# THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS ON THE USE OF SHANGANI AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT THREE SELECTED CHIREDZI DISTRICT SCHOOLS IN ZIMBABWE

BY


ADMIRE MHINDU


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SUPERVISOR: DR ZP NKOSI

**DECLARATION**

I, ADMIRE MHINDU, DECLARE THAT:

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**ii.** This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this thesis for submission.

_____

Dr Zinhle Primrose Nkosi

## DEDICATION

This thesis was written in memory of my late mother, Mrs Oripa Mupape (nee Charumbira) who could not wait a little longer for her to see this achievement. It was going to be a pleasure now to show her my greatest achievement but then she left me too soon. When this great woman passed on just after I had passed my proposal, I felt as if I would not be able to go on but the Almighty helped me. I salute this great woman for raising me and showing me that with education, I would not go wrong…

I dedicate this thesis to my sons, Mufaro T., Tanaka A., Ngonidzashe T. and my only daughter Makanakaishe T Mhindu. Your understanding that mum was busy writing her 'book' whilst she deprived you of your right to be attended to cannot go unmentioned. I implore you to remember that, in life anything is achievable as long as you keep focussed on what you want to achieve. Knowledge is power.

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The arduous journey to my PhD has finally come to an end. It is however prudent that I acknowledge that the completion of this thesis is a result of the contribution of various people. Without their support it was going to be difficult if not impossible to finish it. In particular I want to thank the following organisations and people for their invaluable contribution to the completion of this thesis:

# ABSTRACT

The call for the use of the mother tongue in the education of children especially those at the elementary level has been a contentious issue since the 1953 UNESCO declaration on the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Several African governments are signatories to various declarations which advocate for MTE and Zimbabwe has come up with legislations on languages through the 2006 Education Amendment Act and the 2013 Constitution. However, I noted that no study so far has endeavoured to look into the experiences of teachers using African indigenous languages in general as mediums of instruction in Zimbabwe yet no change in the deployment system has been noted. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers using Shangani as the medium of instruction at three selected Chiredzi District schools in Masvingo province of Zimbabwe.  The study aimed at answering three research questions: 1. What are the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction from three selected Chiredzi District Schools? 2. How are teachers affected by their experiences of teaching through the Shangani medium in three selected Chiredzi District Schools? 3. Why do teachers experience the use of Shangani as medium of instruction in Chiredzi District Schools the way they do? The study was conducted at three predominantly Shangani schools in Chiredzi District. 15 elementary level teachers at the three schools participated in the study. The study is a qualitative case study informed by the interpretivist paradigm. Observation, semi-structured and focus group interviews were used for data gathering.  The study uses qualitative methods for data analysis. The study was informed by Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism as well as Gramsci's Hegemony Theory. Six major themes emerged from the findings. The first theme; challenges facing Shona speaking teachers in the implementation of Shangani medium of instruction, indicates the Shona speaking teachers in the three schools lack proficiency in the Shangani Language. As a result they make mistakes when speaking the Shangani language which in turn causes pupils to laugh at them leading to their humiliation. The second one is on the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's (MOPSE) lack of commitment towards the use of Shangani as the Medium of Instruction, revealing that teachers were not trained in Shangani and that MOPSE is not even making a follow up to the policy to ensure its implementation. The third theme is on the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education's lack of commitment towards the use of Shangani as the MOI where findings reveal that colleges in the province have not yet started training teachers for the use of Shangani as the MOI. The fourth one is on shortage of teaching resources, which shows that the textbooks for the different content areas are still in the English Language, meaning that teachers have to translate content from English to Shangani and back to English because pupils are still examined in English. The fifth theme; the advantages of being proficient in Shangani, shows that the Shangani speaking teachers are better placed to implement the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI as they can meaningfully communicate with their learners using the language. The sixth theme on negative attitudes of some administrators on the use of Shangani as MOI shows that these are impeding the implementation of the policy as teachers get discouraged from using Shangani by the negative comments that come especially from the administrators. Findings of this study are indicative of the fact that, the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI is minimally implemented in the three schools; it is still a word of mouth owing to a variety of challenges. From these findings I concluded that, lack of political will to support Mother Tongue Education policies largely contributes to failure of such policies. The major recommendation is that African governments should begin to appreciate the diversity in humanity and come up with feasible policies that would see minority language children receiving instruction in their mother tongues especially at the elementary level.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

1. MOI:        Medium of Instruction.
2. L1:         First Language.
3. L2:         Second Language.
4. MLE:        Multilingual Education.
5. MTBE:       Mother Tongue Based Education.
6. UN:         United Nations.
7. MTE:        Mother Tongue Education.
8. ISA:        Ideological State Apparatus.
9. APPEAL:     Asia Pacific Programme of Education for All.
10. NFE:       Non-Formal Education.
11. ICC:       International Cooperation Cambodia.
12. ECD:       Early Childhood Development.
13. USA:       United States of America.
14. MOPSE:     Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.
15. UNICEF:    United Nations Children's Education Fund.
16. UNESCO:    United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.
17. MHTESD:    Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a qualitative inquiry into the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the Medium of Instruction (MOI) at three Chiredzi District schools in Zimbabwe. This is done in the context of a new constitution which has upgraded minority languages to official status alongside the two national languages (Shona and Ndebele) and the second language, English. It also looks at the teachers' experiences in implementing the 2006 Education Amendment Act which liberalises the use of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction, particularly at the elementary level. It explores how teachers experience the 'use' of Shangani (a minority language) with regards to government support, resource allocation, attitudes of stakeholders and the teachers' proficiency in the Shangani language, among others. The major intention of the thesis is to unravel the teachers' experiences in implementing the use of Shangani as the MOI which can then give useful insights into the pillars of successful mother tongue policy implementation.

This chapter basically introduces the research and discusses the background to the study, the problem statement as well as the location of the study. The research objectives and limitations are also clearly spelt out. This is followed by the key research questions. The chapter is concluded by a thesis outline.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In today's world, education is the centre of mass involvement as well as a means through which those who possess it can go up the social ladder (Bamgbose, 1991). This is an indication that all members of a country, whether they are speakers of national or minority languages need access to education to enable them to move up the social ladder. Educational instruction comes via a language and this is where problems arise as to which language should be chosen to be the medium of instruction since most countries are multilingual. Language being the sole medium through which learners acquire educational knowledge, the question would be on which languages (native and a second language) could be combined in the teaching/learning enterprise to ensure that learners master the concepts being taught, at the same acquiring skills that will enable them to fit well in higher education and employment (Tollefson and Tsui, 2004).

Obanya (2002) quotes the former director of the UNESCO Regional office for Africa as saying that at the end of the decade (of the 90s) it was Africa that occupied the bottom position of the educational league table and at the same time the chasm in performance in education between African students and the rest of the world broadened during that period. This is because most African states relentlessly sacrifice their character, identity and dignity through the continued use of the former colonial masters' languages in all spheres (Phiri, Kaguda and Mabhena, 2013).This implies that as long as the language of instruction is still foreign to the learner, educational achievement in a majority of African learners will remain a cause for concern for educationists. As Whittaker cited in Totemeyer (2010) rightly observes, hasty submersion in a language foreign to learners has had a negative impact on all the African countries that endeavoured to practice it. Thus, an alternative medium of instruction should be taken into consideration if African learners' educational performance is to improve.

Distinguished academics such as Fasold (1984), Kennedy (1989) and Obanya (1987) concur that success is almost guaranteed in early literacy programmes if a mother tongue is used as the (MOI). In addition to that, various conferences were held and declarations signed stating that the learners' mother tongues should be used as mediums of instruction to ensure optimal cognitive development through schooling (UNESCO, 2004). The most significant of these declarations is the UNESCO (1953) report which explicitly states that learners should start their formal education in their mother tongues. The argument above can be substantiated by findings from the six year Yoruba medium primary project. According to Akinasso (1993) the project undeniably confirmed that the results of using the Yoruba Language(the learners' L1) for all the six years of primary education whilst the second language was just taught as a subject were better and more feasible than an exclusive use of the English Language as the MOI.

Studies carried out by Modiano in 1973 in the Chiapas Highlands of Mexico proved that there was an effective transfer of literacy skills from the L1 to Spanish by the local children and that they performed much better than their counterparts who spoke Spanish only. Makoni, Smitherman, Ball and Spears (2003) also state that, in Niger it was also noted that during the teaching/learning process, women and girls were hesitant to talk due to fear of making mistakes in speaking French which was their second language. The authors further argue that, when learners were made to learn in environments which allowed them to communicate using their mother tongues, their level of fear was reduced and there was improved conversation, communication and participation in the classroom. Studies like these give clear evidence that mother tongue and education are closely related entities which governments should take into

consideration to ensure that education is brought to the doorstep of every member of the society.

UNESCO (2003) views the mother tongue as the first language to be acquired by an individual, the language that makes up one's identity or that which is seen by others as one's native language, the language one mostly uses and knows better than any other. These are the languages that UNESCO (1953) and its subsequent publications want to be used as mediums of instruction in education. In light of this view about what mother tongue is, it is therefore meaningful to say that despite the status of a language, all languages are potential mediums of instruction since each language has a linguistic community that uses it as a first language. This is because the policy on the medium of instruction ensures the linguistic and social groups that will be able to access the economic and political opportunities in their countries, and those that are thrown to the periphery (Tollefson and Tsui, 2004).

As a result of these and other factors, most African governments promulgated policies which seem to promote the use of African languages as vehicles of instruction. In Zimbabwe, the new constitution stipulates that all the languages should be treated equally(The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).Zimbabwe has about 17 languages i.e. English (Formerly the sole official language), Shona, Ndebele (National Languages), Chewa, Shangani, Tonga, Hwesa, Chikunda, Sotho, Xhosa, Sena, Tshwawo, Barwe, Venda, Kalanga, Nambya and Tswana (minority languages). All these are currently viewed as official languages. Prior to the promulgation of the new constitution, the 2006 Education Amendment Act liberalised the use of these languages ( mentioned above) to allow the more commonly spoken language in an area to be used as the medium of instruction prior to form one (Grade 8). Section 62 of the policy states that:

1.  Subject to this section, all the three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English shall be taught on an equal-time basis in all schools up to form 2 level (Grade 9)

2.   In areas where indigenous languages other than those mentioned in subsection (1) are spoken, the Minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in schools in addition to those specified in subsection (1).

3.  The Minister may authorise the teaching of foreign languages in schools.

4.  Prior to form one, any one of the languages referred to in subsections (1) and (2) may be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by pupils.

5. Sign Language should be the priority medium of instruction for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Given this scenario, all the minority languages in Zimbabwe could also be used as mediums of instruction, and according to Cummins (2001) this provides a natural way of communication which closes the gap between the child's home and school. However, Tollefson and Tsui (2004) observe that the struggle to make minority languages part of institutions such as education, as well as the struggle over language rights constitutes efforts to make the minority group itself legitimate and change its relationship to the state.

Gotosa, Rwodzi and Mhlanga (2013) observe that it is now 16 years since Shona and Ndebele got privileged and were allowed in the classroom as mediums of instruction up to Grade 3 level in addition to being subjects. As such, I feel it is now proper for researchers to shift their attention from these national languages to minority language speakers who have suffered double jeopardy by the imposition of English and either Shona or Ndebele as languages of instruction over the years.

The issues discussed above, therefore, call for a thorough investigation into the experiences of teachers in a scenario where they are supposed to use a minority language like Shangani which until 2006 suffered little or no recognition in the Zimbabwean education system. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers are experiencing the use of Shangani (which is not mandatory according to how the policy is stated) as the medium of instruction in Chiredzi district in Zimbabwe. It is one of the 14 minority languages in Zimbabwe and a mother tongue (L1) to the majority of learners in the District. The focus of this study is therefore, on the primary school teachers' experiences on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at the elementary level. At present there are very few studies that have studied Shangani as the medium of instruction (for example, Kadodo and Mhindu, 2013), hence the need to carry out a study on how teachers experience the use of Shangani as the MOI in selected Chiredzi District schools in Zimbabwe.

## 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The fundamental intention of language in education is to enable individuals to express and be fully conscious of all their experiences, understanding and knowledge which are largely facilitated through the use of the mother tongue in education, particularly in those communities where learners have little contact with the second language. Gacheche (2010) believes that, when an unfamiliar language dictates instruction, learners are likely to have questions,

uncertainties and hesitations that remain unsaid, which could lead to hazardous hatred for learning. Thus, the effects of language in education cannot be taken for granted since it is primarily through language that concepts are taught to learners. According to Kadodo, Kadodo, Bhala and Bhebe (2012), there has been a heated debate over the years with regards to the use of African indigenous languages as mediums of instruction at all education levels. This is because various linguists have identified the learner's mother tongue as the language that ensures acquisition of knowledge and skills in education (Gacheche, 2010, Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, Mtenje, 2008 and Prah, 2000).

Zimbabwe has also come up with policies which seem to be promoting indigenous African languages as vehicles through which education can be accessed (1990 and 2006 Amendments to the 1987 education policy and the 2013 constitution). Many researchers have evaluated the policies with reference to Ndebele and Shona (the national languages) (for example, Thondlana, 2002; Gora, 2013; Phiri, Kaguda and Mabhena, 2013). Gora (2013) actually suggests that Shona and Ndebele, representing indigenous African languages, should be used in the classrooms as mother tongues of Zimbabwe. She chooses the two indigenous languages on the basis that they are spoken by the majority of people and they have written materials. However, Phiri et al (2013) state that adopting such a policy will be like sacrificing the minority language speakers and these authors refute Gora's (2013) proposal that the minority language speakers can be sacrificed for the greater good. Muchenje, Goronga and Bondai (2013) actually regard the teaching of Nyanja/ Chewa (a minority language) in Shona (National language) as part of the colonial legacy where indigenous African languages suffered intended neglect.

As highlighted above, other studies have focused on English versus Shona and Ndebele but no research known to me as the researcher has looked into the experiences of teachers using Shangani as the medium of instruction, especially since Shangani is the language under-researched, and , as stated earlier, this is the gap which this study aims to address.

## 1.4 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The research focuses on the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at three selected primary schools in Zimbabwe. This research was conducted at Mandleni, Bhizana and Ntolwane Primary schools in Chiredzi District in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. The names given to the schools are not real names but pseudonyms in line with ethical considerations of anonymity. These schools are situated out of Chiredzi town and are

in a predominantly Shangani speaking community. Smaller numbers of speakers of other local languages are also found in these schools. The schools are typical rural schools and the majority of people in these communities are peasant farmers. This indicates that their socio-economic status is low. Like most rural schools in Zimbabwe, these schools do not have adequate human and material resources. Speakers of this minority language are generally looked down upon by speakers of nationally recognised languages such as Shona and Ndebele. Up until the promulgation of the policy which liberalised the use of Shangani as medium of instruction, the English Language has been the medium of instruction alongside the Shona Language in the form of code switching. The pass rates of the generality of the schools in the district are low. As such, very few people from these communities take part in the politics of the country.

## 1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this research the major limitation was time and finance. However, to meet this challenge I applied for a scholarship. The time limitation was counteracted by delimiting the study to three schools only. Thus, it did not look at all schools in Zimbabwe, nor did it focus on all Chiredzi district schools. The study also focused on fifteen teachers only, not all the teachers at these schools or all Zimbabwean teachers. This means that the results of the study only apply to the schools under study, thus they are not to be generalised except where other researchers see them applicable. In addition, I encountered a difficulty in finding adequate literature in the area of Shangani. However, I regarded this as the strength for doing this research. Another limitation was that the study only focused on Shangani as the medium of instruction, not other indigenous African languages of Zimbabwe. In addition, the focus was only on a single aspect which is the teachers' experiences on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction.

## 1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

For every study to be well focused, objectives need to be set. The objectives of this study were:

1. To establish the teachers' experiences on the use Shangani as the medium of instruction at three selected Chiredzi District schools in Zimbabwe.
   - To establish the teachers' experiences with regards to resources, government and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) support in using Shangani as medium of instruction.

- To establish their experiences in the classroom context.
- To establish their experiences in relation to the whole school engagement or disengagement.
- To establish their experiences regarding parents and the community engagement.

2. To find out how teachers at three selected Chiredzi District schools are affected by their experiences of using the Shangani language as medium of instruction.

3. To establish the reasons for the teachers to experience the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in Chiredzi District Schools the way they do.

## 1.7 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in three selected Chiredzi District Schools?
- What are their experiences in terms of resources, government and MOPSE support in using Shangani as the medium of instruction?

-What are their experiences in the classroom context?

-What are their experiences in relation to the whole school commitment?

-What are their experiences regarding parents and the community engagement?

2. How are teachers affected by the experiences of teaching through the Shangani medium in three selected Chiredzi District Schools?
3. Why do teachers experience the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in Chiredzi District Schools the way they do?

## 1.8 THESIS OUTLINE

Below is an outline of the thesis:

Chapter one discusses the introduction and background to the study. The issue of why advocacy for mother tongue has become a contentious issue is discussed. Policies that seem to promote Mother Tongue Education (MTE) are also highlighted. The gap that exists in research is also clearly spelt out.

Chapter 2 is the literature review section where literature regarding MTE as well as studies conducted in Zimbabwe, other African countries and overseas is discussed. Mother tongue policy implementation in Africa and beyond is also discussed in detail. Teachers' experiences in implementing mother tongue education policies in other African countries are also highlighted.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology employed in the study. The research is qualitative in nature with the interpretivist paradigm being adopted. The case study research design is discussed in detail to justify its relevance to this particular study.It further discusses the sample and sampling methods of the study, the research site, the data generation and analysis methods, issues of validity, reliability and trustworthiness and also ethical issues.

Chapter 4 is the theoretical framework section. The research is informed by Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism. Phillipson, (1992; 1997) talks extensively on the reasons for the existence of linguistic hierarchies in society and tries to come up with an explanation why some languages assume superior positions over others in an endeavour to address these issues. In the process of scrutinising these issues, Phillipson also identifies the ideologies and structures that aid such processes and the role of language professionals. Thus, the existence of linguistic hierarchies where certain languages are dominating other languages as well as ideology which shapes and supports such domination is characteristic of situations where linguistic imperialism is taking place. Therefore, submissions from this theory were useful lenses used in this study to illuminate the experiences of teachers on the use of the Shangani Language (an indigenous minority language) in the face of linguistic imperialism. Another theory on which this research is tethered is Gramsci's Hegemony Theory which proposes that the bourgeoisie (the owners of the means of production) do not always use coercion to oppress the proletariat (the poor) but sometimes use consent where the dominated groups accept that their domination is

normal."Gramsci pays great attention to language as a political issue, for example, on government policy around language, educational language curricula and everyday language practices" (Ives 2004:20). Thus, the way the Zimbabwean language policy is crafted would be critically looked at so as to understand the teachers' experiences in implementing the 2006 Education Amendment Act on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. All these issues would be discussed in relation to the concept of MTE from UNESCO's point of view.

