a report. Even if it is clear in learners' books that learners are struggling in Sesotho, they do not advise on how to address the problem, instead are more concerned with the number of activities in the books not the quality of activities.

Being trusted to guide and advise is a huge responsibility and needs one to be competent. The subject advisor, in this instance, is the MKO and should be able to work with teachers and help them mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classroom. However, it is difficult for the subject advisors to advise, guide and support if they themselves are not fully equipped. The study also revealed that there is a shortage of Sesotho subject advisors in the Ekurhuleni South District. It was found that one subject advisor is responsible for all Intermediate Phase in the whole of Ekurhuleni South primary schools. Therefore, the subject advisor finds it challenging to guide and support all the schools. As a result, it becomes difficult to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms because there is little support for practice from the subject advisors.

#### **4.3.4.8 Sub-theme 1.8: Class time constraints**

Time management is important, especially in the classroom where teachers need to allocate time for each activity such as reading, lesson presentations, class work, corrections and marking. Participants stated that time allocation also plays a role in the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. The following are the participants' responses:

*To tell you the truth, I am more focused on the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP). there is no time for helping learners to practise Sesotho. If I am left behind with the activities stipulated, I will have to account for the Head of Department (HoD) and the district. (T3)*

*There is no other time to help my learners in ensuring that they become fluent speakers and fluent readers. Therefore, our learners will never know Sesotho because of this hurried curriculum. To tell you the truth, my main focus is the ATP, because there is simply no time to go over the work again to ensure that learners fully understand their schoolwork. If I do happen to fall behind on the ATP, I will find myself in hot water with the district and the HoD. (T5)*

*Ehh.... we are mandated by the policy not to deviate but stick to the ATP even if we as teachers see that there is a problem, like the one we are discussing. The Sesotho subject advisors will tell us to follow the ATP religiously no matter what and ensure that we are not left behind. As a result, I focus on the ATP.*

*Problems faced by both teachers and learners as far as Sesotho is concerned will forever be there because of the policies that are number of activities driven. (T6)*

Participants also attributed the time factor as one of the contributors to the decline of the use of Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms. This implies that even if teachers wanted to help learners with pronunciation, reading and other activities that will help to promote Sesotho language, they are unable to due to limited time allocation.

This study found that teachers have limited time to teach the learners. Teachers are required to religiously follow the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), which guides teachers on what to teach, when to teach it and for how long. The allocated time for the Sesotho language in the ATP is 60 minutes per day and during that time, teachers are expected

to do reading with learners, teach, give learners activities, do corrections and control learners' books. As a result, teachers felt that they do not have enough time to help struggling learners. This clearly shows that time plays a major role in teaching and learning. When teachers have enough time to interact with learners, they are able to drill, or re-teach the concept, which will increase the chances of effectively learning the language. Social interaction between an adult and a child lays a foundation for a child to learn (Vygotsky,1978:68), therefore learning will take place when teachers as the MKO, fully interact with learners without being rushed. In this instance, participants stated that interaction with learners is limited due to time constraints. Therefore, limited learning takes place and that will further perpetuate the decline of the use of Sesotho in the classrooms. As a result, in this study, it was found that the Annual Teaching Plan may also be a barrier to learning the Sesotho language due to its time limitations.

#### **4.4 REVISITING THE SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY**

Based on Vygotsky (1978), the socio-cultural theory is founded on the idea that social interaction, especially with those who have knowledge and experience such as teachers, parents and peers, is essential for learning. This implies that learning can take place when people with fewer skills fully interact with more knowledgeable people. Gauvain and Munroe (2020:4) mentioned that socio-cultural theory is realising that one's growth can happen in a social environment. This validates the framework of this study, where schools as social settings, were selected as samples to explore how learners and teachers interact with each other and how the interaction facilitates learning of the Sesotho language in the classroom. It was then established in this study that the socio-cultural theory can be beneficial in facilitating and teaching the language. In other words, for learners to learn, comprehend develop competency in using the Sesotho language, they need to interact with the more knowledgeable other (MKO), who will use the Sesotho language as a tool to teach Sesotho, using the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to guide and support learners until they can develop the required skill which leads to them being proficient in the home language, which is Sesotho.

Xeketwana (2019:15) states that language can be improved through interaction with others, and knowledgeable people make it easier and possible for learners to learn.

Teachers as knowledgeable people felt that even though social interaction action is taking place between themselves and learners, where the Sesotho language is used as a tool to learn and where learners are guided and supported in the classroom, all those strategies are not yielding the desired results.

The findings of this study revealed that the social interactions between the MKO and learners in a social context, such as homes, schools and communities, are not producing positive results. Even the strategies used by teachers as ZPD in the Grade 4 classrooms are not remedying the situation. The Sesotho learners are still struggling with speaking and comprehending grammatically correct Sesotho. The reason for these poor results is because parents do not speak the language with their children, the community is not talking 'proper' Sesotho and learners amongst themselves are not speaking the language. Ochonogor and Ikems (2019:1) state that the survival of any language lies in its acquisition and usage by the younger generation. Therefore, if the learners as the young generation do not acquire good Sesotho language skills and speak the Sesotho language, chances are Sesotho will continue to disappear not only in Grade 4 classrooms but also in the communities., Table 4.3 presents the findings viewed through a socio-cultural lens as social interaction, language as a tool and the zone of proximal development.



**Table 4.3: Summary of findings through socio-cultural theory**

<b>Social Interaction</b>	<b>Language as a Tool</b>	<b>Zone of Proximal Development</b>
<p>Four out of six teachers mentioned that during social interaction between parents and their children at home, parents do not speak the Sesotho with their children. It was also revealed that the community is not speaking 'proper' Sesotho and learners are also not using 'proper' Sesotho when communicating with each other</p>	<p>Three teachers stated that parents do not use the Sesotho language as a tool to teach language. Participants mentioned that parents feel that by using Sesotho as a form of communication, they will be disadvantaging their children.</p>	<p>Five participants stated that incorrect placement of teachers, especially in the Foundation Phase, contributes to the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. Participants felt that the MKOs were unable to provide guidance, enhance learning and support learners in being proficient Sesotho speakers because they are not native Sesotho speakers.</p>
<p>Participants mentioned that contributing factors would include intermarriages, where children are unable to master two languages in one household, as well as urbanisation where during an interaction, different languages are spoken by different people from different cultures which causes dilution of home languages, which in this study, the home language is Sesotho.</p>	<p>Four teachers stated that cultural activities should be incorporated into the school curriculum as a result, teachers will use the Sesotho language as a tool to teach learners not only how to speak 'proper' Sesotho but also teach learners about their culture as well as their traditions.</p>	<p>Four out of six teachers stated that Sesotho subject advisors as MKOs are also contributing to the decline of the Sesotho language in the classroom. Teachers mentioned that some subject advisors are not native speakers; therefore, they cannot fully support and offer sufficient guidance to help teachers alleviate the challenges that they are facing in the Grade 4 Sesotho classrooms.</p>

<b>Social Interaction</b>	<b>Language as a Tool</b>	<b>Zone of Proximal Development</b>
<p>Three teachers felt that interaction with learners is limited due to time constraints stipulated in the ATPs.</p>	<p>Five teachers mentioned that the Sesotho books that they are using in the classroom are poorly structured and do not promote the Sesotho language. As a result, the materials that teach language as a tool were found to be flawed which made it challenging for teachers to effectively utilise them as tools to teach the Sesotho language.</p>	<p>Three teachers mentioned that they are unable to fully guide and support learners in the classroom because of time allocation in ATPs.</p>
<p>All participants mentioned that Heritage Day, which is celebrated annually in South Africa plays a pivotal role in promoting the Sesotho language. Teachers mentioned that it is during social events that learners can learn the language as well as their culture by interacting with Basotho people.</p>		

<p>The study showed that Grade 4 Sesotho learners are not good Sesotho speakers. It was observed during learner-learner interaction in the classroom that learners were not speaking 'proper' Sesotho. Learners used mixed languages when communicating with each other.</p>	<p>It has emerged in this study that all participants had good Sesotho skills and they were proficient Sesotho speakers. Subsequently, they were using the Sesotho language as a tool to teach learners how to speak the 'proper' Sesotho.</p>	<p>The study revealed that code-switching is used by teachers in the classrooms. It was observed that all participants had to use code-switching during the lessons. English was used in a Sesotho classroom because learners did not understand some of the Sesotho words. As a result, teachers used scaffolding to help learners to better understand the Sesotho words.</p>
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<b>Social Interaction</b>	<b>Language as a Tool</b>	<b>Zone of Proximal Development</b>
<p>The study also revealed that there is overcrowding in some of the classrooms. As a result, it becomes challenging for teachers to fully interact and help learners struggling with understanding and speaking fluent Sesotho due to the lack of spacing in the classroom.</p>		<p>The study also shows that teachers have strategies in place to help and guide learners struggling with the Sesotho language. However, teachers are still using traditional teaching methods and are not exploring other useful methods such as technology to enhance learning and to help learners in Sesotho language acquisition.</p>

#### **4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the findings from the analysis of interview and observation data were presented through main themes and sub-themes. Some of the evidence gathered was presented in the form of pictures from the learner's DBE book. Teachers voiced their perceptions for the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners in the Ekurhuleni South district. There was a consensus amongst all the sampled teachers that there is a challenge in Grade 4 Sesotho classrooms concerning learners' inability to comprehend and articulate themselves in their home language which is Sesotho. Teachers identified the causes of the decline of Sesotho and others provided some suggestions to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms.

The outcome of this study suggests that adults need to interact with their children/learners in a way that the interaction facilitates learning the Sesotho language, and new strategies in the classrooms need to be introduced to further help learners learn and understand the language and re-structuring of the curriculum as far as Sesotho is concerned should take place.

Chapter 5 concludes this study, and it presents the summary, findings and recommendations that emerged from the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho Language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District.

The research objectives for this study were outlined as follows:

- explore how home language is promoted in multi-lingual society,
- investigate teachers' perceptions of the strategies outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language.
- identify strategies teachers use to teach Sesotho as a home language

This chapter comprises an overview of the research outcomes, the study's contribution, limitations, recommendations, proposals for future research, and final remarks on the study.

*Chapter 1:* This chapter provided a synopsis of the study. This included the problem statement including the research question, aims and objectives as well as the rationale and context. The theoretical framework was presented and justified for its use. A brief outline of the research methodology that guided the study was given. The chapter ended with presenting key concepts with their definitions, chapter division and chapter summary.

*Chapter 2:* This chapter reviewed literature on the teachers' perceptions on the decline of the Sesotho language, how the Department mitigates the decline of the Sesotho language, and how home language is promoted in multi-lingual society, The social constructivism theory's concept of social interaction, language as a tool and ZPD were dealt with in detail and demonstrated how they served as the lenses in this investigation.

*Chapter 3:* This chapter gave a comprehensive description of the research methodology that was followed in the study. The rationale for empirical research, research approach

and design, research methods such as sampling, data collection and data analysis were presented. The final sections explored the trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations.

*Chapter 4:* In this chapter, the findings emerging from data analysis of the interviews and observation were fully discussed. This included detailed discussions of the findings of the data that was collected during the data collection process and a comparison of the findings with the literature.

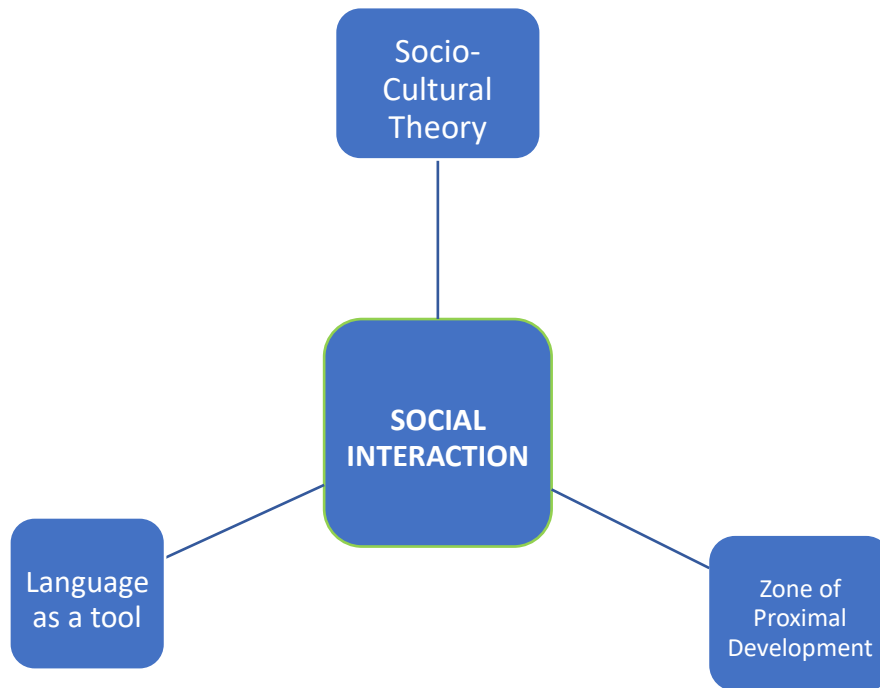
This section summarises the key findings.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The fundamental goal of this investigation was to provide the researcher with reliable and credible data (Bouchrika, 2023). The study objectives outlined at the beginning of this chapter were met. All of the research questions were answered by an analysis of participant responses obtained from collected data. This section summarises the key scholarly findings grounded in socio-cultural theory.

### **5.2.1 Key Scholarly Findings**

The theoretical framework that underpins this study was discussed in Chapter 2, subsection 2.4 which is socio-cultural theory. Socio-cultural theory is founded on the assumption that learning takes place through interaction with knowledgeable people. The key findings are reviewed under language skills acquisition of the socio-cultural theory which includes, social interaction, language as a tool and zone of proximal development (ZPD). Figure 5.1 shows how learners through interaction can acquire Sesotho language skills.