Chapter 5 is data presentation of the semi-structured interviews with 15 teachers. It also focuses on the data from the focus group interviews and observations. Basically, the chapter answers my first research question: What are the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in three selected Chiredzi District Schools?

Chapter 6 is the presentation of both observational and interview data. It reports on data generated through observing lesson presentations by the participating teachers. The findings from the semi structured as well as focus group interviews are also used as a way of triangulation. The chapter answers my second research question: How are teachers in the three selected Chiredzi District Schools affected by the experiences of teaching through the Shangani medium?

Chapter 7 is the discussion and analysis of the findings from interviews and observations. It is the thesis chapter. As the analysis is done, the chapter answers the third key research question: Why do teachers experience the use of Shangani as medium of instruction in Chiredzi District Schools the way they do?

Chapter 8 is on the conclusions and implications of the study. The recommendations are given on the basis of the findings of the research.

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I basically introduced this study by giving the background to the study, key research questions and location of the study, among other things. In this chapter I will make a review of related literature in relation to mother tongue instruction. Various sources were consulted to explore the importance of language in education in general and the mother tongue in particular. Teachers' experiences in implementing mother tongue education policies were also explored. The literature review is organised follows:

-The centrality of language in education.

-Why mother tongue education?

-Factors affecting implementation of mother tongue education policies

-The African experience on mother tongue education policy implementation

-Local studies on mother tongue education

-Mother tongue education beyond Africa's borders

Reference to what has been researched already on the use of the mother tongue as the MOI was done in an endeavour to foreground this study against this background to establish possible experiences of teachers in a scenario where they are expected to use a minority language (Shangani) as the MOI in Chiredzi District of Zimbabwe.

## 2.2 THE CENTRALITY OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION.

Language is a conduit through which educational knowledge is passed. Wolff (2006) states that, language is not everything in education but without it everything is nothing in education. Dube et al (2013) view language and education as interdependent entities since language has to be used for one to attain education. Also, the teaching of a language in schools ensures its survival, endurance and that it is respected. This clearly indicates that the language of instruction matters if meaningful learning and acquisition of educational knowledge is to occur.

The fact that language plays a central role in education cannot be over-emphasised. Dube et al (2013) submit that language and education are similar to Siamese twins which cannot do without each other. This raises questions as to which language should be used as the language of education since most countries in this world are multilingual in nature. It is critical to note that if a language of instruction is not carefully selected, for many children from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds, the prospect to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty may come to an end when they come into school (Mugweni, Ganga and Musengi, 2012) because, it is in the school that various subjects like Mathematics, Science, Economics and History, among others are taught. Those who pass these subjects are likely to get better paying jobs, thus guaranteeing them a good life. However, mastery of concepts taught in these subjects is contingent upon the learner's grasp of the language that is used to deliver the concepts, thus the need to carefully choose a suitable language of instruction for the benefit of all.

Language plays a pivotal role in learning as learners can only make sense of what they are taught in the classroom by the teacher or from written texts (educational input) if the language of instruction is comprehensible to them. It is also through language that children are given a chance to articulate their appreciation of what they would have learnt from the received input (Cummins 2000, Tollefson and Tsui 2004). This underscores the centrality of language in education.

Various scholars have however noted with concern that the use of a foreign language to the pupils impedes rather than aids the acquisition of educational knowledge (Benson, 2009; Heugh and Skutnabb-Kangas, 2010; Broke-Utne, 2010). The implication is that serious consideration to use a language familiar to the learner should be taken to ensure that even the marginalised groups can access education. The learners' mother tongue is obviously the language which the learner is familiar to.

## 2.3 WHY MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION?

Despite the fact that most post colonial African governments have been according African languages an inferior status, there has been considerable debate concerning language rights, particularly in academia (Miti, 2008). In different publications UNESCO has maintained their stance on their dedication to support Mother Tongue Based Education (MTBE), Multilingual Education (MLE) and the differences which manifest themselves in the multiplicity of languages and cultures (UNESCO 2005a, 2007, 2010, 2005b). As a result, Kamwendo (2005)

notes that this prompted the publication of articles and the holding of conferences on the subject. Research has confirmed that mother tongue-based schooling notably improves learning (Benson, 2004b; UNESCO, 2007, 2006; Young, 2009). Thus, governments in Africa and beyond have promulgated policies which seem to advocate the use of the learner's mother tongue as the medium of instruction in education circles. This is because a plethora of advantages for using the learner's mother tongue have been cited. For example, Chilora and Harris (2001) highlight that, children can quickly learn to read and achieve other academic abilities when they learn through the language that is spoken at home unlike when they are made to learn through a foreign language. Broke-Utne and Alidou (2005) state that, learning progresses from simple to complex and from known to unknown. Thus, through the use of their mother tongue, learners are given the opportunity to articulate issues using a familiar language, which leads to a better mastery of concepts. In this context, it implies that if Shangani speaking pupils are taught through the Shangani medium they will be quicker in mastering concepts in the various subjects on the Zimbabwean primary school curriculum.

The learner's mother tongue should also be used in line with submissions in the convention on rights of children as cited in UNESCO (2007). It is stated in the convention that, it is a basic right of learners especially in the early years of education, to learn through their mother tongue (UNESCO, 2007). As such, many school language policies across the globe are engaging in practices where the learners' home languages are honoured to be the languages of instruction (Cheung and Randall, 2000 cited in Chilora and Harris, 2001). Wa-Mbaleka (2014) notes that UNESCO is more concerned with disadvantaged groups of people and as such, all languages are expected to have equal rights to be protected developed and respected. One way to protect the rights of the marginalised groups who are often disadvantaged within national educational programmes is through using their languages in education as mediums of instruction.

Education has been identified as one of the key variables in ensuring human development and effort to avail it to all has been the precedence for governments and development agencies since the United Nations (UN) declared it a human right on 10 December 1948 at the UN General Assembly at the Palais de Chaillot, in Paris. Prah (2000) contends that the most definite way in which education can reach as many people as possible and incorporate them in the democratic and national process is through mother tongue education. Broke-Utne and Alidou (2005) contend that mother tongue education leads to improved communication among teachers and learners thus, facilitating improved teaching and learning. As such, there has been an increasing call for the use of the learner's mother tongue as the medium of instruction as a

way of recognising education as a human right by making it accessible to every citizen and every society.

Critics have argued that the continued use of foreign languages or national languages as mediums of instruction is a double jeopardy for speakers of indigenous minority languages because they are made to believe that their language is inferior to those that are accorded a high status in education. In Zimbabwe for example, Shangani is an indigenous minority language and using English (former colonial master's language) or Shona (a National language) as mediums of instruction would make Shangani language speakers feel inferior to the English Language or Shona Language speakers. From a human rights perspective, speakers of minority languages need to have equal rights as well as support that the majority language speakers enjoy. (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1994). This should be done to ensure that even the minority language speakers learn effectively and efficiently because if the issue of language is not addressed, minority language children would experience an unfavourable education system which in turn leads to high dropout, poverty and illiteracy rates causing them to live an objectionable life (UNESCO 2003, 2007). Thus, whether a language is a majority or minority, the use of the mother tongue in education is encouraged.

In addition to the above, the use of the learner's mother tongue enables learners who are the prospective leaders of the community to have a full understanding of the knowledge and belief systems of the communities within which they live (Magwa, 2010). Indigenous knowledge systems cannot be taken for granted since the link between home and school is essential if meaningful learning is to take place. Dhlamini and Maseko (2014) note that parental involvement and general interest in their children's work is inevitable if the children are taught in the language that parents are conversant in. This indicates that even the performance of pupils at school will improve as parents will be in a position to assist their own children in homework exercises since they are familiar with the language of instruction. Thus, mother tongue education can be a way of bridging the gap that exists between the home and school languages (Mathooko, 2009). If the language is unfamiliar to the parents it would mean that learning begins and ends at school which may actually disadvantage the learner.

The use of foreign or unfamiliar languages actually impedes the acquisition of knowledge in education since teachers are compelled by the situation to stick to the conventional and educator centred methods that require students to give chorus answers, engage in repetition, memorisation and regurgitation of information (Alidou and Broke-Utne, 2006). These methods

in effect make learners passive listeners as the teacher dominates instruction. This shows that, it is advisable to use the learner's mother tongue so as to allow interactive teaching methodologies which bolster pupil participation in lessons for better understanding of concepts. Gacheche (2010) contends that when an unfamiliar language dominates the learning process, learners are left with questions, uncertainties and hesitations that they will never articulate which in turn could lead to perilous resentments. Thus, if a foreign language is imposed on learners what it means is that their knowledge is repressed at the same time authenticating them as objects that can easily be manipulated.

The most significant report on the need to use the learner's mother tongue as the medium of instruction is the UNESCO (1953:47) report on the use of vernacular languages which states that, "On educational grounds we recommend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible." It further states that pupils should start their education through the medium of the mother tongue because it facilitates better mastery of concepts at the same time making the break between home and school as small as possible (UNESCO, 1953). This implies that the learner's mother tongue is seen as a facilitator of understanding in education and thus should be used for the benefit of the learners. According to Brimer and Pauli (1974:24) in McNab (1989:15), once at school "… given that the child is fit and well, the gravest handicap that he can suffer …is to be unfamiliar with the language of instruction." Therefore, the use of the mother tongue is encouraged to guarantee the learners' cognitive development and maximum acquisition of knowledge in education.

As a direct result of the UNESCO (1953) report, many conferences have been held in Africa to encourage the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction. For example, the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa (1975) recommended the gradual increase in the use of African languages as vehicles of instruction at various educational levels because African languages and traditions constitute the indispensable foundations of any educational and cultural advancement in Africa (UNESCO, 1975, Final Report, Recommendation Number 3 as cited by McNab, 1989). This implies that from this perspective, the use of the mother tongue in an African context ensures cultural legitimacy as it is through language that culture is carried from one generation to the next. The theme of mother tongue education was followed up at the Lagos meeting of African Ministers of Education (UNESCO, 1976).At a similar meeting in Harare in 1982, it was stated that since African states are the ones requiring education, the use of African languages as instruments of education becomes the main concern (McNab, 1989). This way, African countries can ensure cultural maintenance,

economic and scientific innovations through the use of their own languages as mediums of instruction.

Learner participation is guaranteed when the mother tongue is the medium of instruction. When learners are participating in class they will have an increased self-esteem. Benson (2004c) cites Dalby (1985) as saying that bilingual learners take part more often in the teaching/learning enterprise and exhibit immense self-confidences compared to learners in immersion programmes who are made to simply listen and recite without making sense of what they are reciting. Thus, using the learner's mother tongue gives them a chance to articulate the knowledge they have acquired and exhibit their capabilities. According to Richardson (2001) Piaget's as well as Vygotsky's didactic theories support the capability by learners to express themselves as fruitful for learning. Thus, for meaningful learning to take place, the use of the learner's mother tongue should be prioritised.

When a mother tongue is used to teach concepts, the learner's effort will be essentially on the mastery of content. Cummins (2000) contends that since subject matter instruction is given through the mother tongue (L1), the learning of new concepts is not delayed until learners gain competence in the Second Language (L2).According to Roy-Campbell (2001) the majority of African learners are failing to acquire educational knowledge because they are taught through foreign language sand the evidence to this effect is overwhelming. The reason is that the persistent use of an unfamiliar language of instruction in schools impacts negatively on the children's thinking capabilities, thus impeding their cognitive growth (Cummins, 2000). Thus, if a foreign language is used, the learner has to first grapple with the language before mastering the concepts. This implies that, it is to the advantage of both the teachers and learners to use the mother tongue as less time is required to deliver and acquire concepts respectively. In addition to that, unlike in submersion teaching which is often characterised by lecture and rote response, mother language instruction facilitates natural communication and negotiation of meaning between teachers and students thus, creating interactive learning environments that are favourable for both cognitive and linguistic development.

The central aim of language in education is to help people express and be determinedly aware of the full range of their experiences, knowledge and understanding which is greatly facilitated by a mother tongue-based education system, particularly in societies where there is limited access to the second language. Awoniyi (1982) advances that language is used as a device of thought since thought and language are mutually dependent entities just like how the body and

soul always influence the operations of the other. There are well known experimental studies on mother tongue-based education programs in African countries that have authenticated that using the mother tongue as MOI is indispensable if learners are to successfully gain educational skills and knowledge.

Modiano's (1973) study in the Chiapas Highlands of México can be a yardstick to prove that mother tongue education is the best. In that study, it was established that indigenous children could efficiently transfer literacy skills from the L1 to the L2 and performed much better than their monolingual Spanish counterparts. Makoni et al (2003) also state that, in Niger it was noted that it was difficult for women and girls to speak out because they were not competent in the French Language and were afraid of making mistakes. These authors further argue that, the women and girls only became free to express themselves when they were allowed to use their home languages in class. These and other researches give clear evidence that mother tongue and education are closely related entities which governments should take into consideration to ensure that education is brought to the doorstep of every member of the society.

Using the mother as the MOI also caters for the learners' affective domain. According to Cummins (2000) the use of the L1 strengthens the learner's emotional realm, which entails confidence, self-respect and identity. This in turn makes learners creative, motivated and enterprising. Therefore, using the mother tongue in education gives learners a chance to discover who they are at the same time developing their behaviours as well as their mental power, dissimilar to when a foreign language is used where they have no choice but to simply regurgitate perfunctorily, leading to disappointment and eventually repeating classes due to poor performance and ultimately, withdrawal from the school system. Thus, it can be asserted that using mother tongues in education yields good results for education in as far as access as well as improved quality education is concerned. However, the question is: Do African governments prioritise the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction given that there is a plethora of advantages for doing so?

As discussed, the use of the mother tongue aids optimal intellectual development of learners and provides access to a wide programme of study which comprises, basically, literacy/ language and mathematics. Most African countries have come up with policies that seem to embrace this mentality. Zimbabwe is also among them. The Zimbabwean 2006 Education Amendment Act (Section 62) states that:

1.  Subject to this section, all the three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English shall be taught on an equal-time basis in all schools up to form 2 level (Grade 9).

2.  In areas where indigenous languages other than those mentioned in subsection (1) are spoken, the Minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in schools in addition to those specified in subsection (1). (NB: These are the minority languages that I mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis).

3.  The Minister may authorise the teaching of foreign languages in schools.

4.  Prior to form one, any one of the languages referred to in subsection (1) and (2) may be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by pupils.

5.  Sign Language should be the priority medium of instruction for the deaf and hard of hearing.

This policy seems to recognize almost all the indigenous languages in Zimbabwe, be they the so called minority or national languages. The question is: How are teachers experiencing the use of the Shangani as the medium of instruction?

Despite all the advantages of MTE discussed above, it is sad to note that, most of the mother tongue education policies especially in Africa, are faced with a myriad challenges. Tollefson and Tsui (2004) cite Benson and King as saying that there is often a disparity between expressed standards and real support for indigenous languages which in their view often results from profoundly rooted ideologies concerning the language. Also, many of Africa's most esteemed researchers in the field of languages (e.g. Obanya, 1999; Bamgbose, 2000) have noted with concern that language policy implementation in the African continent is not consistent with the real policy. This implies that, although many African countries have promulgated policies which seem to be in favour of using African indigenous languages as mediums of instruction, the situation on the ground is that most countries still follow practices where mother tongue education is restricted to the first few grades and much emphasis is placed on quickly changing over to one of the international languages (English, French, Portuguese or Spanish) and this leads to poor performance (Makoni et al, 2003). As Benson (2004:3) notes, an L1 based system can only work "…where basic human needs are being met so that schooling can take place, and mother tongue-based schooling can be properly implemented."Thus, it may mean that the teachers may face some challenges as they experience the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction. A closer look at a few case studies would reveal that teachers

experience the teaching through indigenous languages differently but the majority are facing challenges in the implementation of mother tongue education policies. This would be discussed in depth in the subsequent discussion.

## 2.4 FACTORS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION POLICIES

Tracing the language issue and how language in education policies have been implemented in Africa reflects a gloomy picture since most policies are simply on paper (de facto policies) and never implemented or a situation where they are undermined by the user communities. There are several factors that have hindered language policy implementation in Africa but for the purposes of this literature review, factors like the colonial legacy, attitudes, the avoidance strategy, incentives attached to the language, resources as well as the school culture are going to be discussed and analysed in detail.

### 2.4.1 The Colonial Legacy

The fact that most African countries were once under colonial rule can best explain the language situation in Africa. As Ngugi (1993) notes, during the colonial era, the imperialists introduced various language policies whose major aim was to dominate the African communities. The colonial governments established institutions known as Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) with the exclusive intention to facilitate the total obliteration of African languages and cultures. Ngugi (1993) observes that, inasmuch as the gun made it possible the mining of gold and the political captivity of their owners, it was language that was used to hold captive their cultures, values and minds. In former French colonies like the Ivory Coast and Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) among others, French was the official language. According to Kelly (1982) although the French allowed the use of indigenous languages for the first three years of schooling in a few colonies, in a majority of them, especially in urban schools of West Africa, there was insistence by the authorities on the use of French throughout, as they believed that in this way, they could strengthen their control and shape the minds of the subsequent generations. The use of French as the official language and as the medium of instruction meant that the colonialists used language to shape the minds of the captives. They regarded the French language as a unifying force for the colonial territory which was but an annexe of metropolitan France.

In British colonies like Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya and Malawi among others, English was imposed as the official language and medium of instruction in all European schools. Phillipson (1992) asserts that, unlike the French, the British encouraged the extensive use of local languages in the early years of primary schooling. Roy –Campbell (2001) also confirms that in many African countries, local languages were used as mediums of instruction for the initial years of schooling. This legacy still remains because Makoni et al (2003) report that nearly half a century after the 1953 UNESCO policy on mother tongue education, mother tongue in most African countries continue to mean only a few years of using indigenous languages as mediums of instruction, rather than indigenous languages throughout the whole educational system.

As such, in countries like Uganda, Malawi and Zambia the reported practice is that beyond Grade four, there is a switch to English as the medium of instruction. Benson (2004b) notes that hesitance to adopt mother tongue policies might be due to hundreds of years of colonial thinking that devalues indigenous languages. The colonial experience also led to what Phillipson (1992) calls linguistic imperialism and this has had indelible effects on how African indigenous languages are viewed in this post colonial era. (I will discuss the Theory of Linguistic Imperialism in depth in Chapter 4). Thus, the legacy of colonialism still prevails because the same practice was introduced to these countries by the former colonial masters.