**Figure 5.1: Social interaction**

The findings in this study demonstrate social interaction as a contributing factor in ensuring that learners acquire pure Sesotho language skills.

### **5.2.2 Social Interaction as a Contributory Factor**

For learners to acquire pure Sesotho language skills and become proficient speakers of the language they need to interact and engage with people who are fluent speakers of the language. Vygotsky (1978:101) states that how people engage with others influences one's mental capacity, and, as a result, when learners engage with people who are proficient Sesotho language speakers, their mental capacity will be developed. They will acquire pure Sesotho language skills and consequently become competent Sesotho speakers. This is affirmed by Kurt (2020) indicating that the way people interact with each other shapes each other's cognitive ability.

According to Gauvain and Munroe (2020:4), one's growth can happen in an environment, where there is interaction with peers and linguistically competent people who speak the language (Sesotho). Xeketwana (2019:15) explicitly states that language can be improved through connection with others and that knowledgeable people make it easier and possible for learners to learn. Therefore, without a doubt, interaction with one another drives as a contributory factor in learning.

### **5.2.2.1 Language as a tool for learning**

Language has traditionally served as a means of imparting knowledge to the younger generations. Although the forefathers could not read nor write, learning was kept alive through their home language. This relates to Vygotsky (1978:85) who considered language as a powerful tool when it comes to learning in children, indicating that adults can use it to transmit knowledge. Kurt (2020) states that Vygotsky believed that language is an effective learning instrument since activities such as reading, writing, thinking and reasoning depend on language.

Therefore, it was revealed in this study (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.5.1) that all participants are native Sesotho speakers and are qualified to teach the Sesotho language. It was observed that during interaction with learners, they were able to use the Sesotho language as a tool to teach learners to speak grammatically correct Sesotho and how to pronounce Sesotho words properly. It is also important to note that using language as a tool to learn, not only teaches learners how to be proficient speakers of the language but also allows learners to learn about their cultural values and norms. This is affirmed by Vygotsky (1978:85) indicating that adults primarily transfer cultural norms, values and belief systems to children through language, which in turn, children internalise and learn the desired behaviour. It is through their home language that the forefathers taught children cultural values and beliefs, societal norms and morals, (Pullen, 2018) (*cf.* Chapter 1, subsection 1.2). This implies that when teachers use language as a tool for learning in the classroom, they are not only teaching the language, but they are also shaping the child in totality.

### **5.2.2.2 Zone of Proximal Development**

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is based on the notion that people who are more experienced and skilled can help those with fewer skills so that they can reach a certain level of capability (Zhou, 2020:83). Vygotsky (1978:86) refers to the more experienced person as the 'more knowledgeable other' (MKO). The MKO is useful because he/she can help decrease the level of difficulty and find more suitable tasks that are at the learners' level (Vygotsky, 1978).

In the context of this study, the MKOs are teachers, parents, teachers and society. Two key findings were made under this component of socio-cultural theory. Firstly, it was



found that through observations, teachers as MKO spoke 'proper' Sesotho during interaction with learners in the classroom. Teachers were able to share the rich knowledge that they have with the younger generation (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.5.1). Sibanda (2019) and Venketsam (2021) define ZPD as the range of abilities a learner can accomplish with the help of an experienced person. As a result, teachers were able to offer help, support and guide learners through the process of scaffolding.

The study also revealed that parents and the society as MKOs do not speak 'proper' Sesotho when interacting with the less skilled which are their children. Four participants mentioned that parents do not speak 'proper' Sesotho with children, while other parents do not speak the language at all when interacting with their children (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.1). This defeats the purpose of the teachers (MKO) who were trying to teach pure Sesotho skills in the classrooms but there was no reinforcement at home. Parents as the MKOs are purposely choosing not to speak the language with their children citing that when their children look for employment in the future, they will not be speaking Sesotho. The core idea of ZPD is that a more experienced person can enhance learners learning by guiding them through a task slightly above their ability (Yetman, 2020). This means that parents are missing the opportunity to guide their children and enhance their Sesotho language proficiency while interacting with them at home. This will further ensure the decline of the Sesotho language.

### **5.3 KEY EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of this study highlighted that there is a disconnection among the education stakeholders, which are parents, communities, teachers, and the Ekurhuleni South District subject advisors. This disconnection has had a significant influence on the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms because each entity is working separately with the belief that the methods and initiatives that they are using are for the benefit of the learners. Most of the initiatives or programmes implemented by various stakeholders are inadequate and ineffective and some do not promote the Sesotho language in the classroom. This study concludes that the stakeholders are all working in separation. Parents are not encouraging their children to speak the language because they consider Sesotho as insignificant in comparison to English. The community does not speak pure Sesotho as they have come up with their own mixture of languages to accommodate each other. Teachers' intervention strategies were not effective in curbing

the decline because they are still using traditional ways of teaching and not using the current trends of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the district seemed to be contributing to the problem by allowing the use of poor-quality Sesotho books and not offering enough support through the subject advisors to teachers in the classroom.

This is comparable to the wheels of a car, if one tire is flat, the car will not be able to manoeuvre as it is meant to. Therefore, until these four entities come together and work in collaboration, learners will continue to have challenges in speaking and comprehending their home language. As a result, the Sesotho language will continue to decline in the classrooms, societies and will eventually be extinct. Nishanthi (2020:77) states that home language is a personal identity and people who know who they are, develop personal identity (*cf.* Chapter 1, subsection 1.1). The implication is the extinction of the Sesotho language is not only the death of the language but the extinction of the entire Basotho nation with its identity, culture and heritage.

The main research question was: *What are teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District?* Three questions were constructed to address the main question. The research conclusion stems from the responses given by participants to the research questions and the observations that were conducted.

### **5.3.1 RQ1: How is the home language promoted in multi-lingual society?**

The empirical study established that to promote the Sesotho language in a multi-lingual society, cultural programmes should form part of the curriculum. The study discovered that there is a need for cultural activities to be incorporated in schools so that learners learn about their cultures, gain knowledge and develop new skills (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.1.1). Vygotsky (1978:86) states that the ZPD enables the learner to acquire competencies and techniques that they will later apply in various contexts, which is an indication of acquiring higher cognitive abilities. That is accomplished by introducing cultural programmes in the school curriculum, where learners develop skills that will not only teach them about their culture, but they will also learn their home language in the process. This means schools need to take the lead in advancing Sesotho by incorporating cultural activities into the school curriculum.

The findings revealed that cultural events in the communities are key to promoting the Sesotho language (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.1.2) and found that social events such as Heritage Day are used to promote home language in multilingual societies. It emerged in this study that it is during Heritage Month that people get an opportunity to showcase their different cultures and teach young people about the beauty of their heritage as well as the importance of their home language. Heritage Day festivities present opportunities for adults to impart knowledge to young people regarding their cultures, language, societal norms and values while interacting with each other. O'Connell (2022) states that Heritage Day is about celebrating one's heritage where people share their language knowledge and showcase and celebrate their culture and tradition (*cf.* Chapter 2, subsection 2.6). However, Sesotho learners in some schools celebrated Heritage Day dressed in isiZulu traditional attire. This highlights the fact that Sesotho parents do not teach their children to take pride in their language and their culture, parents tend to choose certain cultures over theirs and this further perpetuates the decline of the Sesotho language in Grade 4 classrooms. This was a cause for concern. In addition, some participants suggested that cultural heritage should not only be celebrated during the month of September but should be promoted daily to yield positive results.

### **5.3.2 RQ2: What are teachers' perceptions of strategies outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language?**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy statement (CAPS) document is the guiding document for teachers teaching Sesotho Home Language. It outlines what learners need to know and provides teachers with guidelines on what is to be taught and learned on term-by-term basis in the classroom (DBE, 2018:7). It outlines the different components that make up the teaching of Sesotho Home Language such as listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting and finally the language structures and conventions.

The findings that emerged from this study was that teachers had limited knowledge of the strategies outlined in the CAPS document to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language. It was revealed that teachers mainly used the CAPS document for content purposes. This means teachers were unaware that the CAPS document offers guidance

on how to teach and support learners with challenges in the comprehension and proficiency of the Sesotho language.

It was established by the study that teachers may lack pedagogical content knowledge, they do not go beyond the knowledge of the subject matter, they depend heavily on what is stipulated in their CAPS regarding what to teach and how long the particular subject has to be taught. Therefore, teachers need specialised knowledge about teaching and learning that will assist them in understanding what makes the learning of specific subjects easy or difficult for learners and develop strategies for teaching and formulating a subject matter to make it easily understandable to learners.

### **5.3.3 RQ3: What strategies do teachers use to teach Sesotho as Home language?**

The findings from this study revealed that teachers still use tried and tested methods of teaching and learning as their strategies to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 learners. It was discovered that teachers did not think out of the box as far as strategies were concerned. The majority of teachers mentioned that they use readers, flashcards as well as speaking the Sesotho language with learners as their strategies to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. It was found that teachers do not use technology to assist in alleviating the challenge of the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. It was revealed that teachers use readers and flashcards as their strategies to support learners in the classroom (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.3.1). However, even though flashcards were mentioned by some participants, flashcards were not used in lessons observed and there were no posters displayed on the classroom walls.

The study also found that teaching the language involves four main components such as listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting and finally the language structures and conventions and as such may assist in mitigating the decline of Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms. It was also revealed in this study that teachers use listening and speaking as one of the strategies to promote and teach grammatically correct Sesotho language in their classrooms (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.3.2). It was also found that participants use reading and viewing as an intervention strategy to curb the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms, where teachers encourage learners to read from their readers, and predict what they think might happen

in the story. At the same time, teachers use this exercise to correct the pronunciation, teach the correct words and increase vocabulary (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.3.3). It was revealed by the study that teachers also use writing and presenting as one of the strategies to teach Sesotho, teachers used writing and presenting as a critical tool in teaching the Sesotho language (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.3.4). The study also found that participants used language structure and conventions as a strategy to teach Sesotho because they believed that it assists learners in developing 'pure' Sesotho language proficiency which assists learners in developing the ability to speak, read, write and understand the language (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.3.5).

It was clear from the findings that participants used the ATP as a strategy to teach the Sesotho home language so that they could mitigate the decline of Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms. Other teaching methods such as the use of technology in the classroom were not explored. Kim (2020) indicates that with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), language learning tools are being developed constantly to help learners in a language context and to become more fluent and efficient (*cf.* Chapter 2, subsection 2.7.4). However, teachers were not using technology and its ability to offer developed language tools such as easy text, access to learning material, support services, translators and dictionaries that could be easily accessed by smartphones. as one of the strategies to curb the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms.

#### ***5.3.4 What are teachers' perceptions of the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District?***

In response to the main question, the findings revealed that various societal and educational factors influence the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District in different ways. Participants mentioned that parents do not use the Sesotho language to talk to their children, intermarriages, urbanisation, wrongly placed Foundation Phase teachers, poor quality of Sesotho books, Sesotho subject advisor incompetence, class time constraints and lack of teachers' knowledge of CAPS for Sesotho home language are the factors that contribute to the decline of the Sesotho language. The study showed that the MKOs, like parents, society, teachers and Ekurhuleni South district subject advisors who are supposed to guide, help and support learners in learning the Sesotho language are not working together. Hence

learners are continuing to battle with developing Sesotho language fluency and full comprehension of the language.

Most participants reiterated the significance of parents encouraging their children to speak the Sesotho language. Participants stated that parents do not speak the language with their children (*cf.* Chapter 4. Subsection 4.4.4.1) and this is vital as a good language foundation should be laid in the early years at home. This was confirmed by the study that was conducted by Gqibitole (2019) stating that many black parents consider English as a tool to access white privilege because the system was set up to favour those who master the Queen's language. Khanyile (2022:66) states that teachers believe that the community has a negative perception of their home language and they do not consider their language as a language that can be beneficial for their children. Consequently, it is challenging for learners to acquire, speak and comprehend their home language properly since parents do not demonstrate enthusiasm and proficiency in the home language, which, in this study, is the Sesotho language.

The study revealed that intercultural marriages of parents with different cultures also affect the proficiency of learners in the home language (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.4.2). Ochonogor and Ikems (2019) confirm that intercultural marriages have negatively affected the use of indigenous languages. It has also been found that urbanisation played in the decline of Sesotho, especially in the townships, where a mixture of languages is used for communication (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.4.3). These findings confirm the study of Sibanda (2019) stating that the concept of home language is increasingly becoming ambiguous and flawed considering the migration and changing landscape (*cf.* Chapter 2, subsection 2.2).

The findings also revealed that wrongly placed teachers in the Foundation Phase have contributed to the decline of Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms. Five participants (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.4.4) were concerned with the placement of teachers in the Foundation Phase. They indicated that some of the teachers who were placed in this phase are not native Sesotho speakers, which makes it difficult to lay a solid Sesotho foundation. Elyas and Alghofaili (2019) state that home language learners are disadvantaged when the teacher is a non-native speaker. The authors further state that non-native teachers are unable to fully connect with learners as well as transfer a

particular culture to their learners. This results in cultural barriers and learners miss an opportunity to learn and know their culture (*cf.* Chapter 2, subsection. 2.5).

It has also been found that the poor quality of Sesotho language books has had an impact on the decline of Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms. Participants were not satisfied with the quality of the books prescribed for use in the classroom, with many quoting the DBE learner book as inadequate and not the standard that they would expect to teach the Sesotho language effectively. Participants stated that the book contains errors and does not promote the Sesotho culture (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.4.5) This is affirmed by the study conducted by Sibanda (2019:8) stating that major African languages in South Africa do not have much literature that can facilitate effective classroom teaching. Poor performance and poor proficiency in the home language can be attributed to factors such as a shortage of good African language textbooks.