For countries like Mozambique which were colonised by the Portuguese, the colonialists used language to hold captive indigenous peoples' cultures, values and minds through their policy of assimilation (assimilado). In order to achieve this, the imperialists first suppressed the indigenous languages of the captive nations (Ngugi, 1993). As such, the use of indigenous languages was abolished in all Portuguese colonies in a bid to make the captives fail to have their own mirrors which they could use to observe themselves as well as their enemies (Ngugi, 1993). The suppression of indigenous languages occurred simultaneously with the elevation of Portuguese as the language of all communication. Even at school, pupils were punished if they were caught speaking their own African languages because the aim of the colonisers was to remove the minds of indigenous people from the world and history carried by their languages (Ngugi, 1993). This would ensure the complete economic and political domination of these captives.

Education through the colonial master's language meant access to white collar jobs because adeptness in these languages was a precondition to access employment. Awoniyi (1982) asserts that those who studied indigenous African languages did not have the assurance of getting

better paying jobs in the future; instead, those who studied English were certain that they would access good jobs and other prominent posts in the political arena as well as in trade and business. As such, Africans were told in a subtle way that their languages were uncouth and primitive and could not be considered worthy of scientific analysis and study. This legacy still remains because according to Awoniyi (1982) many Africans still attach a tag of inferiority on indigenous languages. Many Africans still believe that African languages are incapable of expressing scientific terms and still regard foreign languages highly. Dawe (2014) contends that the knowledge of the English Language has always been associated with better quality education, national and international competitiveness and better employment opportunities. Thondlana (2002) observes that in Zimbabwe, English is still a prerequisite for accessing employment. As such, this colonial legacy impedes MTE policy implementation in many countries

The issue of using the colonial masters' language throughout the education system is still evident in most urban schools especially former Group 'A' schools (the schools that were exclusively for the whites during the colonial period. According to Awoniyi (1982) during the colonial period some school administrators put up notices on the walls such as 'No vernacular here.' This practice is still evident in many schools in South Africa, Zambia and Uganda among others where it is made clear the medium of all communication is English. This shows that in most post-colonial states, the English language is still regarded highly to an extent that it is prestigious to send one's child to an all English speaking school. This leaves a lot of questions on how teachers are experiencing the use of Shangani which according to Mabaso (2007) is a minority language.

Cummins (1984) observes that critics can understand issues of language policy implementation better if they use the historical perspective. As such, historical antecedents may influence the language of instruction in schools. The colonial history of a country can largely influence the language that is used as MOI despite the fact that the language policy might be saying something different. Makoni, et al (2003) observe that English, Portuguese and French, each a remnant of the colonial legacy, is still the dominant language of instruction in many African countries. This is because Phillipson (1992) asserts that in British colonies, for example, local languages were only used in lower grades in preparation for the transition to education through the English medium because local languages were never given a high status in any colonial society.

As such, during the colonial era, most Africans mistakenly thought that formal education meant being competent in the English Language –they wanted to be equal to their colonial masters in all respects (Awoniyi, 1982). Prah(2000)notes that things have not changed in post-colonial Africa because Africans still have a high regard of these former colonial languages to an extent that they are regarded as prestigious and vehicles that enable access to higher education and employment to those with proficiency in them. For example, in Tanzania the colonial legacy remains strong because as reported by Roy-Campbell (2001) the policy of using Kiswahili as the MOI throughout the primary school was mandated in 1968. However, the political leadership remains hesitant to make Kiswahili the MOI beyond the primary level more than thirty years after plans for this move were announced.  One of the arguments is that Kiswahili lacks adequate linguistic complexity to replicate high status knowledge, chiefly the sciences (Roy-Campbell, 2001).This is the mentality that prevails in many post colonial nations and this has hindered the implementation of mother tongue policies in countries like Uganda and Kenya, among others. It remains to be established by this research if these historical antecedents are also not hindering the implementation of the Zimbabwean 2006 MTE policy on the use of Shangani and other Zimbabwean indigenous languages for imparting knowledge at the elementary level.

Since the colonial master's language was foreign to Africans, only a few could master it. Using the foreign languages was one of the strategies that the colonialists used to create a small group of elites that would be used as a link between them and the rest of the African people. According to Prah (2000) the use of colonial languages resulted in the appearance of two major groups in those societies: a few elite who lived in the colonial masters' languages while the rest of the indigenous population operated in their local languages and culture. Thus, Meyer (1998) asserts that the colonial educators utilised education through the English language to maintain unequal power relations based on race and class. As a result of this, he goes on to state that the Zimbabwean educational history reveals that Africans have always regarded an African curriculum through African languages as less valuable than a European curriculum through English. This is because proficiency in the colonial masters' language was associated with upward social mobility, so the captives had no option but to regard the colonial master's language highly at the expense of their own languages.

Moyana (1988) concludes that due to the colonial legacy, victims of cultural imperialism end up seeing their own culture as an object of scorn and derision to an extent that they feel ashamed to be associated with their own languages and culture. She adds that victims of cultural

imperialism admire the imperialists and try as much as possible to imitate them. This legacy still prevails in countries where many people still regard the former colonial master's language highly, despite the inability by many Africans to achieve competence in the languages for them to be able to succeed in their studies and get better jobs. Prah (2000) reports that only 4 % of Zaire's (now Democratic Republic of Congo) population can speak French fluently and between 5 and 20 % of Zambia's population have competence in English. This means that the colonial legacy of creating a minority of indigenous elites through the imposition of former colonial master's languages still prevails in many African nations. These elites created by the former colonial masters assumed leadership at the independence of most of the African nations and have used the avoidance strategy in making policy statements so as to maintain the economic, social and political distance between them and the majority of the population.

## 2.4.2 The Avoidance Strategy

The imposition of English on many African states led to what Phillipson (1992) calls linguistic imperialism. He observes that linguistic imperialism has an indirect means of twisting the mindsets, feelings and ambitions of the noblest in a society to an extent that they would not appreciate and realise the potentials embedded in their local languages. As such, some elites in post colonial states have used the avoidance strategy in making policy statements on MTE because they have been brainwashed by linguistic imperialism. Thus, those in power do not show their commitment to the use of indigenous African languages as MOI as they want to maintain the status quo, where they maintain their social distance with the generality of the people. As such, Bamgbose (1991:111) observes that, "Language policies in African countries are characterised by avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation and declaration without implementation."Illuminating the meaning of avoidance, he adds that, "Avoidance of policy formulation is an attractive technique because it frees the government from the unpleasant consequences of any pronouncement which some sections of the community may find objectionable" (Bamgbose, 1991:111). As such, MTE policies in the majority of countries in Africa are not clearly stated so that no-one would be blamed whether or not the policy is implemented.

Authority is an essential factor in language planning. McNab (1989) quotes Fishman (1974) stating that language planners and target populations alike have their own preferences, habits and attitudes towards languages. As such, since most governments prefer former colonial masters' languages at the expense of their own languages so as to maintain the social distance

between them and the rest of the population, they will promulgate mother tongue education policies using the avoidance strategy. For example, the so called 'minority language' speakers may mount pressure on the authorities to regard their languages and use them as mediums of instruction in education.

Since those in power would want the support of these marginalised people, they would promulgate policies that may sound as if the minority languages are at equal status with the other languages. As Cooper (1989) notes, there is always antagonism in as far as the choice of language is concerned because the established elites work hard to promote a particular standard whilst the counter elites strive to make the counter standard recognised. He adds that, when the elites realise that the counter elites are trying to detach the periphery from the centre; they come up with strategies to maintain the status quo. Thus, although many post-colonial elites are not interested in the use of indigenous languages, they may promulgate mother tongue policies that are never implemented because the policies are not clearly spelt out. As such, Desai (2012) concludes that language policies in Africa have remained mere statements of intent which are never supported to ensure the development of African indigenous languages to meaningful positions in the language hierarchies. This implies that most African MTE policies are never implemented as the policymakers use what Bamgbose (1991) calls the avoidance strategy in making policy statements.

An example of a language policy that implies avoidance is that of Uganda. According to Nankindu et al (2015) the policy for rural schools says that local indigenous languages are the recommended mediums of instruction while English Language is the MOI in urban schools. This happens in a background where English is still required for employment and access to other social and political positions (Nankindu et al, 2015).This means that the government of Uganda is not committed to the use of the indigenous languages as MOI because making rural school pupils learn through languages that do not guarantee employment is a subtle way of encouraging them to learn through English which guarantees employment.

This may also imply that the government of Uganda does not have confidence in the indigenous local languages because those in the urban areas (where children of government officials learn) learn through the English language. Prah (2000) quotes Roy-Campbell (1998) as arguing that if government officials lack the confidence in their own language due to real unawareness of the possibilities of language or class interest, what can one expect from the common people? If the officials used the word <u>may</u> in stating policy statements to do with mother tongue

education, it shows that they are not even confident with the policy themselves. As such, in Uganda it is the teachers' choice to use or not to use the learners' L1 as MOI because the policy itself is not mandatory.

The avoidance strategy also puts the government on a safe side from rebellion by minority language speakers. According to Royneland (1996) when minority languages are further ignored or systematically marginalised by the state, there are high chances that the state loses its authority among the speakers of these languages. As such, policies would seem as if they recognise these languages. For example, the way in which language issues are articulated in the Zimbabwean 2006 Education Amendment Act implies avoidance. The policy says where Shona and Ndebele are predominantly spoken; they 'may' be used as mediums of instruction. It further says that minority languages may be taught as subjects if the Minister authorises it. According to the policy, the country's minority languages may also be used as MOI prior to Form 1 (Grade 8 equivalent). This shows that the Zimbabwean MTE policy is not mandatory just like the Ugandan one. Gacheche (2010) cites Shotton (2002) as saying that, as education is structured especially for those that are poor and weak, what it simply does is to disregard the learners' experiences and knowledge at the same time confirming them as objects of manipulation. The avoidance strategy has been used to maintain unequal power relations because mother tongue education policies have not been taken seriously for the benefit of the marginalised as their proficiency in the former colonial masters' languages is limited due to the fact that they lack the exposure to such languages. As Royneland (1996) aptly says, speakers of so-called minority languages find themselves on a football pitch playing, not to win but to draw against a side which certainly in some cases is really trying to win. As discussed, the ruling elites in many African countries have succeeded in doing this by the use of the avoidance strategy.

The fact that the 2006 Education Amendment Act seems to be employing the avoidance strategy through the use of the word 'may' raises questions as to whether or not it is fully implemented in Zimbabwe. The way it is stated, that is, the use of 'may' seems to suggest that the seriousness and political will to upgrade indigenous to significant positions in the modern world are minimal. To show that most post –colonial governments are not committed to the implementation of MTE policies, they do not attach benefits for learning through these local languages and this has had a negative impact on their implementation of such policies.

### 2.4.3 Indigenous languages and the need to use incentives to attract users

The issue of incentives for using particular languages is another determinant factor to MTE policy implementation. Herbert (1992) aptly says that a language can only be attractive if it has utilitarian value. The question then is: Do our African indigenous languages have the utility value that the users need so much? Bamgbose (1991) that the teaching of African languages is usually impeded by the fact that African languages are associated with low prestige. This implies that if there are no incentives attached to indigenous languages, the implementation of MTE policies will remain a fallacy because the user community is concerned with the benefits they would get if they use the mother tongue, for example, access to higher education.

In most African countries, the reality on ground is that despite the fact that English is alien to most of the citizens and is only accessible to the few learned elite, it enjoys a high status, aspiration value and use because it is highly cherished as a language that allows its users to have access to higher education and opportunities internationally. Prah (2000) observes that MTE has never been linked to benefits such as employment, higher education or access to economic resources, as what happens with the former colonial languages. The former colonial languages are still a requirement if one is to access employment or economic resources available. This makes it difficult for the implementers to implement mother tongue education policies which will not be of any benefit to the learner in later life.

Mother tongue education is practised in countries like Seychelles and Ethiopia among others. Their policies succeeded because they attached incentives to their indigenous languages. McNab (1989) reports that, in Ethiopia, competence in the Amharic Language is the key for accessing employment. The same applies to Kiswahili in Tanzania and Creole in Seychelles. However, many other African countries still put former colonial languages at the pedestal at the expense of their own. In Zambia for example, only those who would have passed English can be employed or access higher education. This has led to many teachers in such countries to introduce the English medium as early as Grade One to give their learners practice in a language that would give them an advantage in later life at the same time ignoring the so called mother tongue education policies in their countries.

In Uganda, English is considered a language of socio-economic ascent and is valued because a high economic status is equated with being able to speak English well. Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) observe that if one speaks English well, he is educated and has a good job. The same scenario obtains in Kenya. The fact that Kiswahili had no incentives attached to it when Idi

Amin decreed it a national language of Uganda in 1973 was one of the reasons that led to its rejection by the Ugandan society. Prah (2000) advises that another way of increasing the status of African languages is to make them required subjects and requirements for getting employment. However, Roy-Campbell (2001) observes that in Zimbabwe a pass in Shona merely adds to the number of 'O' Levels a student may get and unlike the requirement for English, students do not need to pass Shona in order to get their 'O' Level certificates. The question is: How would teachers experience using Shangani as the MOI in a scenario where indigenous languages are not viewed highly or even considered at employment level? This shall be discovered as the research unfolds.

In the highlands of Peru, the parents rejected bilingual education. McNab (1989) reports that the plan was rejected by the parents because they knew that social and economic power was associated with the language of the elite, so they actually approved the teaching of the children in Spanish from the first day in school. Thus, whether or not the Peruvian parents knew the advantages of their children learning through the mother tongue they would not accept it as they were fully aware of the advantages of using the foreign language. The same feelings have been evident in many African people towards mother tongue education. Phillipson (1992) observes that the majority of Africans in former British colonies seem to have the feeling that advocacy for African languages is aimed at relegating them to the periphery. Thus, it is crucial to value African languages at the level of policy because Roy-Campbell (2001) notes that, if at the level of policy and concrete reality African languages are not valued, the common people will not see them as important outside their direct social milieu because they would want a language that would ensure securing employment and financial security.

Incentives attached to a language are critical in ensuring successful MTE policy implementation but there are also equally important factors like the attitudes of the learners, teachers and even parents towards the indigenous languages that may also undermine policy implementation. This is what follows in the ensuing discussion.

### 2.4.4 Teachers, Learners and Parents' Attitudes towards the Use of African Indigenous Languages in Education

Baker (1992) notes that, stakeholders' attitudes towards a proposed language shift need serious consideration because if they are negative, all the attempts to come introduce a language policy can be futile. Group and individual attitudes are of significance as they determine the successful implementation of a MTE policy. According to Kadodo et al (2012:33) "…an attitude is a

disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably towards an object, person, institution or event." In this context, an attitude is a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably towards a language policy. Kadodo et al (2012) therefore say that the user community's feelings towards a language should be taken seriously as they contribute towards the success or failure of the proposed language policy.

People develop attitudes due to various reasons. Baker (1992) posits instrumental and integrative reasons for stakeholders' attitudes. Instrumental motivation mirrors pragmatic, utilitarian motives. According to Cook (1996) when one is learning a language for instrumental reasons, the driving force is external and different from how the L1 speakers of the language view it. The instrumental reasons may include learning a language so that one could perform well in the examination, get employment or to gain social recognition. The colonial history of Zimbabwe shows that those with competence in English had an assurance of a better life that is why people developed favourable attitudes to it (Kadodo et al, 2012). These authors further argue that during the same period, the indigenous languages lacked economic empowerment and this affected the user community's perceptions towards them. Thus, it is clear that the instrumentality of English language made people develop positive attitudes while negative attitudes were developed towards indigenous languages because they were not economically empowered.

The instrumental function of English in South Africa during colonial period led to the development of negative attitudes of learners towards Afrikaans. The children of Soweto were aware that their acceptance of Afrikaans language would limit their chances to enrol for higher education locally and internationally (Herbert, 1992). This led to the Soweto uprising in 1976. As a direct result of this uprising it became possible for schools to opt for English as sole medium of instruction above primary levels with Afrikaans relegated to the status of a language of study. Also, the imposition of Arabic as an official language in the southern region of Sudan was one of the crucial factors in starting the 17 year long disastrous conflict (Herbert, 1992). These scenarios are enough evidence that as long as languages do not have the instrumental function they are unlikely to attract positive attitudes from the consumers of the policy. Thus, the issue of attitudes cannot be ignored as it largely determines implementation of a language policy.

The question is: What are the learners, teachers and parents' perceptions towards the Shangani Language? These have implications on how teachers are likely to experience using Shangani

as MOI. As McNab (1989) states, the knowledge by learners that it is prestigious to speak and learn through the official language and that it enables them to access employment, mass media and other written materials, may make them resist mother tongue education. For example, research among the Ibo in Nigeria indicates that, the attitudes of both pupils and their parents are greatly more favourable to English than to Ibo, despite the fact that educational failure is prevalent (Okonkwo, 1983 in Phillipson, 1992). This is because education ensures movement of individuals up the social ladder and school children are fully aware of the language that makes them access good employment. The colonial experience that English was a gatekeeper for employment and that it is still a gatekeeper in post-colonial countries makes many parents have negative attitudes towards the indigenous languages. Meyer (1998) observes that, in a national socio-linguistic context where indigenous languages are marginalised, parents may see that government may have a double agenda in promoting home languages in rural schools while favouring a European language at higher levels of education. He adds that, they may even think that government employees through their superior class position are deceitfully attempting to increase job prospects for their own children. This is an indication that unless indigenous languages in Zimbabwe are made to hold a high expectancy-value that will ensure a good life for consumers, implementing the MTE policy becomes difficult as consumers do not see the efforts to use these languages as genuine.

The attitudes of teachers towards the mother tongue cannot also be taken for granted as they are the primary implementers of the policy. McNab (1989) notes that the success or failure of language in education policies and their implementation can be evaluated at the grassroots level of education, that is, the classroom. Thus, the attitudes of teachers will also determine policy implementation. The instrumental function of languages in Zimbabwe is also known by teachers. Kadodo et al (2012) observe that the English Language has been strongly maintained at the apex of the education curriculum in the Zimbabwean economy. English is also used in the examination of all the subjects in the curriculum except indigenous languages. It remains to be seen if the stakeholders at the three schools have a positive regard of using Shangani as MOI.