The findings also revealed that overcrowding in the classrooms may also contribute to the decline of the Sesotho language in the classrooms (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.4.6). One of the participants mentioned that it was a challenge to move around the classroom because of spacing, as a result, it became a challenge to reach every learner and be able to assist them. The finding concurs with Venketsamy (2023) stating that overcrowding in the classrooms may create a stressful atmosphere that may have a detrimental effect on the standard of teaching and learning. This hampered the MKO's ability to guide and offer needed support to learners.

This study also found that Sesotho subject advisors in the Intermediate Phase were not competent enough according to the participants (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.4.7). The participants stated that some subject advisors were not Sesotho native speakers, therefore they were unable to help with challenges faced by teachers in the classroom and they sometimes offer incorrect advice. A subject advisor is considered to be an MKO who helps in decreasing the level of difficulty (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, in this study, the MKOs were found not competent enough to help teachers struggling with the inability of learners to speak and comprehend the Sesotho language.

Time constraints was also found to be one of the contributing factors to the decline of Sesotho in Grade 4 Sesotho classrooms (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.4.8). Participants indicated that time allocation stipulated in the CAPS document's ATPs did not allow

enough time to teach and drill the concepts until such time all learners could pronounce certain words and speak the language fluently. The study also established that teachers did not have enough knowledge of strategies in the CAPS document that address the decline of the Sesotho language in the classroom (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.4.9). Teachers were not aware that the Sesotho CAPS document offers strategies on how to support learners struggling with learning their home language, which means listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting and finally the language structures and conventions of the Sesotho language.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings emerging from the analysis revealed that there are challenges in the teaching of Sesotho as a home language, and the discovery of these challenges have led to the recommendations in this study. The empirical data that was collected in schools resulted in the following recommendations, and these recommendations can be applied in mitigating the decline of the Sesotho language among the Grade 4 Sesotho learners in the Ekurhuleni South District.

### **5.4.1 Recommendations for Policymakers**

- It is recommended that policymakers need to ensure that the Sesotho language is 'pure' and not contaminated by other indigenous languages.
- It is recommended that the CAPS document needs to be revised and have guidelines on how to teach the Sesotho language using innovative strategies and incorporating technology.
- It is recommended that policymakers revisit how the Sesotho language should be taught in the classroom. The CAPS document stipulates that twelve activities are to be taught and written in learners' books in a two-week cycle. It is also advised by the Sesotho subject advisors that within those twelve activities, language structure should be added daily because there is a lot of language structure that appears in the ATP and needs to be covered as well within that two-week cycle. Teachers are expected to teach, do corrections with the learners and control/mark learners' books in 60 minutes. As a result, because of this hurried curriculum, there is no sufficient time for teachers to teach the concept given thoroughly until learners understand and become proficient speakers.



- It is also recommended that policymakers work together with teachers as implementers of the drawn policies. Teachers are the ones facing challenges in classrooms, therefore, by integrating teachers in policymaking, we will be able to develop policies that will not only facilitate work in the classroom but will also address and provide solutions to difficulties encountered by teachers, such as the inability of learners to comprehend and speak their home language, which is Sesotho, fluently.
- It is recommended that policymakers consider incorporating cultural activities into the curriculum. Teachers suggested that cultural activities should be integrated in the school curriculum. Cultural activities in the curriculum will allow learners to learn about their culture and their language.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations for the Ekurhuleni South District**

- It is recommended that the Ekurhuleni South district in consultation with the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), review the Sesotho literature, especially the learner DBE books. This study discovered that Sesotho books used by learners in the classrooms lack rich Sesotho vocabulary, are full of errors such as incorrect spelling, direct translations that sometimes do not make sense, and do not promote Sesotho culture and heritage.
- It is also recommended that teachers should be guided in becoming authors since some of them might be competent in publishing authentic Sesotho books.
- It is also recommended that the district office should appoint native Sesotho speakers as subject advisors to support teachers in Sesotho classrooms.
- It is recommended that the Ekurhuleni South District appoint more Sesotho subject advisors to address the current shortfall. This study revealed that one Sesotho subject advisor oversees all Intermediate Phase Sesotho schools in the Ekurhuleni South District. Consequently, the subject advisor is unable to fully support teachers experiencing challenges in the classroom as they only visit the school once or twice a year.

#### **5.4.3 Recommendations for Schools**

- It is recommended that schools become community-centred, where parents and communities become an integral part of the school and work together to alleviate

challenges faced by schools of learners being unable to understand and speak their home language fluently which in this study is the Sesotho language. It was discovered that parents and the community do not speak the Sesotho language with their children. Therefore, if parents and the schoolwork together, this challenge can be alleviated in the classrooms.

- It is also recommended that the schools appoint Sesotho native speakers who will specifically teach the Sesotho language as a subject. It was discovered that some of the teachers were wrongly placed, some of the foundation teachers were not trained in the phase and they were not fluent in Sesotho but were placed because they needed a teacher. As a result, teachers are unable to lay a solid Sesotho foundation for learners.

#### **5.4.4 Recommendations for Grade 4 Sesotho teachers**

- It is recommended that teachers are offered continuous professional development to work on developing their subject content knowledge (SCK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to ensure that they are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skill to effectively teach Sesotho Home Language.
- It is recommended that Grade 4 Sesotho teachers familiarise themselves with the CAPS curriculum as it was established that teachers only use CAPS documents for content. It was established that teachers were unaware that there are strategies and guidelines in the CAPS that can help them mitigate the decline of Sesotho in the Grade 4 classrooms and promote and maintain 'pure' Sesotho.
- It also recommended that teachers use updated methods for teaching and learning, as it was established that the majority of teachers depend only on traditional methods such as reading, showing flashcards and speaking the language with learners as their intervention strategies. It is recommended that teachers use ICT such as Google Classroom for collaborative teaching and learning, and also use ICT to engage learners in independent learning through interactive games that can enhance learners' language skills.
- It is also recommended that teachers use visual aids in their classrooms such as Sesotho posters and models such as Basotho huts, Basotho hats (*Modianyewe*), Sesotho beads, and the others as a way of promoting the home language and culture, thus enhancing learners' interest and cognitive abilities. It was established

by the study that some of the Sesotho classrooms were not stimulating, there were no Sesotho flash cards on the wall for incidental reading, and there were no Sesotho models displayed to show that it was a Sesotho classroom.

#### **5.4.5 Recommendations for Parents**

- It is recommended that parents need to start making an effort to speak Sesotho with their children. It has been revealed in this study that parents are contributing to the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. Parents do not speak Sesotho with their children at home, citing reasons such as preparing their children for future employment so there is no need to speak Sesotho with their children. It is recommended that parents be educated on the importance of children knowing their home language at an early age and the value it has in their further education. Parents need to be made aware that when learners possess good home language skills and knowledge, they will develop a better understanding at school and will be more comfortable in learning an additional language which leads to successful communication (Morake, 2018) This can be done through a series of workshops hosted by the Ekurhuleni South District in collaboration with schools where Sesotho is taught as a home language.

#### **5.5 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The findings in this study provided a platform for other studies to be conducted on the acquisition, comprehension and fluency in home languages and teachers support in home language classrooms. Further research should concentrate on how parents may be brought on board to take interest and pride in their home languages, which in this study is the Sesotho language. The same research should be conducted in other home languages, particularly African indigenous languages, to see whether they face similar challenges in Grade 4 classes.

#### **5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study had its own set of limitations, the first limitation was that the study focused only on six sampled Sesotho LoLT schools, as a result, the study could not be applied to other Sesotho schools in the district. Secondly, the study was conducted at Ekurhuleni South District, therefore the findings of the study are limited to this particular district and do not include other districts in the province of Gauteng. Thirdly, the study's sample size was

small, as a result, findings may not be representative of all Grade 4 teachers' perceptions in the Ekurhuleni South District. Fourthly, the study only focused on Grade 4 Sesotho teachers and learners, although there are other Sesotho intermediate grades such as Grade 5 and Grade 6 at the schools, therefore findings cannot be extended to other Sesotho grades. Finally, the study used two methods of data collection, which are interviews and observations which only allow a small number of participants.

## **5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Home language preservation is a contentious subject not only in South Africa but throughout the world, this study sought to explore the teachers' perceptions for the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 in the Ekurhuleni South District. The study found that there is a challenge as far as the Sesotho language is concerned in the Grade 4 classrooms of the Ekurhuleni South District, and the challenge does not stem from learners themselves, but learners are the victims of circumstances. The study concludes that the MKOs are the cause of the decline of the Sesotho language in the Grade 4 classrooms. The study found that subject advisors, teachers, communities and parents are not working together with the intention of helping the learners/children to reach their potential in developing proficiency in speaking and understanding Sesotho. However, in a true sense, they are doing the opposite and causing the decline of the Sesotho language in Grade 4 classrooms. The study suggests that all decisions taken by education stakeholders should be done collectively, where there is a synergy of what is being done at the district level, at schools, in communities and at home. If stakeholders continue to work individually, we face the risk of losing not only the Sesotho language, but also Sesotho customs, culture and identity. As a result, the preservation of the Sesotho language depends on the stakeholders.

A Sesotho saying,

*“Ntja pedi ha e hlowe ke Sebata”*

means when people work together on a common goal as an integrated whole, the goal will be easily achieved.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Proof of Registration



0233

MOTLAUNG L P NG  
9126 LEHTSANYANE STREET  
TOKOZA GARDENS  
1426

STUDENT NUMBER : 36842192  
ENQUIRIES TEL : 0800 001 870  
EMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za  
2024-04-23

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: MED (CURRICULUM STUDIES) (98434)

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	NQF credits	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION EXAM. DATE	CENTRE (PLACE)
Study units registered without formal exams:						
DF01095		MED - Didactics	**	E		

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

# Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations ([www.unisa.ac.za/register](http://www.unisa.ac.za/register)). Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year. Students registered for the MBA, MBL and DGL degrees must visit the SBL's eSOnline for study material and other important information. Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification. Readmission rules for MEd: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT:	17965.00		
Payable on or before:			
Immediately: 5930.00	2024/03/31: 0.00	2024/05/15: 6017.00	2024/08/15: 6018.00
	2024/11/15: 0.00	2025/03/15: 0.00	

Yours faithfully,

Prof MM Sepota  
Acting Registrar

104X 0 00



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## Appendix B: Ethical clearance



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2023/06/07

Ref: **2023/06/07/36842192/18/AM**

Dear Ms LP Motaung

Name: Ms LP Motaung

Student No.:36842192

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2023/06/07 to 2026/06/07

**Researcher(s):** Name: Ms LP Motaung  
E-mail address: 36842192@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 0817829549

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof. M.M. Maja  
E-mail address: majam@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27124294433

#### Title of research:

**Teachers' perceptions of the reasons for the disappearance of the Sesotho language amongst Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District**

**Qualification:** MEd CURRICULLUM STUDIES

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2023/06/07 to 2026/06/07.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2023/06/07 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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## Appendix C: Response letter from GDE



**GAUTENG PROVINCE**  
Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	06 September 2023
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2023– 30 September 2023 2023/404
Name of Researcher:	Motaung L.P
Address of Researcher:	9126 Lentsanyane Street Thokoza Gardens
Telephone Number:	0817829549
Email address:	leratopm15@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Teachers' perceptions of the reasons for the disappearance of the Sesotho language amongst Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District.
Name of University:	UNISA
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	6 Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Ekurhuleni South

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

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

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001  
Tel: (011) 355 0488  
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za  
Website: www.education.gpe.gov.za

## Appendix D: Request permission to Ekurhuleni South District



The Circuit  
Manager  
Infinity Office Park  
2 Robin Cl  
Meyersdal,  
Alberton  
1448

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS THAT TEACH SESOTHO**

My name is Lerato Precious Motaung, and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor Margaret Malewaneng Maja in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies towards a Masters of Education Degree (Curriculum Studies) at the University of South Africa. I hereby request your permission to conduct a study entitled **Teachers' perceptions for decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District**

This study will entail observing learners during Sesotho periods and interviewing 6 teachers from 6 Sesotho teaching schools in Ekurhuleni South District. Data of this study will be collected through semistructured one-one interviews and observations during Sesotho lessons in selected schools. Interviews will be approximately 30-35 minutes, while observations will be for a period of an hour. Data will be collected during the third term.

The aim of this study is to explore what are teachers' perceptions for the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District. I hereby ensure that confidentiality and anonymity will always be maintained during the study and the collected data will be kept safely upon the completion of the study. Participation of participants in the study will always be voluntary and participants will be at liberty to withdraw from the study and they will face no penalty.

Should any questions arise or for further clarity please do not hesitate to contact me at 081 782 9549 or alternatively, you can contact my supervisor at 012 429 6201 or by e-mail at [majam@unisa.ac.za](mailto:majam@unisa.ac.za)

Hope to hear a positive response.

Lerato Precious Motaung

Student Researcher at UNISA.



1031 0 00 0

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[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## Appendix E: Request Permission Letter to Schools



9126 Lentsanyane  
Street  
Thokoza Gardens  
Thokoza  
1426

**Dear Sir/Madam**

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT M.Ed. RESEARCH AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

My name is Lerato Precious Motaung, and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor Margaret Maja in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies toward a Masters of Education Degree (Curriculum Studies) at the University of South Africa. I hereby request your permission to conduct a study entitled **Teachers' perception for decline of Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District** at your school.

This study will entail observing Grade 4 learners and interviewing a Grade 4 Sesotho teacher in your school. The data will be collected through observations and semi-structured one-one interviews after school. The observations will be conducted during Sesotho lessons. Interviews will be approximately 30 to 45 minutes, while observations will be for a period of an hour. Data will be collected during the third term.