It should, however, be noted that language attitudes are not permanent. Attitudes change depending on the situation. Herbert (1992) observes that the attitudes towards Afrikaans in Namibia have fluctuated from rejection (under the German rule) to full acceptance under the South African regime to absolute refutation by the South West Africa People's Organisation(SWAPO) (which identified it as a language of oppression) and since

independence, to more tolerance for Afrikaans again. This shows that if conditions change, attitudes towards a language can change. In the case of mother tongues, people's negative attitudes towards it can be changed through sensitisation of the user community on the advantages of implementing MTE policies. Through this study, I endeavour to establish the attitudes of the consumers of the 2006 language policy so as to establish the experiences of the primary implementers of the policy, the teachers.

Even if attitudes are positive, they need to be complemented by the availability of both human and material resources and this is what follows in the ensuing discussion.

### 2.4.5 Human and Material Resources

Debate on the efficacy of MTE policies usually centres on the ability by the teachers to impart knowledge using the learners' L1. However, Fasold (1984) and Thomas (2009) observe that those countries that try to promote the use of the learners' L1 face an acute shortage of teachers with the required levels of proficiency in the learners' L1. They add that this happens despite the fact that the presence of teachers is a prerequisite if a MTE policy is to succeed. For example, in a research carried out by Burton (2013) it was discovered that teachers lacked adequate training in the local languages and that made teachers unaware of the monitoring and assessment strategies they might employ to assist the students. Consequently, Benson (2004c) observes that teachers who are non-native speakers of the learners' L1 will evade the supposed benefits of L1 and revert to the bad practices knowingly. Benson (2004c) further notes that the teachers who lack proficiency in the learners' L1 will continue using the teacher-centred methods which are characterised by mere regurgitation of information by the learners, giving them no chance to express their lack of understanding of what is being recited. This gives evidence that the issue of resources is critical in MTE policy implementation policies as it will never be practicable without adequate human resources.

The issue of examinations and the pressure they put on learners and teachers (especially those who are incompetent in the learners' L1) alike is another reason why the benefits of MTE policies are evaded in most countries. Thus, since most materials are written in L2 and examinations are conducted in L2, teachers would simply ignore using the learners' L1 and continue using L2 despite policy's advocacy for L1 instruction (Gacheche, 2010). In Kenya, it is reported that although the 1976 policy advocated for L1 instruction, the majority of teachers continued to use English because they were aware that it was the language of examination and upper classes, mistakenly thinking that early introduction of the English Language would mean

the learners' quick mastery of it (Bunyi, 2005 in Gacheche, 2010). This is evidence that human and material resources are critical if the implementation of a mother tongue policy is to be successful.

Being able to speak the learners' L1 should not be the only variable to be considered by policymakers in MTE policy implementation. Some critics have argued that it is wrong to assume that ability to speak a language implies ability to teach through it. According to Benson (2004c) if teachers do not undergo formal training in the local languages instruction is likely to be ineffective therefore governments should not relax assuming that everything will go on well. Dutcher (2003) sums it up saying if there is a serious shortage of materials, untrained teachers in local languages and inadequate language development MTE will not succeed. This leaves a lot of questions on the measures put in place by the Zimbabwean government for manpower training to ensure that teachers would experience meaningful teaching through the Shangani Language.

A question then arises: What has been done to ensure that the 2006 Education Amendment Act is implemented? For example, what has been done in terms of teacher training and teacher deployment to ascertain that African indigenous languages would be used as MOI? This shall be discovered as the research unveils. In the Zimbabwean context, Thondlana (2002) observes that the implementation of MTE policy particularly on the minority languages was even more complicated because the few teachers who are proficient in the languages are not deployed in the relevant areas. Thus, Chilora and Harris (2001) aver that the teachers' L1 may be a hindering factor to meaningful MTE implementation particularly when their L1 is different from the learners'. In addition to that, Stites (1999) says that the unavailability of minority language teachers and texts is the major explanation why bilingual education projects in the Zhuang area of China have been failing. It remains to be established by this research how the issue of human resources has been addressed to ensure that Shangani as the MOI is successfully implemented.

Another issue of concern in MTE policy implementation is that shortage of materials in the indigenous languages. According to Lartec et al (2014) in implementing Mother Tongue Education- Multilingual Education (MTE-MLE), goals are not being attained if there is a deficiency of materials needed; hence, there is need for the provision of the books and instructional materials that are helpful to the pupils which will increase their understanding. Research has shown that in third world countries MTE policy execution are usually done in

situations where there is an acute shortage of instructional resources yet education would be on demand by the generality of the citizens (McNab, 1989). She further argues that the problem of resources cannot be ignored as complete shortages may lead to the undermining of the policy by the teachers. Through this research, it will be established if the government has availed the resources to ensure the success of the 2006 MTE policy.

An example of a policy that was promulgated without the availability of material resources was the 1996 Malawi MTE policy. The language for the pupils' books, teachers' guides and lesson plans was English but delivery of lessons was supposed to be in the learner's L1 which apparently was not the teachers' L1 (Chilora and Harris, 2001). As a result some children were learning some subjects in more than two languages. Thus, to a larger extent the 1996 Malawi mother tongue policy was not implemented due to lack of both human and material resources. One of the reasons why there is an acute shortage of resources to ensure implementation of mother tongue education policies in Africa is lack of donor support.

### 2.4.6 Donor Control

Most African governments are cash-strapped (Broke-Utne, 2000) and they mostly rely on donor funding for the provision of learning/teaching materials in the indigenous languages. This affects these poor countries because oversees companies may not want to print books in an indigenous language which may be just marketable in one country yet they can make big business through publishing books in the former colonial masters' languages. For example, Broke-Utne (2000) notes that Britain and France are giving aid to their former colonies in the form of books or money so that English and French respectively can continue to be taught in schools. This has led the broke governments to ignore the development of local languages.

Benson (2004c) confirms that adopting the ideals of MTE policy implementation, that is, materials development, teacher training and providing broadcasting services for MLE may strain the budgets of most African governments and they would not want to use the few resources to develop the indigenous languages in the face of economic challenges. As such, they may seek donor support but usually the overseas donors would inject money to promote their own languages. Notable examples are those of British authorities trying to reintroduce English as the official language in Tanzania by allocating funds towards the production of materials and that of the French government that wanted French to remain the official language of the Seychelles which the then Minister Mr Ferran rejected. These and other examples are evidence that donor funding is required to avail material resources for MTE because most

African countries do not have the money to produce the instructional materials. The question that remains is: Did the Zimbabwean government access the donor funding to produce the required materials in the Shangani Language? The research will find out.

In Kenya, mother tongue education policy faced many challenges at implementation level due to various reasons, among them being shortage of qualified teachers, inadequate syllabi and unsuitable textbooks (Awoniyi, 1982). This shows that successful implementation of mother tongue education policies is contingent upon many factors, resources being one of them.

## 2.5 THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE ON MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

### 2.5.1 The case of South Africa

In South Africa, 11 languages were declared official languages at independence after 1994. However, Tshotsho (2013) laments the poor implementation of the policy. She notes that, in practice, Afrikaans and English continue to enjoy a higher status compared to the other nine. De Klerk (2002) observes that the fact that English is recognised as the language of government authenticate the reality that the South African government sees it as the language of power and high value. This implies that despite the promulgation of a MTE policy, English still maintains its superiority over South African indigenous languages. However, Heugh (2005) reports that the high failure and dropout rates in South Africa is caused mainly by the use of the English Language as MOI. This means that using a foreign language as MOI is hindering the acquisition of educational knowledge.

Miti (2008) observes that in certain circumstances untrained teachers in local languages are required to teach the language by virtue of them being able to speak the languages. Tshotsho (2013) reports that, the government of South Africa is yet to avail resources (both physical and human) for the promotion of multilingualism. As a result, she further notes that MTE policy implementation is not practicable in the near future because books written in the South African languages are not yet available. This indicates that it is mammoth task to ask the teacher to teach using any one of the local languages without the requisite resources. MLE is yet to be achieved in South Africa because as Desai (2012) notes, the common features of South African schools are: congested classrooms, malnourished children as well as poorly qualified teachers.

Teachers in South Africa are also facing challenges in the use of indigenous languages because the parents are not in support of MTE. This is despite the fact that MTE enhances the teaching of Mathematics as well as Sciences in schools (Mwinsheikhe, 2002). Nkosi (2014) cites various authors (e.g. Adegbija, 2004; Kamwangamulu, 2003; Kamwendo, 2010) as saying that the English assumed a prestigious position because of the history of apartheid laws in South Africa. On the other hand these scholars observe that local languages continue to occupy an inferior position in independent South Africa as they are not seen as possible vehicles through which educational knowledge can be acquired. As Tshotsho (2013) reports, parents in South Africa insist that their children should learn through the English medium.

Ndamba (2008) reports that in a research carried out by Langa and Setati in 2006 it was found out that the language of preference in learning Mathematics for learners at secondary school was English because they saw no value in local languages which could not offer them any economic and social benefits in the future. This is because English is used as a yardstick to measure one's ability to do a job or not. Hence, out of desperation African language speakers willingly choose to learn English for instrumental reasons for them to be able to access education, health and housing (Tshotsho, 2013). Thus, what is happening in South Africa currently is the same as what is happening in typical post-colonial countries (Desai, 2012), implying that indigenous languages continue to perform peripheral roles in the South African context. As such Desai (2012) observes that in the post-colonial world language policies are notorious for remaining statements of intent.

### 2.5.2 The case of Malawi

A notable MTE policy in the history of Malawi was the one that the government of Malawi unleashed in 1996. It stated that with immediate effect learners in standards 1 up to 4 were supposed to learn in their L1 (Ref. No IN/1/4 dated March 1996 as cited by Chilora and Harris, 2001). This was a shift from the then existing policy where Chichewa (the national language) was the MOI in all schools. Chilora and Harris (2001) note that, the government of Malawi had fully supported the policy on Chichewa as the MOI. They further observe that teachers already in service and new received training on using Chichewa as MOI in standards 1-4. In addition to that, teaching and learning materials were developed and dispatched to all schools. As a result of this preparedness towards mother tongue education, teacher training matched well with the MOI (Chilora and Harris, 2001) but this was not consistent with the pupils' home languages, hence the need for the 1996 policy reform.

The recognition of the pupils' home languages could be seen as a positive development as this would ensure mastery of concepts. Magwa (2010) notes that, learners would understand Mathematical and Scientific concepts better when presented in their mother tongues as compared to when a foreign language is used. However, Chilora and Harris (2001) lament that despite the promulgation of the said policy; government maintained the previous policy on teacher posting, i.e. the posting of teachers was based on the need in particular regions and not that they spoke the languages spoken in the schools. What it means is that there was a high possibility that a teacher who was not proficient in the learners' mother tongue would be posted to that school and be expected to even use the language as the MOI. As a result of this, the policy was minimally implemented as teachers only switched to the learners' mother tongue when officials entered their classrooms. It was a painful experience for those teachers. Chilora and Harris (2001) thus observe that there was a mismatch between the two policies and the situation in schools and that had a negative impact on the successful implementation of the policy at classroom level.

### 2.5.3 The case of Nigeria

The Nigerian government has a policy in place which states that in lower primary classes the MOI is the mother tongue. However, Abidogun (2012) concurs with Adegbija (2004) that there is inconsistency between the advantages for the children to be taught through the L1 and what is taking place in the classrooms. The major challenge that the teachers are experiencing while using Yoruba as the language of instruction is the shortage of resources. According to Abidogun (2012) mother tongue education was advocated in a situation where syllabi and textbooks are written in the English Language. As a direct result of this, teachers had to devise strategies like translation and improvisation of reading materials for them to be able to use Yoruba as the MOI.

Research has shown that from 1971-1983, the Yoruba programme which advocated for MTE throughout the six years of primary school yielded very positive results. This was because the steps taken for the implementation of the programme included among other things, the designing of the curriculum, availing relevant teaching aids and using Yoruba as the MOI throughout the six years of primary education (Ejieh, 2004 cited in Abidogun, 2012 ). The requisite training for primary school teachers on how to use the home languages as mediums of instruction was also done. The findings of that research clearly confirmed that performance of participating children in the experimental group was much better than those in the control

group in all subjects at the end of primary 6. The six year Yoruba programme according to Akinasso (1993) established indisputably that making children at primary school learn through the Yoruba language for all the six years and learning the L2 just as a subject was practicable in addition to giving better results than making them learn through the English Language. This indicates that if serious considerations on the ideals of MTE implementation are made, positive results are guaranteed.

The Nigerian government can learn something from the 1991 Education Reform in Papua New Guinea. Abidogun (2012) cites Buhmann and Trudell (2008) as reporting that The 'Tok Ples Pri Skul' preschool programme was introduced in 1994 and promoted the use of over 200 local languages for teaching in these schools. The programme was a huge success because learners who were literate in the local languages out-performed those that were proficient in English only (Wroge, 2002 cited by Abidogun, 2012). These results confirm the fact that the MTE gives a foundation for the learners' ability to learn, thus enabling them to learn a second language and other school subjects in their mother tongue (Mathooko, 2009) and other African countries can draw lessons from the Papua New Guinea's experience.

## 2.6 Local Studies on Mother Tongue Education

The history of Mother Tongue Education (MTE) in Zimbabwe is a troubled one just like its African counterparts discussed above. UNESCO (2007) notes that theory has confirmed that the core for all literacy initiatives lies in the ability to read and write in the mother tongue and the advantages of bilingual education to learners' cognitive development are explicit. However, when making a review of the 1987 Education Act (as amended in 1990) on using Shona as the MOI, Thondlana (2002) reports that most schools advocated the use of English as MOI from the outset because it was seen to be a language which guaranteed economic benefits to those proficient in it. She further reports that generally, if an individual did not have a pass in the English Language at Ordinary level (Grade 11 equivalent) he/she was not eligible for higher education or meaningful employment. Shona, Ndebele or any of the local languages were presently not acceptable substitutes. If this is the same scenario in which the 2006 Language policy is operating, then chances are high that it is not being implemented fully. Eastman (1990) in Herbert (1992) and Prah (2000) correctly observe that people would not want to be educated in their local languages if the languages are not prestigious in the wider economic, social and political milieu.

The 2006 amendment came at the background of poor implementation of the use of Shona and Ndebele (National Languages) as MOI up to Grade 3 level (as stated in the 1987 Education Act). Gotosa et al (2013) state that the 2006 Amendment policy was made despite reports that the use of Shona and Ndebele as well as selected minority languages up to Grade 3 was not being implemented as revealed by studies that were carried out after the amendment in 1987 (e.g. Thondlana, 2002; Ndamba, 2008; Phiri et al, 2013). One of the reasons cited for failure of implementation of the use of Shona and Ndebele as mediums of instruction was the problem of negative attitudes of parents and pupils towards the African indigenous languages. Just like in Botswana, the private schools in Zimbabwe catch the attention of parents to make their children learn in these schools by emphasising that the MOI is English in their schools (Nhongo, 2013). This indicates that the attitudes of parents towards the indigenous languages are negative and this has contributed to failure in MTE policy implementation in Zimbabwe.

Also, Muchenje et al (2013) report that Shona is still being imposed on Nyanja speaking pupils (Nyanja is one of the minority languages in Zimbabwe) despite the fact that the 1987 policy as amended in 1990 had officially recognised it and recommended that it be used up to Grade 3 in areas where it is spoken. Thus, minority language learners in Zimbabwe have suffered double jeopardy as they are taught through two unfamiliar languages, Shona/Ndebele and English. Nhongo (2013) observes that some local Zimbabwean languages are suppressing and dominating other indigenous languages, for example, Shona and Ndebele are continuously dominating the so called minority, such as Shangani, Tonga, Venda and Sotho among others. This implies that in addition to English which supersedes all the indigenous languages, minority languages suffer suppression by the national languages. This scenario leaves one wondering how teachers are experiencing using these minority languages as MOI.

Earlier mother tongue policies in Zimbabwe have been greatly affected by an acute shortage of both human and material resources. Dhlamini and Maseko (2014) cite a study carried out by Gondo and Gondo in 2012 where it is noted that there are a lot of inconsistencies in the training of African indigenous language teachers in Zimbabwe. They observe that while all trainee teachers are supposed to do a course in English and either Shona/Ndebele, all the other indigenous languages like Sotho, Nambya, Kalanga, Tonga, Hwesa, Chewa, Barwe, Nyanja, Venda and Shangani are not. This implies that it may be difficult for these teachers to use the minority languages upon graduating as qualified teachers.

Dhlamini and Maseko (2014) report that in Matebeleland provinces (which are predominantly Ndebele), L1 Shona speaking teachers outnumber Ndebele teachers in primary schools yet the same are expected to deliver lessons to a predominantly Ndebele class through the Ndebele Language as the MOI. Dube et al (2013) also highlight the dilemma in which minority languages in Zimbabwe are in as far as human resources are concerned and according to Mumpande (2006) in one scenario, the Tonga parents thought that withdrawing their children from schools was better than letting them to be taught by qualified Shona speaking teachers who had replaced the Tonga speaking untrained/relief teachers. The move by the government back then may be indicative of a serious shortage of teachers proficient in the minority languages which may suggest that there is a high possibility that the teachers in the schools under study may not be proficient in the Shangani Language. It remains to be unveiled how such teachers are experiencing the use of Shangani as the MOI in the schools.

## 2.7 MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION BEYOND AFRICA'S BORDERS

UNESCO (2007) highlights that it has been supporting 11 countries in mother tongue and bilingual programmes. The countries include Phillipines, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Nepal, India and China among others. According to UNESCO (2007), the Asia Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) so far is showing promising results following the sterling work in the development of orthographies for the different languages and the creation of teaching and learning materials. Generally, the experiences of the countries under the programme reveal that the classes are very effective and learners are learning the required skills in their L1 (UNESCO, 2007). For the purposes of this discussion, I will discuss three success stories in mother tongue education implementation.

### 2.7.1 The case of Cambodia

In Cambodia, a bilingual Education Programme for Youths and Adults from members of the Bunong community has been largely successful. According to UNESCO (2007), there are approximately 19 languages and 30 to 40 minorities. The national language is Khmer and there is no clearly spelt out policy for MTE. However, UNESCO (2007) reports that the Royal Government of Cambodia fully supports those programmes that endeavour to provide MTE such as the Non-Formal Education Programmes (NFE).

According to UNESCO (2007) Cambodia's Ministry of Education and Sport approved orthographies for quite a number of minority languages which include Brao, Tumpuen, Krung,

Bunong and Kavet. This means that the implementation of the bilingual education programme for youths and adults would be easy in the presence of an approved orthography of the Bunong language. In choosing the project site, two key factors were considered:

1. The availability of teachers proficient in the Bunong Language.
2. The propinquity to the provincial capital to ease monitoring and supervision (UNESCO, 2007).

With these important factors taken into consideration, the successful implementation of the project is largely guaranteed because the teachers are Bunong speaking and the project site is closer to the provincial capital which makes it easy for officials to monitor.

Another important step taken to ensure successful implementation of this project was to develop materials and the work was done by the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC). According to UNESCO (2007) the Bunong neighbourhoods have welcomed the idea of learning in their own language because they are realising its benefits. Understanding of concepts by the learners is now much better than when they were taught by a Khmer teacher through the Khmer language because they are taught by a Bunong teacher and the learning materials are in the Bunong Language. The teachers who are implementing this programme received training in bilingual teaching at ICC and they also received training in adult education at the Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sport (UNESCO, 2007).

In my own analysis of the bilingual education programme for youths and adults in Cambodia, I would say the project was largely successful owing to the preparatory work done by the government before the project was rolled out. With an approved orthography, trained teachers and materials in Bunong, one would expect nothing but successful implementation of the project. This research will establish if these ideals for MTE policy implementation were addressed in the Zimbabwean context to ensure that the use of the Shangani language as the MOI would be successful.

**2.7.2 The case of Phillipines**

Burton (2013) remarks that, research evidence from studies carried out in the Phillipines and in other countries convinced the policymakers in the country of Phillipines that there were a lot of benefits in letting minority language children learn through their local languages. The advantages noted in these studies point to high involvement in classroom activities (Benson, 2004c) better access to education and growth of critical thinking skills (Broke-Utne, 2006) and

improved academic skills (Cummins, 2000). Although the Phillipines case seems to be a successful one, it faced its own challenges. For example, in a research carried out by Lartec et al (2014), the participants emphasised that they really need books written in mother tongue so as to enable them to successfully implement MTE-MLE successfully. These sentiments are consistent with Dekker et al (2008) that no teacher can teach effectively without appropriate materials.

The issue of human resources is also a major challenge in Phillipines. Lartec et al (2014) state that if the teachers are not that literate in all the different languages of their learners, thus, the production of mother tongue textbooks and dictionaries is a must in the indigenous languages. Teachers are also experiencing difficulties in translating terms from English or Filipino to the learners' mother tongues. In a research carried out by Burton (2013) participants indicated that they are experiencing difficulties in teaching pupils because they cannot think of the right word that is exactly the equivalent of the source language thus putting them in a situation that brings confusion to the pupils.

### 2.7.3 The case of China

China has, with the support of UNESCO, successfully implemented a MTE project to the minority language speakers of the Kam Language. The project is called the Kam/Mandarin Bilingual Education Pilot Project for children (UNESCO, 2007). In selecting the project site, two factors were considered:

1. The village chosen should have the same characteristics with other villages in the neighbourhood so that the project could be repeated in neighbouring villages if proven successful.
2. There was need for the community members to be in support of the idea of bilingual education in Kam and Chinese (Greary and Pan, 2003 as cited in UNESCO, 2007).

Prior to the implementation of the project, several workshops were conducted to map the way forward in the development of materials. Since educators from the national languages could not take part in the development of the materials in the Kam minority language, the Kam community leaders and Kam teachers provided their specialist information about their language and culture which then enabled the programme organisers to develop a broad range of curriculum and teaching materials for use in the pre-school (UNESCO, 2007). All these efforts later contributed to the success of the project.

The subjects that are taught at pre-school in the Kam language include: Math, Singing, Art and Physical Education. Since in Kam speaking homes very little of Mandarin is spoken, it was observed that Kam speaking children could understand very little if instruction was given in Mandarin in Grade 1. This led to teachers labelling these Kam speaking children as slow learners. The Kam/ Mandarin project aimed at bridging this gap where learners are made to learn via the Kam laguage at the same time having oral Mandarin lessons in preparation for instruction in Mandarin in Grade 1. The teachers who implemented this project underwent training before they were made to teach using the Kam Language.

Just like in the case of Cambodia, the success story of the Kam/Mandarin Bilingual Education Pilot Project for Children (UNESCO 2007) is a result of careful planning and consideration of the basics in MTE, that is, training manpower and availing resources in the Kam Language. According to UNESCO (2007), as a result of the Kam/ Mandarin project, children's performance in later grades proved to be far above their counterparts who did not go through the same programme. Therefore, the Kam/Mandarin project was a success because all cogs were in place before the implementation of the project.

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

As highlighted, many authorities support the use the learners' L1 as MOI for meaningful transmission of skills and knowledge to take place. Various factors that stifle the successful implementation of MTE policies especially in Africa were discussed in detail. These include the colonial legacy, unavailability of both human and material resources, donor control and lack of incentives to attract users to use the African indigenous languages. These factors have been discussed in an effort to highlight the likely ways in which teachers at the selected schools experience using Shangani as MOI.  The African experience in MTE policy implementation was discussed in considerable depth. Success stories in MTE implementation were also highlighted. The next chapter centres on the methodology employed in this study.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter I made a thorough review of literature related to this research. In this chapter my focus is on the research methodology employed in the study. The research approach chosen is discussed in detail with its characteristics, strengths and limitations clearly outlined. This covers the paradigm under which the study operated. The case study research design's characteristics, strengths and limitations are explicitly given. The sample and sampling procedures as well as the data gathering instruments used follows after the discussion on the research design. Following is the aspect of ethical considerations that were taken when carrying out the study. The aspects of trustworthiness and reliability are then given followed by highlights on what exactly happened when I was conducting the research. This is done in the order that was followed on the administration of the three instruments, that is, the semi-structured interview, focus group interviews and observation. A summary of the methodology employed in this study is given followed by the conclusion.

## 3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Every research hinges on philosophical underpinnings. According to Creswell (2007) these philosophical suppositions comprise the function of values in the research (axiology), the language of the research (rhetoric), methods used (methodology), a standpoint on what reality is (ontology) and how the researcher knows what she/ he knows (epistemology). Merriam (1998:8) defines qualitative research as:

> *...an approach which recognises that meaning emerges through interaction and is not standardised from person to person as in quantitative research, and thus allowing the researcher to study issues in detail, without predetermined categorised analysis.*

This implies that in qualitative research, meaning can only be arrived at when there is meaningful interaction between the researcher and the research participants. Unlike in quantitative research, there are no preset categories for scrutiny. This implies that in qualitative research classes for data analysis emerge during the data gathering process.

Creswell (2003) sees qualitative research as an inquiry process whereby researchers seek to understand a human or social problem, based on constructing an intricate, holistic picture formed with words, whilst giving a detailed report on the means of participants and carrying out the study in naturalistic set-ups. This definition encapsulates quite a number of characteristics of qualitative research. The first characteristic is that it aims at understanding a social or human problem. What this means is that, in qualitative research the researchers cannot avoid visiting the people involved for them to be in a position to understand the issue being researched on. The second aspect that Creswell raises in his definition is that the qualitative researcher builds a multifaceted and holistic image using words. This implies that the researcher has to give thick descriptions of research participants' views in order to reach a meaningful understanding of the research problem. Third, qualitative research is conducted in the natural setting. These views are consistent with Denzin and Lincoln's (1994:2) view that, qualitative research is "…multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter."

Qualitative research is a broad approach which studies social phenomena and its diverse types are interpretive, naturalistic, ethnographic and largely critical (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). They add that qualitative researchers draw on numerous techniques of inquiry. From this definition one can therefore say that qualitative research is an approach that involves a natural inquiry which uses non-interventionist data collection strategies to unearth the natural occurrence of events. The data is collected by interacting with the people involved.

I adopted the qualitative research approach for this research because it was the most relevant in line with its ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions. Schulze (1999) notes that qualitative research is a multi-perspective kind of approach to societal interaction and its major aim is to describe, interpret and reconstruct this interaction with regards to the meanings that research informants append to it. As such, the duty of the qualitative researcher is to unearth the participants' interpretations of the phenomenon under investigation. Thus, according to Creswell (2007) the qualitative research approach situates the observer in the world. This means that adopting a qualitative research for this study enabled me, as the researcher to go and get relevant information from the teachers and how they are experiencing the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction.

### 3.2.1 Strengths of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is grounded on the naturalistic phenomenological belief that views reality as interactive, multi-layered and a shared communal experience (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). Thus, researchers attempt to interpret reality from the informants' viewpoint. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) note that "...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." Furthermore, Strauss and Corbin (1990) say that qualitative research can be utilised to gain new perspectives on subjects where much is already known or in situations where comparatively little is known concerning the phenomenon. I have based this study on the qualitative approach because its direct source of data is the natural setting, thus, it is not founded on preconceived assumptions but on viewpoints that emerged from the data gathered from the participants. Thus, l gathered data in the field where the research participants practice the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2007) which in turn enabled me to get authentic data to answer the research questions. As such, the study established the experiences of teachers using Shangani Language as the medium of instruction at three selected schools in Chiredzi District in Zimbabwe from their own point of view.

Qualitative researchers are the key research instruments. They collect data themselves using numerous sources of data. Creswell (2007) opines that the data gathered in qualitative research is in several forms such as documents, observations and interviews. This implies that the researcher does not rely on a single source of data thus collects data which may be comparable to establish what goes on in the setting. This is because the major intention of qualitative researchers is to enhance the understanding of a specific issue by "…bringing to life what goes on in the setting and how this is connected to broader panoply of real life" (Yin, 2005: xiv).

Creswell (2007) points out that in qualitative research, researchers begin with a worldview and the study of research problems making an inquiry on the implications that the individuals attribute to a human or social problem. This means that the qualitative researcher draws insight from what the research participants ascribe to the research problem. In addition to that, qualitative research is concerned with things as they occur, circumstances as they are constructed in the daily course of events and life as it is lived (Chisaka, 2013). Thus, researchers seek an understanding of the lived experiences of research participants in actual situations which, in turn, will enable them to generate theories based on those experiences.Gray (2014) highlights that, qualitative research is extremely contextual and the data is gathered in

a natural and real life setting. In this study, the experiences of teachers were better understood through interaction with the participants which in turn helped me as the researcher to interpret the meanings attached to those experiences by the participants themselves. This is because qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural locations, endeavouring to decipher, and infer them in terms of the meanings the participants bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In addition to that, in qualitative research the researchers are allowed a degree of flexibility in carrying out a particular research and facilitate the examination of topics which are quite sensitive. This can only happen in cases where there is some kind of trust between the researchers and the participants.

Tichapondwa (2013) summarises the strengths of qualitative research which can be presented diagrammatically as follows:

**Figure 1: The Strengths of Qualitative Research**
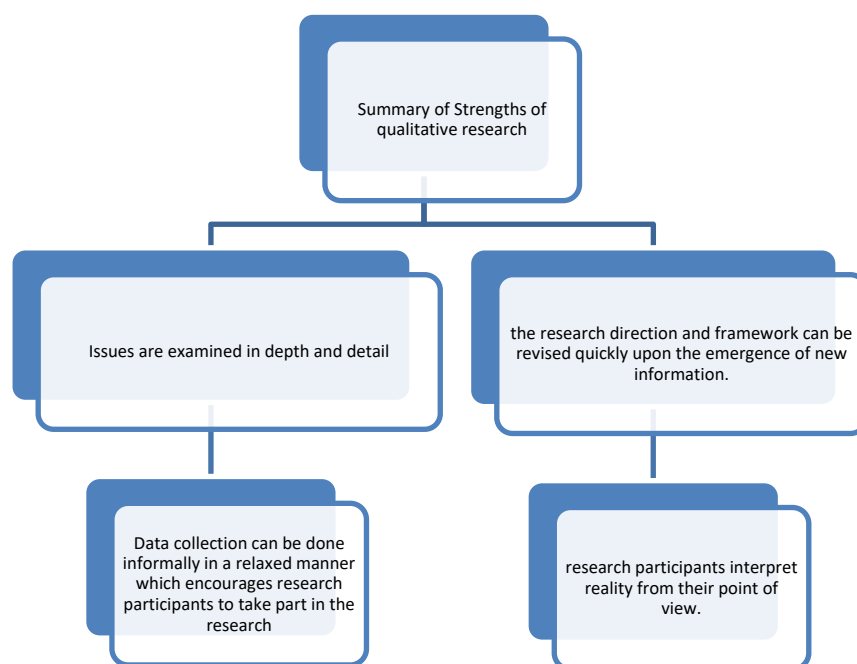


However, the qualitative approach has its share of limitations which I am moving on to now.

### 3.2.2 Limitations of Qualitative Research

Whilst it is true that qualitative methods can scrutinize social issues in particular settings in substantial depth, the collection and as well as the analysis of qualitative material can be time consuming and therefore expensive (Tichapondwa, 2013). This implies that qualitative

researchers use a lot of their time and resources in the gathering and analysis of data. In addition to that, qualitative researches generally involve relatively small numbers of research participants and as such they may not to be taken seriously by policy makers or even other researchers. For this reason of a limited number of participants, the knowledge produced may not be generalised to other people or other settings. However, in this research my focus was on understanding the circumstances or settings in which the research participants addressed the issue under investigation, not on generalising the results to other contexts (Creswell, 2007). For this reason, this automatically places this research in the interpretive paradigm.

## 3.3 THE INTERPRETIVIST PARADIGM

The study is located in the interpretive paradigm since its major focus is to describe how people interpret their worlds and how they make meaning of their particular actions, and not forecasting what people will do (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state that, interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to get to an understanding of their interpretations of the world around them. It situates the researcher as the chief research instrument through which data is gathered and analysed (Terre Blanche, Dhurrheim and Painter, 2006).

As such, researchers build their theory through working directly with the participants' experiences and understanding of the phenomenon at hand. Therefore, the interpretivist paradigm was the most suitable for this particular study as it investigated the experiences of teachers on the use of the Shangani Language as the medium of instruction from their point of view. This is because the interpretivist paradigm is largely connected with approaches that allow the research participants' voice, practices and concerns of to be heard (Weaver and Olson, 2006).Gray (2014) states that, interpretivism digs deeper to establish the historically situated and culturally derived interpretations of the world.

Interpretive researches usually stand for the marginalised and underrepresented groups, be it differences in race, gender, religion, class or sexuality (Ladson-Billings and Donnor, 2005 cited in Creswell, 2007). In addition to that, Terre Blanche, Dhurrheim and Painter (2006: 273) observe that:

> The interpretive paradigm involves taking people's subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them (ontology), making sense of people's experiences by interacting with them and listening carefully to what they tell us (epistemology) and making use of qualitative research techniques to collect and analyse data (methodology)

I adopted the interpretive paradigm because the Shangani language has been regarded a minority language since the colonial period, only to be recognised as one of the 'official' languages just recently in the Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution. As such, there has been very little recognition of this minority language regarding its use in education. Through the interpretive paradigm I was in a position to dig deeper into the teachers' experiences on the use of Shangani as medium of instruction from their own point of view.

## 3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Frankfort- Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) say a research design is the plan that allows the researcher to find answers to the problems at hand. A research design thus expresses the modus operandi for carrying out the study, the layout of how the research is carried out in order to obtain the requisite evidence in answering research questions. In this study, a case study research design was adopted. Yin (2009:12) defines a case study as "…an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context." This implies that a case study endeavours to unearth meaning from a real life context. As the researcher, I therefore obtained my data from teachers of three selected Chiredzi District schools in Zimbabwe and the case that was studied was their experiences of using Shangani as the medium of instruction.

Rule and John (2011) point out that a case study is a systematic investigation of a particular case in order to produce knowledge. This implies that in case studies, it is the aim of the researchers to generate new knowledge from the in-depth studies of particular cases. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) cite Hughes (1995:322) as saying that "...the case study approach is particularly valuable when the researcher has little control over events." Thus, the case study was relevant in this research since I, as the researcher, had no control over the teachers' experiences in using the Shangani language as the medium of instruction. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) cite Nisbet and Watt (1984) as saying that one of the strengths of case studies is that a single researcher can undertake them single-handedly and that they are strong on reality. This means that I, as the researcher, was able to gather data and interpret reality from the actual context without help from other researchers.

### 3.4.1 Advantages of case studies

Adopting a case study design has several advantages. Green and Thorogood (2014) observe that, if we need depth and accuracy in a particular research, then we have to adopt a case study research design. This is becausecase studies are usually descriptive in nature and provide rich longitudinal information about individuals or particular situations (Terre Blanche, Dhurrheim and Painter, 2006). Thus, the researchers can accurately reach a full understanding of the cases involved since they go on the ground to establish what is going on in a particular setting. Because it is anchored in actual life conditions, it results in a rich and holistic account of phenomenon (Merriam, 2009).

Case studies also have the advantage of allowing new ideas and hypotheses to emerge from cautious and thorough observation (Terre Blanche, Dhurrheim and Painter, 2006). Merriam (2009) opines that the case study offers insight in readers that can be interpreted as provisional hypotheses that help structure future research and as such it plays a pivotal role in advancing a field's knowledge base. Thus, by studying naturally occurring phenomena, researchers are in a position to develop new theories and contribute meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge. In addition to that, the case study research design is advantageous in scenarios where researchers aim at answering the 'how' or 'why' question which quantitative studies are not in a position to answer. Thus, Flyvbjerg (2006) persuades researchers to use the case study research design on the grounds that learning about human behaviour is a worthwhile endeavour and this can only be achieved through the use of good case studies. In this study, the case study enabled me to see beyond the obvious by carefully observing how the teachers at the selected schools were experiencing the use of a 'minority' language as the medium of instruction.

Flyvbjerg (2006) summarises the indispensability of case studies in contributing to theory as follows:

➢ sophisticated learning about social issues arises from a nuanced, context-dependent understanding of what is going on in a particular situation, not 'rule-based' general principles;

➢ one single case study may be enough to disprove a theory, in terms of falsifying a hypothesis;

➢ a single case study can develop a theory, for example, Pauline Prior's (1995) work on institutionalisation;

> a single case can be 'paradigmatic' in that it provides the model, 'ideal type' from which others can learn.

For these and other advantages, the case study design was adopted for this study.

### 3.4.2 Limitations of case studies

Inasmuch as case studies help in understanding a phenomenon accurately, its major limitation is that it is time consuming especially in the analysis of data. Merriam (2009) observes that the product of thick descriptions and analysis of a phenomenon may be too long, too comprehensive or too involving for busy policy makers and practitioners to read and use. In addition to that, there may be problems with the validity of information, fundamental links are difficult to test and sweeping statements cannot be made from single case studies (Terre Blanche, Dhurrheim and Painter, 2006). However, Merriam (2009) cites Erickson (1986) as arguing that, what we discover in a particular case can be transferred to similar situations since the universal lies in the particular. In addition to that, contemporary case studies often use methods such as video or audio tapes which provide data that can be reanalysed by other researchers (Terre Blanche, Dhurrheim and Painter, 2006).