The aim of this study is to explore what are teachers' perceptions for the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in **Ekurhuleni South District**. I hereby ensure that confidentiality and anonymity will always be maintained during the study and the collected data will be kept safely upon the completion of the study. Participation of participants in the study will always be voluntary and participants will be at liberty to withdraw from the study and they will face no penalty.

Should any questions arise or for further clarity please do not hesitate to contact me at 081 782 9549 or alternatively, you can contact my supervisor at 012 429 6201 or by e-mail at [majam@unisa.ac.za](mailto:majam@unisa.ac.za) Hope to hear a positive response

Lerato Precious Motaung

Student Researcher at UNISA.



1031 0 00 0

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## Appendix F: Request Permission to Teachers



9126 Lentsanyane Street  
Thokoza Gardens  
P.O Thokoza  
1426

Dear teachers

My name is Lerato Precious Motaung, and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor Margaret Maja in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies towards a Masters of Education Degree (Curriculum Studies) at the University of South Africa. I hereby request your permission to conduct a study entitled **Teachers' perceptions for decline of Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District.**

Your participation in this study will be through interviews and observations. Data collection and interviews will be conducted in term 3. Your participation will be voluntary and under no circumstance that personal questions will be asked that may reveal your identity unless you are contacted for follow up interviews. Kindly note that interviews will be approximately 30 to 45 minutes long, observations will be an hour long and interviews will be electronically recorded. Should you give us consent to participate in an individual interview, confidentiality will be ensured, and you may withdraw from the interview at any time you wish to.

If you agree to participate in the study, kindly sign the consent letter as a declaration of your consent and that you are willing to take part in the study and you also understand that you can withdraw at any time. Should you have any questions regarding your participation in this study or need additional information which will assist you in reaching a conclusion about whether you will participate in the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on my mobile number: 081 7829549 or by email: [368421922@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:368421922@mylife.unisa.ac.za) or alternatively my supervisor by e-mail at [majam@unisa.ac.za](mailto:majam@unisa.ac.za)

I hope you will kindly consider my request and give me permission to use your involvement in the study for a wide range of purposes.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours Sincerely

Lerato Precious Motaung

STUDENT RESEARCHER (UNISA)



1031 0 00 0

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## Appendix G: Consent for Teachers



I....., have read and fully understand the request letter to participate in the research on **TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE DECLINE OF SESOTHO LANGUAGE AMONG GRADE 4 LEARNERS IN Ekurhuleni South District.**

I also understand that confidentiality and anonymity during the study will be maintained, and that participation is voluntary.

I accept and give my consent to participate.

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

Researcher: Ms. L.P Motaung  
Supervisor: Prof. M.M Maja



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## Appendix H: Interview Schedule



### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

#### 1. Gender (indicate with an "X")

Female	
Male	

#### 2. Age (indicate with an "X")

20-29	
30-39	
40-49	
50+	

#### 3. Professional Qualifications of participants (indicate with an "X")

Qualifications	Eg.	Specialisation
	B.A Degree	Eg. Mathematics
Certificate/Diploma		
Bachelors' degree		
Masters' degree		
PhD		

#### Professional experience of the participants (indicate with an "X")

1-5 Years	
6-10 Years	

11-15 Years	
16-20 Years	
20 years and more	



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## Appendix I: Response to Interview Questions

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What are teachers' perceptions of how Sesotho home language can be promoted in a multi-cultural society?

a. Promotion of home language in multi-cultural society.

#### **Sesotho cultural activities in schools**

The curriculum must play a role in promoting Sesotho and include cultural activities such as mohobelo and mokgibo, just like life skills where learners will go and be taught cultural activities. (T2)

T4 & 5 had similar views regarding the matter.

They stated that unless we come up with certain programmes that will make these children aware that Sesotho is important. Come up with Sesotho cultural activities that will teach these learners about who they are and where they come from.

#### **Heritage Month to promote Sesotho in the communities.**

In our community, every year during the month of September, the Basotho cultural event is held in our community stadium where Basotho showcases their Sesotho culture. Even in my school, we have a heritage week where learners come to school dressed up in their traditional attire. (T 1)

To promote Sesotho in a multilingual society, Basotho usually hosts an event during Heritage Month to showcase and promote Sesotho, but I do not think that is enough. We cannot wait for one month in a year to promote Sesotho. What are we doing during the other 11 months? (T3)

2. What are teachers' perceptions of the strategies outlined in the CAPS to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language?

a. Lack of teachers' knowledge of CAPS Sesotho Home Language

Ehhh... [scratching the head], CAPS document encourages learners with vocabulary, but yaah... it is not enough. (T2)

Haai, I would not say, but I have strategies that I implement in my classroom. (T4)

Haai.... I don't want to lie. Though I have my strategies that I use they are not that effective. (T5)

3. What intervention strategies do teachers use to mitigate the decline of the Sesotho language?

a. Teachers' strategies to mitigate the decline of Sesotho language.

### **Promotion of classroom reading in Sesotho HL.**

I start my lesson with reading in the first 10 minutes of my Sesotho period so that I can help my learners with pronunciation. (T1)

I use flashcards pasted on the walls to serve as continuous learning, but still..... [ shaking and brushing his head gently] (T 2)

Ehhh.... Yes, one of the strategies that I am implementing is reading in the first ten minutes of my period, to help my learners with pronunciation and learning of new words. (T 3)

### **Listening and speaking**

To help my learners to speak the proper Sesotho language, I always try to engage with them about the topic at hand during the listening and speaking skills. (T1)

### **Reading and viewing**

During reading and viewing skill, I start my lesson by allowing my learners to view the pictures of what they are going to read about, in this way my learners get to predict of what they are going to read about. This gives me an opportunity as a teacher to correct their pronunciation as well as their vocabulary in general. I'm sure you witness during the lesson I asked my learner what the picture was about, and majority said "cake" others said, "birthday cake", therefore this gave me an opportunity to teach them that it is called "kuku ya letsatsi la tswalo" in Sesotho. (T1)

### **Writing and presenting**

I use writing and presenting to check my learners' writing skills and language knowledge, for me, language skills are not only about speaking but also about writing. (T4)

### **Language structure and conventions**

I believe if you want to teach a child a language, language structure is the most important skill. After all, it contains all the elements of spoken language such as "maele" (idioms) which I believe is what we call pure Sesotho because it was a language spoken by our forefathers. (T3)

Language structure and conventions are what I consider to be teaching learners real Sesotho language. Don't get me wrong, other language skills are still important but teaching language structure and conventions allow me to teach learners real spoken language that I know they can apply in their daily interactions with others. (T6)

4 What are teachers' perceptions for the decline of the Sesotho language among Grade 4 learners in Ekurhuleni South District?

a. Perceptions for the decline of the Sesotho language

### **Parents not speaking the language with their children.**

Parents do not speak Sesotho with their children at home, they do not encourage their children to speak the language. Therefore, learners are unable to speak fluent Sesotho because they do not speak Sesotho at home. (T1)

T4 cited that:

Most parents do not speak Sesotho with their children. You will find parents saying, “My child cannot understand Sesotho, please speak English”. You will hear a parent talking to his son saying “Ek se my laaitie kom hierso”, so parents are contributing to the decline of the Sesotho language in the community and the classroom. They do not value Sesotho, they cite that when their children are looking for employment, they will not be using Sesotho, and it is of no use.