## 3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING

As the population was too big to be dealt with in its entirety, the researcher worked with a sample. According to Best and Kahn (1993), a sample is a small portion of a population selected for the purpose of observing characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. In other words, it is a subset of the population. The process of selecting some individuals to represent the entire population is called sampling. In this research the sample comprised fifteen teachers teaching Grades 1 to 3 at the three selected schools. The fifteen teachers were selected as participants in this study because they are 'using' Shangani as the medium of instruction at the elementary level. In addition, these teachers are teaching at the elementary level where learner competence in the English Language is still limited and where the policy states that they should use the learners' L1 in lesson delivery. This is also the level at which learners are taught the basic concepts in education and it is imperative to ensure maximum acquisition of these skills as a foundation for their educational life. It was therefore necessary to unearth how these teachers are experiencing the use of the Shangani medium in a situation that requires them to prepare their learners for end of term examinations that come in the English medium. As such, they made me access the in-depth knowledge about aspects that relate to their experiences on

using Shangani as the medium of instruction by virtue of their professional role and experiences.

In this study I used a sample of three schools which were selected through the simple random sampling technique. Cohen, et al (2007) note that the simple random sampling technique gives each member of the population an equal chance of being selected. I derived my sample of 15 purposively selected teachers from those three schools. For the first two schools there were two classes per grade from Grade 1 to 3 and as such, a total of six teachers per each school were selected on the basis that being teachers at the elementary level, they qualified as participants of this research. At Bhizana Primary School, there were two classes per grade to bring the total number of participating teachers to six. At Ntolwane Primary School there was only one class per grade and automatically the three teachers for the particular grades were selected.

As highlighted above, I purposefully selected the schools and teachers. Robson (1998:141) observes that "The principle of selection in purposive sampling is the researcher's judgment as to typicality of interest". Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) concur with the above assertion when they state that cases to be included in the sample are handpicked by the researchers on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought. Thus, it is totally the discretion of the researcher to judge particular people as suitable for the provision of the required information. Despite the fact that they may not be representative and their statements may not be generalisable, this is not the major concern in such sampling, but to acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

The three schools were selected in this study because they are located in Chiredzi District where the Shangani Language is predominantly spoken, which the research intends to establish the experiences of teachers using it as the medium of instruction in line with the 2006 Education Amendment Act. According to Best and Kahn (1993) purposive sampling has the advantage that the researcher takes a sample which has the characteristics that the researcher wants to look at. Thus, first-hand information was found from the schools that are located in a predominantly Shangani community.

## 3.6 DATA GENERATION METHODS

To solicit information from the participants, I used research instruments. I used three data generation methods. These were observations, semi-structured and focus group interviews. I therefore developed semi-structured and focus group schedules, as well as an observation schedule to serve as my research instruments. According to Leedy (1993), research instruments are tools that serve to assist the researcher to collect relevant data that will help answer research questions, as stated in Chapter One. Three instruments were developed and employed in this research. These are: observation, semi-structured and focus group interview schedules. Since each of these instruments has its strengths and weaknesses, the use of three different instruments necessitated triangulation as a way of counteracting the shortcomings of each. Mouton and Marais (2003) observe that, triangulation includes multiple data collection sources in a single a research project to enhance the dependability of the results and to compensate for the limitations of each method. Thus, the use of the three instruments enabled me to 'home in' an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by approaching it from different angles (Terre-Blanche and Dhurrheim, 1999 cited in Mutasa, 2003). This ensured validity and reliability of the results of this research.

### 3.6.1 Observations

Qualitative researchers are contended that all researches about social phenomenon like education can be best carried out through the use of interactive techniques of generating data. One such technique is observation. The research being qualitative in nature, is field focused (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). This implies that a researcher in education cannot avoid visiting schools and observe what goes on in those schools. In this research I observed the teachers delivering lessons at the three schools.

Observations are highly favoured in research because they allow researchers to access authentic information through the observation of situations as they transpire. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) observation is very crucial in research in that it usual that people may say that they are doing one thing yet in reality they may be doing something different so going there to see it for oneself can help researchers to know the truth. Therefore, the researcher can get information about the physical environment and about human behaviour through recording from the actual situation without having to rely on retrospective or anticipatory accounts of others (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006).

In this study I used an observation schedule to guide in the collection of data. In a space of three weeks, one lesson observation per teacher was conducted with all the fifteen teachers teaching the lower grades. This means that, in total, fifteen lessons were observed. Observation time was dependent on the time allocated for the lesson in a particular school. I consistently used the observation schedule to collect data, upon which items on the observation schedule were completed. All the lessons observed were video-taped. This was done to capture all the key issues and all the video recordings were then transcribed on completion of the observations for the purposes of analysis. Recording was done as all the participants had signed Participant Consent Forms prior to the observation dates.

However, the observation method has been criticised by some critics claiming that it is prone to bias as some people would behave in a certain way so as to please the researcher. Sapsford and Jupp (2006) note that when people are being observed they may consciously or unconsciously behave artificially and as result, what the researcher observes may not truly reflect their natural behaviour. However, paying constant visits to the schools under study enabled me as the researcher to get familiar to the teachers and as such, on the actual observation day the participants displayed their natural behaviour as they regarded me as one of them. This ensured the authenticity of the research results. The Grade 1 to 3 classes were targeted for observation in this research.

### 3.6.2 Interviews

Besides observations, interviews were also used during the research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) are of the view that in qualitative research the most favoured method for data gathering is the interview. Gray (2014) sees an interview as a verbal exchange in which one person, the interviewer attempts to acquire information from and gain understanding of another person, the interviewee. This implies that, the purpose of interviewing research participants is for the researcher to acquire information that helps him/her to answer the research questions. The interview is viewed by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) is a powerful implement for researchers because it is a flexible data gathering tool because it allows multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal and spoken. In this study, I used the semi-structured and focus group interviews.

### 3.6.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:182) state that,

> *The popularly used interview technique employed in qualitative research is the semi-structured interview, where a schedule is prepared that is sufficiently open ended to enable the contents to be reordered, digressions and expansions made, new avenues to be included, and further probing to be undertaken.*

A semi-structured interview is therefore flexible in that researchers can reorder the contents as well probe further if need arises.This type of interview has an advantage because it allows for further probes, thus, enabling the researcher to get more relevant data (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006; Ogunniyi, 1984).Gray (2014) concurs with the view above when he avers thatthe researcher is in a position to probe for further clarification of responses if semi-structured interviews are used. The use of the semi-structured interviews therefore, enabled me as the researcher to obtain the participants' meanings and how they viewed the central experiences in their lives (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

In this study I interviewed all the fifteen participating school teachers to establish from them how they were experiencing the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at their schools. Shank (2002:33) observes that, "We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe". Thus, a one on one interview was conducted at a quiet place to avoid any form of disturbance during the interview process. The interview focused on their experiences on using Shangani as the medium of instruction, how they are affected by those experiences of teaching through the Shangani medium and why they construct the relationship between their experiences and the factors that influence the implementation of the policy in the way they do. Both the observations and the interview yielded qualitative data that was then interpreted to explicate the participants' point of view (Marshal and Rossman, 2006).

The interview was indispensable in a research that sought to establish the experiences of teachers using Shangani as the medium of instruction. This is so because as alluded by Sidman (2013) in Gray (2014: 383) "At the route of interviewing then is the intent to understand the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience." Thus, the interview enabled me to understand the experiences of teachers in their day to day operations in a predominant Shangani community and their own interpretations of their experiences. In addition to that, interviews have an advantage that meanings of questions can be immediately

clarified and that they have a good return rate. As such, I managed to get relevant information from relevant people through the use of the interview.

The major shortcoming of the interview is that the respondents may be reluctant to freely air their views as certain issues may be very sensitive. To counter this shortcoming, Lofland (2006) in Corbin and Strauss (2008) states that field researchers are obligated to give the research participants a guarantee that they will remain anonymous through an assurance that pseudonyms would be used in the research report. I gave the participants that assurance of confidentiality to enable me to access the perspective of the person being interviewed (Pattorn, 1990 in Best and Kahn, 1993). Also, Merriam (2009) states that tape recording the interview ensures that everything said is preserved for analysis. In this study, audio recordings of the interview sessions were done to ensure that all the interview data were captured.

Furthermore, interviews have been criticised for the fact that they are prone to interviewer bias. To minimize bias, the interviewer has to read questions exactly as they are written, to repeat a question when asked, to accept a participant's refusal to answer a question without showing signs of frustration and to probe in a non-directive manner (Gray, 2014). In the interview process I ensured that the environment was relaxed and I was very patient to ask questions in a simplified manner in instances when respondents had not understood the question in the first place.

### 3.6.2.2 Focus group interviews

 Another data gathering tool used in this study was the focus group interview. De Vos et al (2005) describe a focus group interview as a way of obtaining an enhanced appreciation of the feelings or thought of the people about a subject matter, product or service. Focus group interviews are thus, not in a sense of a backwards and forwards between the interviewer and group but the communication amongst group members who examine a topic given by the researcher (Morgan, 1988:9 in Cohen , Manion and Morrison, 2007) yielding a collective rather than an individual view.

The major reason why the focus group interview was chosen is that it presented a more normal communication environment as compared to a one on one interview because participants are influence and get influenced by others-just like what happens in real life situations. (Krueger and Casey, 2009:7). Therefore, through interaction among group members, participant views emerged and enabled me as the researcher to gain insights that might not have been available

in a one on one interview. The focus group interviews with teachers from each school were also video recorded. I chaired the discussions so as to keep the focus group interviews open ended but to the point (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) point out that in focus group interviews data are generated by interaction between group participants. They further state that participants are given a chance to ask questions for each other, ask for elucidation, give comments on what they have heard and probe others to say more on the topic under discussion. In addition, as they respond to each other, participants make known their own standpoint regarding the subject under study (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003). This implies that participants should be allowed to interact amongst themselves on issues raised by their colleagues as a way of unearthing in-depth knowledge on issues that relate to the research sub questions.

As the discussion develops, the response by the individual becomes sharpened and improved and moves to a deeper and more significant level (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).In this study, the three focus group interviews helped me to reach a deeper understanding on the teachers' experiences of using Shangani as the medium of instruction since most of the discussions raised a lot of debate on the issue under investigation.

In focus group interviews it is the researchers' duty to keep the discussion focussed on the research topic. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) are quick to note that focus groups should not be left to chance and circumstance by virtue of them being naturalistic; their naturalism has to be cautiously fixed by the researcher. In all the three focus group discussions I consistently monitored the direction of the discussions to ensure that they were in tandem with the participants' experiences on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at the elementary level.

### 3.6.2.2.1 Stages of a focus group according to Lewis and Ritchie (2003)

1. Scene setting and ground rules: When all the participants are gathered the researcher makes a more formal start to the session with a personal introduction, outline a research topic and background information on the intention of the study and its founder, At this point confidentiality is stressed.

2. Individual introductions: This is where the researcher allows participants to introduce themselves.

3. The opening topic: It should be easy-conceptual or definitional.

4. Discussion: Here members in the focus group engage in an in-depth interaction on issues under discussion.

5. Ending discussion: This is where the discussion is officially ended.

If these procedures are followed, the participants can be free to share and contribute meaningfully to the research by sharing views in a free environment. In this study, all these procedures were followed and this contributed to the success of all the focus group interviews.

## 3.7 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

After data was generated, I then had to analyse it. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) say that once data have been gathered, the subsequent stage entails analysing them, usually through some form of coding. According to Gray (2014) analysis involves a process of breaking data into smaller units to reveal their characteristic elements and structure. Thematic analysis is only possible when the data has been transcribed. Merriam (2009) notes that transcribing the recorded interviews verbatim gives the researcher the finest database for analysis. This implies transcribing the recorded information as is. However, this process is tedious and time consuming (Merriam, 2009). Despite this fact, in this study I made verbatim transcriptions of the recorded interviews. This was done in consideration of Gray's (2014:604) observation that, "While typing up transcripts yourself may be time consuming and laborious, it does develop a familiarisation with the data at an early stage". Thus, familiarising myself with the data was indispensable for analysis purposes. It took me about one month to transcribe all the interview data.

In this study I used the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying and analysing patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun and Clarke 2006) and is a form of pattern recognition within the data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006).The analysis of qualitative data is largely a spontaneous interaction between the researcher and the de-contextualised data that are already interpretations of a social encounter (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, 2013).

In this study I had to first code my data, develop categories out of patterns that were evident, up until I came to broad themes. This was consistent with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) who state that in analysis several stages like producing natural units of meaning, categorising

and ordering the identified units of meaning and structuring narratives to describe the interview should be observed. Thus, I came up with themes which capture the important data in relation to research questions and thus represent some level of patterned response of meaning within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006:82). The use of qualitative data collection instruments i.e. observation; interview and focus group interviews necessitated the thematic analysis method in this research since the gathered data are largely qualitative.

## 3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS, RELIABILITY AND RIGOUR

### 3.8.1 Trustworthiness
The aspect of trustworthiness is the qualitative equivalent of validity in quantitative research. It can be best understood under the four aspects that it encompasses which are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability which are discussed in detail in the discussion that follows.

### 3.8.1.1 Credibility

Shenton (2004) states that credibility in qualitative research is the equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research and that it deals with the question, 'How congruent are the findings with reality.' This implies that the qualitative researcher endeavours to establish truthfulness through the adoption of research methods that are well established in qualitative investigation (Shenton, 2004). In this study I therefore ensured that research findings accurately represented what is really transpiring in the situation (Nelman et al., 2005) by offering participants an opportunity to check if their views were represented fairly in the findings and interpretations. Thus, when I was done with the transcription and analysis of the data, I sent them back to the participants for them to verify if what I had written was exactly what they said. This exercise enabled the research participants to confirm that whatever was presented was authentic and not fabricated.

Triangulation is another way of ensuring credibility in qualitative research. According to Shenton (2004) this may involve using different methods such as observation, focus groups and individual interviews. These are the major data collection strategies employed in this research in my endeavour to address the issue of credibility. Shenton (2004) further notes that whilst focus group and individual interviews share some methodological shortcomings since they are both interviews of a kind, use of these methods is encouraged since their distinct characteristics actually result in individual strengths. Thus, the use of these two instruments in

this research ensured the credibility of this study as Shenton (2004) notes that the use of different methods in concert compensate for their individual limitations and exploits their benefits.

### 3.8.1.2 Transferability

Research results should be transferable. Transferability in qualitative research is the equivalent of external validity in quantitative research. Shenton (2004) quotes Stake (1994) as saying that although each case may be unique, it is also an example within a broader group and as a result the prospect of transferability should not be immediately rejected. This implies that as long as the cases under study are derived from an example, then the results can be transferable to other cases within that example. For example, in this study the three selected schools were drawn from Chiredzi District with more than 50 primary schools with the majority of pupils who speak Shangani as their first language. Thus, the results of this study can be transferable to these schools because their location is the same and as such, the experiences of teachers in using Shangani as the language of instruction may be the same.

### 3.8.1.3 Dependability

Dependability and credibility are interwoven aspects of qualitative research. This is because the demonstration of credibility has some bearing in ensuring dependability. This implies that a credible research is dependable. Shenton (2004) notes that dependability can be achieved through the use of overlapping methods like focus group and individual interviews. Thus, through this kind of triangulation a research study can be both credible and dependable. Employing these overlapping methods in establishing the teachers' experiences in using Shangani as the medium of instruction at the 3 schools ensured the dependability of the study.

The dependability of a qualitative study can also be enhanced if an in depth methodological description is given so that other researchers could repeat (Shenton, 2004). As such, I have taken this into consideration. The recommendations and the methodology employed have been clearly outlined. In addition to that, the minute details of how the data gathering process was done in the field was given to show that the research was not fabricated. Therefore, the study is dependable.

### 3.8.1.4 Confirmability

Trustworthiness also implies confirmability of results. According to Shenton (2004) the conception of confirmability is the qualitative researcher's equivalent to objectivity in quantitative research. He adds that, research findings can only be confirmable if they reflect the actual experiences and ideas of informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. To cater for this, I ensured that findings of this research precisely corresponded to what is actually taking place in the situation (Nelman et al., 2005) by offering participants an opportunity to check if their views were represented fairly in the findings and interpretations. Thus, when I was done with the transcription and analysis of the data, I sent them back to the participants for them to verify if what I had written was exactly what they said. This exercise enabled the research participants to confirm that whatever was presented was authentic and not fabricated. This was done also to ensure that my own biases as a researcher are mitigated.

### 3.8.2 Reliability

According to Denscombe (2010) reliability refers to the quality of the methods therefore researchers need to be sure that the methods they use are consistent and not provide fluctuating measures. In addition to that, reliability implies the possibility of the findings to be replicable (Merriam, 2009). In qualitative research, however, it is very difficult to achieve the replicability of findings since researchers mainly study human behaviour and experiences which are never static. However, Merriam (2009) cites Lincoln and Guba (1985) as stating that, the notion of reliability with regard to instrumentation can be applied to qualitative research in a sense similar to its meaning in traditional research.

In this study, the most appropriate methodology to answer the research questions was adopted. Reliability was also ensured through the triangulation of research instruments. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) concur with Mouton and Marais (2003) that using numerous sources of data gathering in a single research project increases the dependability of the results and compensates for the shortcomings of each method. Therefore, using three data generation methods in this research enabled me to 'home in' an understanding of the issue under investigation by analysing it from different angles (Terre-Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). This is also consistent with Denscombe's (2010) observation that the accuracy and precision of data can be assessed by comparing them with findings on the same topic produced using different

research methods, that is, triangulation. In this study the triangulation of data gathered through different instruments ensured the authenticity of research results.

### 3.8.3 Rigour

A trustworthy and reliable research has rigour. Dependability and rigour can be enhanced in qualitative research by recording data objectively and comprehensively including the use of audiotapes, videotapes and different levels of the transcription of data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). All the interview sessions were recorded and every detail necessary was included to make the report as comprehensive as possible. Doing this enables future researchers to repeat the same research and come up with more or less the same results (Shenton, 2004).

## 3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical considerations were observed in this research. These included obtaining informed consent of the gatekeepers, parents and participants. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) point out that researchers should be guided by the following principles: informed consent, respect of privacy and confidentiality, non-malfeasance (non-evil) to research participants and no deception of research participants. Thus, consent of the parents was sought in this study because when doing observations, I was using a video tape and their children were also video recorded. Thus, getting an informed consent on whether or not they like their children to be seen when presenting my findings was important.

I made it clear to the participants that participating in the research was voluntary, and if at any stage of the research they may want to withdraw, they were free to do that without any prejudice. I also informed them about how the research would be conducted and the instruments to be used to allow them to make a clued-up choice on whether or not they should take part in the research.

## 3.10 DATA COLLECTION IN THE SCHOOLS

### 3.10.1 CONDUCTING THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

*(i)Mandleni Primary School*

I went to Mandleni Primary School to conduct interviews with Grade 1 to 3 teachers. There are two classes per grade so a total of 6 teachers were interviewed. From the 6 teachers interviewed, 4 were female while 2 were male. All the teachers were holders of the Diploma in Education

and 4 majored in Early Childhood Education while 2 specialised in the General Course for teaching students from Grade 4 to 7. Their demographic information is presented on the table thus:

**Table 1: Demographic Details for Mandleni Primary School Participants**N=6

| ASPECT | RESPONSE | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| SEX | FEMALE | 4 |
|  | MALE | 2 |
| AGE RANGE | 20-25 | 1 |
|  | 26-30 | 2 |
|  | 31-35 | 2 |
|  | 36-40 | 1 |
| PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS | DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION | 6 |
| SPECIALISATION | EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT | 4 |
|  | GENERAL COURSE | 2 |
| TEACHING EXPERIENCE | 0-5 years | - |
|  | 6-10 | 3 |
|  | 11-15 | 1 |
|  | 16 years + | 2 |
| HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION | 'O' Level | 4 |
|  | 'A' Level | 2 |
|  | BED | - |
|  | MED | - |

The interviews were held in quiet rooms that the teachers chose to ensure that there were no unnecessary interruptions. Most of the interviews went on very well. The teachers showed commitment to the research in general and the interview session in particular. As such, most of them aired out their views in a relaxed manner. I managed to interview all the six teachers at the school in one day. However, four of the participating teachers were a bit reluctant to share their experiences at first but later on they opened up and told me that at the beginning they thought it was a witch hunting exercise since all the interviewees were not Shangani speaking. The length of the interview sessions differed depending on individual teachers' contributions and explanations. The shortest interview at this school was 20 minutes 44 seconds while the longest was 30 minutes 56 seconds. All the interviews were recorded using an audio recorder.

*(ii)Bhizana Primary School*

A total of six teachers were interviewed at school 2. Their demographic information can be presented diagrammatically thus:

**Table 2: Demographic Details for Bhizana Primary School Participants:** N=6

| ASPECT | RESPONSE | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| SEX | FEMALE | 4 |
| | MALE | 2 |
| AGE RANGE | 20-25 | 2 |
| | 26-30 | 1 |
| | 31-35 | 1 |
| | 36-40 | 2 |
| PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS | CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION | 2 |
| | DIPLOMA IN  EDUCATION | 4 |
| SPECIALISATION | EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT | 4 |
| | GENERAL COURSE | 2 |
| TEACHING EXPERIENCE | 0-5 years | - |
| | 6-10 | 3 |
| | 11-15 | 1 |
| | 16 years + | 2 |
| HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION | 'O' Level | 5 |
| | 'A' Level | - |
| | BED | 1 (PENDING) |
| | MED | - |

Interview sessions were conducted two days after the interviews in school 1. The school administrators stated that they were going for a meeting and the Teacher in Charge was going to take care of my needs. The Teacher in Charge was very welcoming and she moved with me from class to class for introductions. The teachers were very welcoming and most of them had particular interest in the research since they are Shanganis. The deputy head's office was used for the interviews with individual teachers and after interviewing a particular teacher, he/she would call the next teacher for the interview. There are two classes per grade and as such, a total of six teachers who teach the Grades 1 to 3 classes were interviewed. It was a very hot day but the teachers and administrators made sure that I was comfortable by providing me with cold drinking water. One of the teachers provided me with a laptop to charge my video cameras whenever they ran out of power. I was really comfortable and I enjoyed my stay at the school.

On average, interviews at this school were conducted for 28 minutes. A voice recorder was used to capture the data for later transcription and analysis.

*(iii) Ntolwane Primary School*

At Ntolwane Primary School I interviewed a total of three teachers teaching from Grade 1 to 3. At this school there is only one class per Grade that is why I had to interview only 3 teachers teaching from Grade 1 to 3.

**Table 3: Demographic Details for Ntolwane Primary School Participants** N=3

| ASPECT | RESPONSE | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| SEX | FEMALE | 2 |
| | MALE | 1 |
| AGE RANGE | 20-25 | 1 |
| | 26-30 | 1 |
| | 31-35 | 1 |
| | 36-40 | |
| PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS | CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION | - |
| | | 3 |
| | DIPLOMA IN  EDUCATION | |
| SPECIALISATION | EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT | 3 |
| | GENERAL COURSE | - |
| TEACHING EXPERIENCE | 0-5 years | - |
| | 6-10 | 2 |
| | 11-15 | 1 |
| | 16 years + | |
| HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION | 'O' Level | 2 |
| | 'A' Level | - |
| | BED | 1 |
| | MED | - |

At this school the school administrator was very welcoming but two of the teachers claimed that they were busy and had other things to attend to. They only availed themselves for the interviews two hours after my arrival. However, this was not much of a problem since there was one teacher who had availed herself on time so I conducted an interview with her first and then interviewed the other two after the tea break.  The interviews were conducted in a bicycle shed that the teachers identified as the most suitable place for the interviews. The first two teachers were free to air their views during the interview session but the other one was a bit

reserved despite the efforts that I made to make the whole encounter free. The interviews took 24 minute 10 seconds, 29 minutes 3 seconds and 16 minutes 19 seconds respectively. A voice recorder was used to capture all interview data for later transcription and analysis. Observation of lessons followed after the interview sessions in the three schools.

### 3.10.2 OBSERVATION OF LESSONS
#### (i)     Mandleni Primary School

Lesson observations were done on the first day after the interviews. The school has two classes per grade and all the 6 teachers at Grade 1 to 3 levels were observed teaching a single 30 minute lesson. The classes are very large with an average of 50 pupils per class. Generally, the pupils were excited by my presence and my assistant who was capturing the lessons using the video camera. Some of the teachers were a bit tense at the beginning of the observations but as the lessons progressed they began to behave in a natural fashion. I consistently used the observation checklist to capture observational data whilst my assistant recorded all the proceedings using a video camera. This was done to ensure that all the detail was captured for later analysis.

#### (ii)  Bhizana Primary School

Like at Mandleni school, lesson observations were done on the first of the two days spent at the school. The school also has two classes per grade. The teachers were very comfortable to teach their lessons in my presence. The classes are also very large and pupils had to scramble for the few textbooks available. The pupils continuously looked at my assistant who was video tapping the lessons and their teachers had to continuously remind them to pay attention. Each of the six teachers was observed teaching a single 30 minute lesson and all the observations were video recorded. I consistently used the observation checklist to capture observational data.

#### (iii)     Ntolwane Primary School

The situation was a bit different at this school. There is only one class per grade and as such, only three teachers teaching Grade 1 to 3 were observed. I observed all the teachers teaching at the elementary level for a period of 30 minutes each. The classes have an average of 50 pupils per class. Like in school 1, the teachers were not very comfortable to be observed whilst teaching but they later on became relaxed and taught their lessons in a natural way. The pupils seemed surprised to see somebody video recording them and they constantly threw an eye at

my assistant who was video recording the proceedings. I was making notes on my observation checklist as the teachers delivered their lessons. The data was kept for later analysis.

## 3.10. 3 CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

I carried out focus group interviews on the second day of my visits to Mandleni and Bhizana Primary Schools and on the first day after the interviews and observations at Ntolwane Primary School. In all the three schools, it was post-observation focus group interviews for me to get clarity about things I noted during lesson observations.

### i) Mandleni Primary School

On the second day of my visit to Mandleni Primary School, I conducted a focus group interview with all the 6 teachers who had been interviewed and observed the previous day. The teachers were so tense that when the first question was asked there was silence in the room and I had to repeat the question in a simpler way. However, when the first person gave his response, the teachers became relaxed little by little and as the session progressed, they freely shared their views regarding the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. Several ideas were raised in the discussion and it extended to close to two hours of serious discussion. Some of the questions that I asked were to do with their views on the policy that says the learners' language should be used as the language of instruction and how they experienced the implementation of that policy among other issues. I made use of the focus group interview schedule to guide the proceedings. However, I noticed that there was one teacher who only answered once after a colleague had asked her to also share her views on the issue at hand. The focus group session was video recorded and the data was kept for later analysis.

### ii) Bhizana Primary School

All the participating teachers participated in the focus group interview on my second day at the school. All the stages for focus group interviews were observed and I made use of the focus group interview schedule to direct the focus group discussion. The major questions were on the teachers' views towards the policy on the use of Shangani in teaching and learning and their experiences in the implementation of such a policy. There were a lot of insights that I gained from this focus group discussion as the participants freely aired out their views. However, I noted that the Shangani speaking teachers dominated the discussion while the non Shangani

speaking only came in when a new question was asked. The focus group took about two hours. The focus group interview was video recorded.

### iii)    Ntolwane Primary School

The   three teachers at the school were called in for a focus group interview in the afternoon after the interviews and observations. All the stages for focus group interviews were observed and I used the focus group interview schedule to direct the focus group conversation. The focus group discussion occurred in a free classroom and the teachers freely aired their views on issues to do with their experiences on the use of Shangani as the language of instruction. The debate was not as lively as the other two and this can be attributed to the number of teachers involved. The focus group session took about 1 hour. The interview was audio taped.

## 3.11 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY USED

**Figure 2: Summary of Methodology Used**



Research Design: Qualitative ;Interpretive;Case study

Data Generation Methods: One on one semi-structured interview;Observation; Focus Group interviews

Sample and Sampling: 15 Grade 1 to 3 teachers; Purposive Sampling

Data Transcription: Researcher

Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis; codes;categories; themes
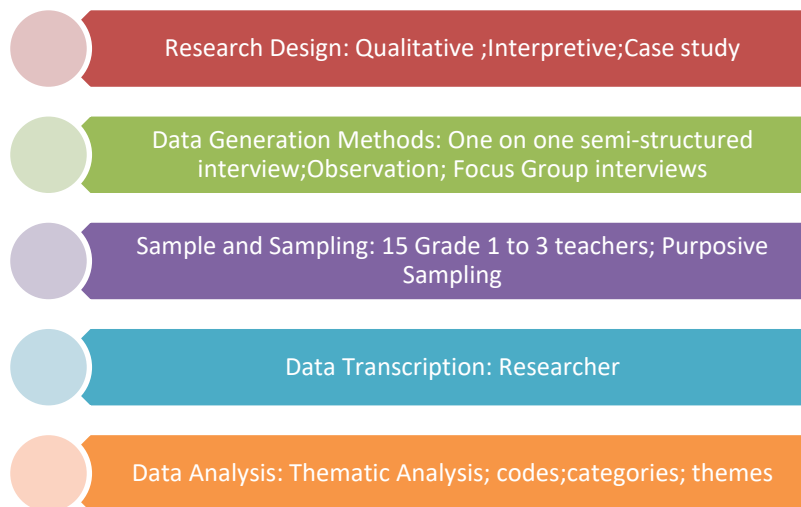
## 3.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter my focus was on the research methodology employed in the study. The research approach chosen was discussed in detail with its characteristics, strengths and limitations clearly outlined. After that the paradigm under which the study operated was discussed in detail. The case study research design's characteristics, strengths and limitations were discussed and at the same time justification for the choice of the design was given. The sample and sampling procedure as well as the data gathering instruments used followed after the

discussion on the research design. Following is the aspect of ethical considerations that were taken when carrying out the study. The aspects of trustworthiness and reliability were then given followed by highlights on what exactly transpired in the data gathering process. This was done in the order that was followed on the administration of the three instruments, that is, the semi-structured interview, observation and focus group interviews. A summary of the methodology employed in this study was given towards the end of the chapter. The next chapter looks at the theoretical framework that guided this study.

# CHAPTER 4

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED CONCEPTS

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

I critically looked at the methodology used for this study in the previous chapter. In this chapter my focus is on the theoretical/conceptual underpinnings guiding this study. Concepts and theories are critical in any study because they act as lenses through which we can critically look at our subject (Sorensen, 2004). In the same vein, Simon and Goes (2011) observe that the theoretical framework offers a well-supported justification to conduct your study and helps the reader understand your standpoint. This is an indication that no meaningful research can be carried out without making reference to a theoretical framework.

A theoretical framework can be viewed as the backbone of any research as it provides useful insights on theory upon which each research is based. Miles and Huberman (1994) view a conceptual framework as a product that can be in visual or written form, one that explains either geographically or in narrative form, the central things to be studied, that is, the key factors, concepts, or variables- and the supposed correlation amongst them. The conceptual/theoretical framework therefore informs the whole research to an extent that all the aspects of the study can be best understood from those theoretical and conceptual footings. In simpler terms, an established theory informs the current understanding of what is going on (Sitko, 2013). It is therefore critical that any research be informed by theoretical and conceptual underpinnings as these will prove to be useful in one's interpretation of findings from the research under study. This research is guided by submissions from Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism, Gramsci's Hegemony Theory as well as concepts of mother tongue education as outlined in several articles from UNESCO.

The concept of mother tongue education is viewed differently by different schools of thought. On one hand, there is a school of thought that sees mother tongue education as indispensable especially in the child's early school years whilst on the other hand there is a school of thought which is totally against it. It is critical in this research that I consider these conceptual underpinnings as they will be useful in answering the research questions especially the 'what' and 'why' questions. The beliefs of the key stakeholders in education will obviously determine the kind of experiences teachers undergo in their endeavour to teach Shangani as well as use it

as a language of teaching in the 3 schools under study. Basically, I will use the UNESCO's concept of mother tongue education as well as submissions from those authors that adopt its stance on MTE.

## 4.2 THE INDISPENSABILITY OF THE MOTHER TONGUE AS THE LANGUAGE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

UNESCO has maintained that the learners' mother tongue is a necessary pre-requisite for the acquisition of educational knowledge (see UNESCO 1953, 2003, 2008 and 2011). The major reason why UNESCO has been on the lead on these issues is the fact that it is one of its responsibilities to offer frameworks for education policy and practice on significant and multidimensional issues (UNESCO, 2003). This is because, "Language and in particular, the choice of language of instruction in education is one such concern and often invokes contrasting and deeply felt positions", (UNESCO 2003:14). Thus, without a clear cut position on the issue of the place of mother tongue in the teaching and learning enterprise, different countries would come up with policies that might not even consider the use of the mother tongue since the phenomenon is a contentious issue.

It is critical that the language issue be taken seriously especially with the view that mother tongue is seen as an important educational pedagogy which expedites building of basic intellectual skills and faster acquisition of a second language (Ross, 2004). However, there is the issue of multilingualism and globalisation that threaten the use of these mother tongues in education. UNESCO (2003:14) observes that:

> *…in many countries that were previously under colonial regimes, the official language is the language of the former colonisers and in addition to these official languages, several countries recognise national languages which may be compulsory.*

This implies that these officially recognised languages are the only ones which enjoy use in the education system and consequently, the power and prestige associated with them. This therefore defeats the supposed benefits of mother tongue instruction to minority language speakers. UNESCO (2008) defines a minority language as a language spoken by a statistically lesser population and/or the language spoken by a politically relegated population no matter its size. Thus, the choices made on which languages will be used as the mediums of instruction in education typify the use of authority, the construction of ostracism and minoritisation and unfulfilled assurances of children's rights (UNESCO 2008). UNESCO (2003) notes that,

minority language speakers are at a disadvantage analogous to when they receive education in a foreign language when a national language is used as the medium of instruction. However, this is not in tandem with the definition of local language offered by UNESCO (2008:6) that it is different from a regional, national or international language in that it is the language spoken in the homes and marketplaces of a particular community. This means that if UNESCO puts primacy on the use of local languages as the languages of teaching and learning, the so called minority languages should also have their fair share in education in areas where they are spoken.

Stroud (2002:48-49) observes that, "Linguistic marginalisation of minority language groups and their political marginalisation go hand in hand…" implying that each of the two variables influences the other. Thus, the continued imposition of other languages on minority language speakers mean the continued marginalisation of these minority groups from the political activities in particular countries which in turn causes the continued domination of these groups by those from the majority groups. In addition to this, there will be cultural and linguistic discontinuity between home and school and according to Baker and Prys (1998) in such a scenario, the self esteem and self confidence of minority language children may be affected as they are made to believe that their culture and language are not valued. Feelings of low self esteem and low self confidence are disastrous because they impede their learning. This implies that, immersion education, which according to Thomas and Collier (1997) say that a model in which the learner is completely immersed in a foreign language for most or all curriculum should be avoided at all costs so that minority language children may also benefit from learning in their home language.

It should be noted that issues of mother tongue education, bilingual education and second language acquisition are a feature of multilingual countries (see for example Cummins, 2009; Hornberger, 2008; Lo Bianco 2008; Tollefson et al 2004).Despite the fact that most countries are multilingual, UNESCO (2003) maintains that mother tongue tutoring, which generally means using the learners' mother tongue as the medium of instruction, is a crucial constituent of quality education, especially in the initial school years and should include both the teaching of and the teaching through this language. Doing this will offer a lot of advantages like becoming proficient in the first language, success in other subjects as well as competency in the second language. As Kosonen (2005) rightly notes, children are more likely to succeed in school when they are offered opportunities to learn in their mother tongue. UNESCO (2011) confirms that research has long-established that young children master educational knowledge

better when they are taught in their mother language as a prelude to and complement of bilingual and multilingual schooling. Therefore, mother tongue education should be embraced especially in the elementary years and then slowly make a transition to educational learning in the second language so that they learn the second language effectively (UNESCO, 2011).

However, UNESCO (2003) observes that since there are a lot of difficulties encountered in trying to implement mother tongue instruction, it is far from being the rule. Some of the identified challenges include the following: sometimes the mother tongue may be unwritten, appropriate terminology for education purposes may still have to be developed, lack of educational materials and trained teachers, resistance to schooling in the mother tongue among a plethora of other challenges (UNESCO, 2003). A closer look at these challenges show that the primary implementer of a mother tongue education policy i.e. the teacher, would be the worst affected as his/her experiences are likely to be very difficult. The teacher is the one who would grapple with coming up with appropriate terminology for educational purposes as well as teaching without adequate resources and so on.