Parents should be blamed. They do not instil pride in their children as far as Sesotho is concerned. (T5)

### **Inter-marriage of different cultures**

Different languages are spoken in one household because of parents’ mother tongue. (T2)

(T3) further mentioned that a mixture of languages also plays a role, you will find majority of households these days a mother is a Zulu, the father is Mosotho, and the children speak a mixed language.

### **The Urbanisation**

Many different types of languages are spoken in the township due to multiculturalism in one area. So, it is the influence from outside, that these learners bring these languages into the classroom. (T 2)

T 4 & T6 also added that:

Our Sesotho language is clouded because these learners speak township language like “ntwana ha revaye” When they interact with each other, they do not speak their home language. (T 4)

We go to our townships, and the language that these learners use is mixed. (T 6)

### **Wrongly placed teachers in the Foundation Phase (grades R-3)**

I believe if learners have a good foundation in the Foundation Phase, it will be easier for learners to know the language. I believe some Foundation Phase teachers are not trained to teach Foundation Phase. You will find a Further Education and Training (FET) trained teacher teaching Foundation Phase. Do you think that teacher is skilled enough to teach Grade 1 learners the basics of reading and writing? (T1)

T 4 also added his view and stated that:

For me, it becomes a challenge when you say Grade 4 classes. If a learner had a good foundation from the Foundation Phase, learners would not struggle as they do now. The Foundation Phase is not taken seriously in some schools. When they hire Foundation Phase teachers, they do not take into cognisance whether the person is a native Sesotho speaker or qualified to teach that phase. If learners’ foundation is not

well laid, those building blocks will crumble and they will not be able to sustain the knowledge. When a learner gets to Grade 4, where he/she is expected to have the basic knowledge of Sesotho, the learner encounters problems [ showing annoyance].

### **The quality of Sesotho books.**

Another contributing factor to the decline of the Sesotho language in our classrooms is the quality of our Sesotho books. There is this book called learners' DBE book [sighs]. The book is poorly structured. I wonder how the book was approved. If our Department of Basic Education (DBE) and our district were serious about promoting Sesotho, they would not be forcing us to use the book daily in our classrooms because of its poor Sesotho quality. (T1)

I am not sure if our education system is taking our Sesotho language seriously enough because lots of Sesotho books that we are using lately do not have rich Sesotho vocabulary. Even though the mandate comes from the Department of Basic Education on which books should be used, our district should have recognised that most of Sesotho's books are flawed. (T3)

Have you seen books that we are using [ laughing sarcastically.....]? Haai.... [claps her hands once]. They are empty, they don't have rich vocabulary like the books we use to read. How do you expect teachers to effectively teach and learners to learn Sesotho while they are given such poor-quality books to use? Our current books are slowly killing our language. (T5)

### **Sesotho subject advisor' competency**

You will find one Sesotho subject advisor is responsible for advising all the schools in the Intermediate Phase. (T3)

To be honest, the Sesotho subject advisor is partly contributing to the decline of Sesotho. I am saying this because nothing is done to curb the decline of Sesotho. During school visits, I will give the subject advisor learners' books, and see that learners are struggling. I would explain the challenges I am facing in the classroom, but nothing is done [touching her forehead showing defeat]. (T5)

Sesotho's subject advisor is concerned with teacher development, not any other issues. The subject advisor visits schools to make sure that teaching and learning take place, there are enough activities in learners' books and educator files are up to date. (T6)

### **Class time constraints**

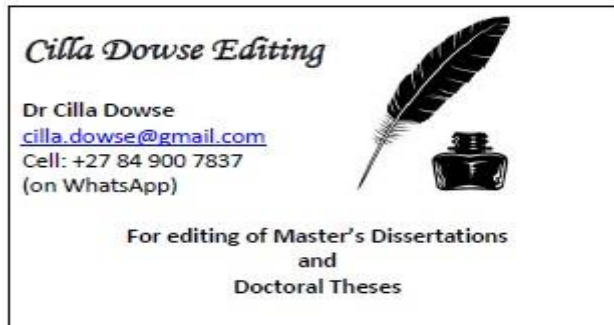
To tell you the truth, I am more focused on the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP). there is no time for helping learners to practice Sesotho. If I am left behind with the activities stipulated, I will have to account for the Head of Department (HOD) and the district. (T3)

There is no other time to help my learners in ensuring that they become fluent speakers and fluent readers. Therefore, our learners will never know Sesotho because of this hurried curriculum. To tell you the truth, my main focus is the ATP, because there is simply no time to go over the work again to make sure the learners understand the work fully. If I do happen to fall behind on the ATP, I will find myself in hot water with the district and the HOD. (T5)

## Appendix J: Observation Schedule List

<b>Teacher and learners' usage of the Sesotho language</b>	Good	Poor	
	Describe	Describe	
<b>Teacher's correct usage of Sesotho language</b>	Good	Poor	
	Describe	Describe	
<b>Classroom environment conducive for learning and teaching Sesotho language</b>	Good	Poor	
<b>Classroom environment conducive for learning and teaching Sesotho language Teaching strategies for teaching Sesotho language</b>	Describe	Describe	
	Good	Poor	
<b>Teaching strategies for teaching Sesotho language Learner to learner interaction in Sesotho language</b>	Describe	Describe	
	Good	Poor	
<b>Learner to learner interaction in Sesotho language</b>	Describe	Describe	
	Good	Poor	

## Appendix K: Proof of Editing



This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

**LERATO PRECIOUS MOTAUNG**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL STUDIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE DECLINE OF THE SESOTHO LANGUAGE**

**AMONG GRADE 4 LEARNERS IN EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT**

Cilla Dowse  
02 July 2024

Cilla Dowse  
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Programme on Editing Principles and Practices: University of Pretoria 2009  
Editing and Proofreading for Academic Purposes: McGillivray Linnegar Associates  
2021  
Professional Editors' Guild Associate Member, DOW003

Disclaimer: The editor takes no responsibility for any changes or revision to the document after the final round of editing has been completed and the proof of editing certificate issued.

## Appendix K: Turnitin Report

PAPER NAME

**Teachers Perceptions of the Decline of the Sesotho Language among Grade 4 Learners in Ekurhuleni South District.docx**

AUTHOR

**LERATO PRECIOUS MOTAUNG**

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WORD COUNT

**39776 Words**

CHARACTER COUNT

**215076 Characters**

PAGE COUNT

**115 Pages**

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**925.8KB**

SUBMISSION DATE

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REPORT DATE

**Jul 2, 2024 2:23 PM GMT+2**

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