This scenario required UNESCO to take a stance on the issue of mother tongue education and this research is informed by that stance that I am now moving on to discuss in the ensuing discussion. After several consultations UNESCO (2003) came up with three basic principles which are useful lenses in our understanding of mother tongue education. The first principle (which largely informs the current research) is that, "UNESCO supports mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of learners and teachers" (UNESCO 2003:37). It maintains that mother tongue instruction is indispensable for early instruction and literacy and should be extended to as late a stage in education as possible. This means that all pupils should begin their formal education in their mother tongues. It suggests that if a given neighbourhood has a diversity of languages, measures should be put in place to organise instruction groups according to the learners' mother tongues and in cases where this is inevitable, learning should be in the language which gives the slightest learning difficulties to the majority of the pupils, and specialist help be offered to those whose language is not the language of instruction. This is a clear stance which underscores the seriousness of UNESCO on the use of learners' mother tongues in their early years. However, Arnold et al (2006) note that it is sad to note that, the norm around the world is monolingualism in official languages.

For the first principle to be meaningfully implemented, UNESCO (2003) highlights the importance of ensuring that the production and distribution of teaching materials is promoted. In addition to production of materials in the mother tongues, it also recommends that educational planning should comprise at every phase early provision for the training of adequate, knowledgeable and competent teachers of the country concerned who are familiar with the life of their people and are able to teach using their local language. These submissions imply that mother tongue policy is not something that should be done in a haphazard manner but should be done systematically where materials are put in place and teachers are trained in preparation for the implementation of the mother tongue education policy. It is however sad to note that in Africa, and other post-colonial contexts, the medium of instruction policy is often a tool for the influential who have mastered the colonial languages to maintain their power and their advantaged position (Bamgbose 2000, 2005) and as a result, the ideals suggested by UNESCO (2003) above are observed and implemented to a lesser extent.

UNESCO however does not trivialise the importance of other languages in education. It also encourages, minority indigenous peoples to learn the national languages in addition to their mother tongues for them to be able to take part in and contribute to their broader community (UNESCO, 2003). Thus, consideration should be made to ensure the gradual introduction of these other languages. I should hasten to indicate that the introduction of the national and global languages should be gradual because submersion into these languages is tantamount to violating the children's right to receive educational instruction through their mother tongue. As observed by UNESCO (2003), when introducing the second language as a subject of instruction consideration should be taken to ensure that the amount is increased gradually and that it should not become the medium of instruction until the pupils are adequately familiar with that second language. These submissions would be useful lenses in establishing the experiences of teachers who are implementing a mother tongue education policy at the elementary level. If these ideals were strictly followed in the promulgation of the Zimbabwean policy then the minority language speakers (Shangani) would to a larger extent enjoy the benefits of receiving instruction in a language they understand better. At the same time, the teachers would enjoy the implementation of the mother tongue education policy.

To ensure that the concept of mother tongue instruction is clearly understood UNESCO (2011) outlines approaches to bilingual education. I am going to present the approaches diagrammatically:

**FIGURE 3: MODELS OF MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION**

**Mother tongue based instruction**
- The learning programme is delivered entirely in children's L1

**Bilingual education (a.k.a- two way bilingual education**
- use of 2 languages as mediums of instruction
- also known as 'dual education instruction' in which minority and majority children are taught in both majority and minority languages.

**Mother tongue-based bilingual education**
- L1 is used for as the primary medium of instruction for the whole of primary school while L2 is introduced as a subject of study itself to prepare students for eventual transition to some academic subjects in L2

**Multilingual education**
- Formal use of more than two languages in the curriculum

**transitional bilingual/multilingual educationT**
- the objective is a planned transition from one language of instruction to another
- 'short at' or 'early exit' is a term given to programmes that involve an abrupt transition to L2 instruction after only 2 or 3 years in school
- 'late transition' or 'late exit' refers to a switch to L2 instruction after a child has become fully fluent academically in L1

Quoted from UNESCO 2011:21 (DIAGRAM IS MY OWN CONCEPTION)

The diagram above illustrates how important it is to have a clear standpoint on the part of a government when it sets out to adopt Mother Tongue Education (MTE), lest there would be chaos in the implementation of the policy. It is highly likely that a clear policy would succeed since every stakeholder would be aware of what is expected of them. For example, a country may adopt a bilingual education programme where two languages are used as the Medium of Instruction (MOI). In this scenario the first language of the learner (majority or minority) is used alongside a language of wider communication. Therefore, it is my feeling that if this is clearly spelt out, confusion on the part of the implementers is minimised as they are aware of what they are expected to do. I also feel that the teachers' experiences in implementing this

policy would be different and better than a situation where there is no clear cut position on which type of mother tongue education a country is adopting. This leaves us with questions on the extent to which African governments in general have considered UNESCO's position on MTE. It is the intention of this research to unearth the experiences of teachers in using a minority language (Shangani) as the medium of instruction and whether or not the ideals of MTE have been embraced by the Zimbabwean government in its 2006 Education Amendment Act on the use of the sixteen indigenous languages in education in Zimbabwean schools. The reason why I am concerned about the Zimbabwean policy is that it was under the colonial rule by the British and it was normal that the English Language dominated in education. How then is the policy likely to succeed in the face of Linguistic imperialism and the hegemony of English (and even the national languages) on the minority languages? It is critical at this stage that I refer to Phillipson's Linguistic Imperialism Theory and how it influences the likely experiences of teachers in implementing a mother tongue education policy.

## 4.3 PHILLIPSON'S LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM THEORY

It is imperative at this point that I discuss why most language policies in Africa especially those that have to do with MTE have remained 'mere statements of intent' (Desai, 2012). The major reason is a phenomenon called Linguistic imperialism that was coined by Phillipson in (1992). He admits that Linguistic Imperialism is not an easy subject and that is the reason why it requires to be discussed at length (e.g. Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994) so that assertions can be rigorously and intensely grounded, exposed and examined (Phillipson, 1997).He has thus written extensively on this concept and my study is tethered on some of his submissions in the Linguistic Imperialism theory. Harvey (2005) is quick to say that it is a prerequisite to come up with a definition of the concept for it to be used critically rather than simply controversially. This means that defining the term is indispensable if we are to fully grasp its meaning and the discussion below makes an attempt to give a comprehensive definition of the term.

### 4.3.1 What is Linguistic Imperialism?

Phillipson, (1992; 1997) believes that Linguistic imperialism is a conjectural belief formulated to explain why there are linguistic hierarchies in an endeavour to attend to issues why some languages are used more and others less as well as what structures and ideologies aid such processes and the part played by language experts. Thus, the presence of linguistic hierarchies

where certain languages are dominating other languages as well as ideology which shapes and supports such domination characterise situations where linguistic imperialism is taking place. Phillipson (1992: 56) cites Ansre (1979:12-13) defining linguistic imperialism as,

> *The phenomenon in which the minds and lives of the speakers of a language are dominated by another language to the point where they believe that they can and should use only that foreign language when it comes to transactions dealing with the more advanced aspects of life such as education, philosophy, literature, governments, the administration of justice etc. Linguistic imperialism has a subtle way of warping the minds, attitudes and aspirations of even the noblest in society and preventing him from appreciating and realising the full potential of the indigenous languages.*

From this definition of linguistic imperialism, Ansre highlights very critical issues. One of the issues raised is the fact that Linguistic Imperialism occurs where a language (or languages) is dominated by another language. Where this domination occurs, the dominated people believe that they are able and are obligated to use that language in advanced transactions such as education, judiciary or even in literature. Linguistic imperialism also makes the dominated language speakers lose confidence in their own languages to an extent that they cease to appreciate and realise the potential in their own languages. For example, in a research carried out by Kadodo and Mhindu (2013) on the extent to which Shona and Shangani languages were used as mediums of instruction in Masvingo and Mwenezi districts respectively, "one of the education officers commented that nobody in his or her normal sense would really want his/her child to be taught through the mother tongue when the industry still demands for English" (ibid: 118). This implies that this supposed custodian of the policy does not even believe the implementation of the policy is a worthwhile endeavour and at the same time he does not even see the potential of indigenous languages taking over as languages of industry and commerce once they are empowered as languages of instruction. From Ansre's (1979) point of view, this kind of thinking reflects a situation where linguistic imperialism has taken place. The particular education officer can be said to be a baptised follower of linguistic imperialism because he has come to accept that those that are 'normal' should see the use of local languages in education as unacceptable but should rather use the English language.

Phillipson (1992) opines that it is important for critiques to ascertain linguistic imperialism as a discrete category of imperialism so that an assessment of its function in an imperialist structure in its entirety can be made. According to him, for two fundamental reasons the phenomenon called linguistic imperialism pervades all the other brands of imperialism: "The

first has to do with form (language as the medium for transmitting ideas), the second with content" (ibid: 53).

In trying to highlight the reason of form, he advances that for links in all fields language is the principal means of communication and as such it is indeed a prerequisite for most varieties of contact other than spontaneous compulsion. Phillipson (1992) maintains that linguistic imperialism supersedes all the other brands of imperialism due to the fact that communication presumes reciprocated understanding on the basis of a shared code and that it is the centre's language which is used. This confirms that the domination of a people is only possible where the language of the centre is imposed on the dominated people.

It should be noted that Phillipson (1992) identifies linguistic imperialism as a sub-type of linguicism which, according to him, refers absolutely to philosophies and organizations where language is the way for causing or upholding an imbalanced allotment of resources and power. He adds that, this can be noted in situations where mother tongues of immigrant or indigenous minority children are ignored in the school system and consequently affect their learning. Thus, the speakers of these languages will suffer a lot in their learning since they are made to learn through an unfamiliar language which automatically put those proficient in the foreign language at a great advantage in the whole learning enterprise. Phillipson (1992) further notes that, for linguicism to make up linguistic imperialism it is presumed that an imperialist structure supports the players in question for the mistreatment of one society or mutually by another. It is therefore clear that linguistic imperialism occurs where an imperialist structure supports such exploitation of other language groups.

There are several examples that can be highlighted in our endeavour to understand what Linguistic Imperialism is all about. Prah (2009) identifies quite a number of examples of situations where linguistic imperialism is evident. For example, he talks about what is happening in Algeria and Morocco where he notes that, there is a strain between the central Arab governments and the Berber marginalised groups where these minority groups have felt that Arabisation is threatening their languages and cultures. Prah (2009:2) reports that, "Through centuries of Arabisation these originally indigenous inhabitants of the area have become minorities." This implies that the Arabs dominated the Berber speaking community and at the same time relegated them to become a 'minority' in their own country.

The Arabic language therefore occupied the top position in the linguistic hierarchy whilst the languages of the indigenous Berber groups were thrown to the periphery. From Phillipson's

point of view this dominance of one language on the other is linguistic imperialism. He argues that, "Linguistic Imperialism is also central to social imperialism, which relates to the transmission of the norms and behaviour of a model social structure, and these are embedded in language" (Phillipson 1992:53).

Prah (2009) further observes that the influence of the Roman Imperial growth was the major cause of the extinction of the Etruscan culture and language. He also identifies the Classical Greek culture which virtually absorbed many of its conquered peoples (such as Judea). "The subject populations became immersed in Greek culture and the spread of *koine* (common) Greek language was an instrument as well as a result of this cultural assimilation" (Prah, 2009:2). Prah, (2009) notes that in Botswana, the linguistic hegemony of the SeTswana language has led to the linguistic and cultural assimilation of the Khoe and San speakers. This confirms Phillipson's argument that linguistic imperialism pervades all the other kinds of imperialism.

Phillipson (2015) however, believes that the widespread expansion of the English language could be understood if the lenses of his conception of linguistic imperialism are used. He succinctly says:

> *The historical record reveals that in the UK, as in other European countries and the USA, a systematic effort over centuries went into attempts to convert a multilingual reality into a monolingual state, and to pursue the same goal worldwide by means of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 2015:3).*

Thus, according to him, the spread of the English language was a systematic, not a random effort to put the language on the driver's seat in the global economy. He observes that it was not coincidental that in 1945 English became the leading language of international relations, business, banking, scholarship, science, and popular culture but rather, it was through leadership of America (ibid).

Boyle (1997) notes that Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism can be best understoodfrom Galtung's (1980) conception of the phenomenon where imperialism is described under six broad but interrelated headings: communicational, cultural, economic, military, political as well as social. In Galtung's conception of imperialism, the world is divided into two major categories: the Centre and the Periphery. He believes that the powerful western countries constitute the Centre whilst the periphery is made up of those countries

subjugated by the centre. He believes that within the centre and the periphery, other centres and peripheries are also found.

According to Boyle (1997) Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism (of the English language) follows the stages that Galtung outlines in his general conjecture of imperialism. The initial phase of Linguistic Imperialism according to Phillipson is the early-colonial stage which is patently compelling (the Stick stage), the second phase, which is characterised by offers of benefits to a few elite is the neo-colonial stage (the Carrot stage) and finally, the neo-neo-colonial stage, in which rule is attained more subtly by ideological influence through technology and the media (the Ideas Stage). It is therefore critical to look at these stages one by one in detail so that we can reach a meaningful understanding of how many countries came to be in this quagmire of linguistic imperialism. This thorough analysis makes the theory relevant where the current research is situated in an African context where linguistic imperialism can be best understood due to its colonial history.

**4.3.2 Colonialism and linguistic imperialism**

Colonialism and Linguistic Imperialism are two closely related concepts to an extent that we cannot make a meaningful analysis of each without making reference to the other. Prah (2009:2-3) reports that,

> *As Western exploration of the Americas increased, European nations including Britain, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal all raised to claim territory in hopes of generating increased economic wealth for themselves.*

He adds that, in their new colonial states, these conquering nations impressed their culture and language with permanent and as far as this, ineradicable effects. What Prah is saying is very clear: Every country that was colonised by a particular European country was forced to use the colonialist's language. Countries like Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Nigeria, Uganda Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Nyasaland (Malawi) and Kenya among others were forced to use English; Mozambique and Angola (Portuguese); Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Ivory Coast (French) etc.

Since Britain had a numerical advantage in terms of colonies, it followed that the English Language was used over a larger geographical spread compared to the rest of the conquering nations. It then assumed the official status in all British colonies. On the other hand, indigenous languages were classified as mere dialects or *patois* (Calvet, 1974 in Phillipson,

1992) which he defines as never anything other than a defeated language whilst a language is a dialect which has succeeded politically. This classification of indigenous languages as dialects was in effect confirming that these languages had been defeated by these colonial languages and in this case English, thus Linguistic Imperialism.

Calvet (1974) in Phillipson (1992) does not use the binary opposition of language and dialect since he believes that colonial discourse abused these terms. He avers that, instead we should use terms that express power relationships between competing languages. From his point of view, it is proper to talk about dominant and dominated languages. The fact that during the colonial period no African language performed any influential function is an indication that these languages had been defeated by the languages of the conquering nations. Phillipson (2015) confirms that in colonial empires, the colonial languages were invariably the languages of power. Considering African indigenous languages as mere dialects whilst English was accorded the language status in Zimbabwe and other former British colonies made the indigenous people lose faith in their languages as they did not even guarantee employment. From Phillipson's point of view this domination is a reflection of Linguistic Imperialism.

According to Prah (2009) Phillipson was right to finger the extraordinary spread of the English Language as an entelechy connected to the historical trajectory of the British empire on which the sun never set and contextualised it in the current neo-colonial and post-colonial truth of our times. In other words, according to Phillipson's Linguistic Imperialism theory, the spread of English worldwide is a result of a conscious policy of language diffusion carried out by British and American powers. When the British imposed their language on Africans they had a hidden agenda; that of promoting the English language together with capitalism, trans-nationalization, homogenization and Americanization of the culture of the world, linguistic, cultural and media imperialism (Phillipson, 1999).

Phillipson (2009) thus contends that the historical record reveals that in the United Kingdom (UK), like in other European countries and the United States of America (USA), an organized attempt over centuries went into efforts to change a multilingual certainty into a monolingual state and to pursue the same goal worldwide by means of linguistic imperialism. It is sad to note that the annihilation of many languages is perpetuated by many language policies which are linguicist overtly or covertly (Phillipson, 2015) and it is my intention to find out if this also applies in the Zimbabwean context and how it may contribute to the experiences of teachers in using the Shangani language as the language of instruction.

From Phillipson's point of viewthe spread of English is not a natural phenomenon, resulting from the need to find a lingua franca for transnational or international communication to overcome the language barriers that are likely to emerge in situations where people speak different mother tongues. However, it is a result of a conscious decision by those in power to dominate speakers of the 'minority languages.' Thus, Crystal (2003:9) purports that, "A language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people- especially the political and military power." This therefore confirms the fact that the spread of English as a global language and its subsequent dominance in education is a reflection of the power of its native speakers. The status of English, therefore, is a result of conscious political efforts made by two of the world's most powerful countries.

Crystal (2003:59) notes that there are two nations that are responsible for the hegemonic character of English in Africa and elsewhere in the world. These are England and the United States of America. He notes that:

> *The present day status of English is primarily the result of two factors: the expansion*
> *of British colonial power which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century and*
> *the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth*
> *century.*

It can be noted that Crystal here raises pertinent issues with regards to the dominance of the English language. One of the issues is the colonial history where the English colonized many countries and imposed their language as the official one on the subdued nations. The indigenous people were therefore expected to learn this foreign language so that they could use it for all official transactions in commerce, judiciary and education among others. Therefore, English occupied the top position in the hierarchy of languages while the indigenous languages played insignificant and peripheral roles in these central domains.

According to Phillipson (1992:57) "Periphery languages are not accorded enough resources to develop so that the same functions could be performed in them." This is clear evidence that the colonialists made a deliberate attempt to suppress the indigenous languages by not allocating enough resources for them to develop and for them to be able to perform the same functions that the English language performed. As a result, in most African countries in general and Zimbabwe in particular, the colonialists made sure that they only developed one or two languages as national languages whilst the rest were regarded as mere minority languages. In Zimbabwe, for example, the colonial government facilitated the standardisation of the

ChiShona language in 1935 by one Clement Doke. However, from my own point of view, the other 15 languages (that I mention in Chapter 1 and 2 of this thesis) needed to undergo the same process of standardisation for them to assume a higher status.

The fact that languages like Kalanga, Tonga, Shangani and Nambya among others, occupied the third, fourth or fifth position on the hierarchy since English was at the top, followed by national languages like ChiShona (and Ndebele later) ensured the suppression of these languages. Calvet (1979) in Phillipson (1992) also notes that, in post independent Mali, French continues to be the language of power and the current upliftment of Bambara, as well as extensive literacy in it, has been done at the cost of other languages in Mali. This submission suggests that the minority language speakers were the worst affected by linguistic imperialism as they were suppressed by the colonial languages as well as the national languages. It also shows the national languages continue to suppress these languages in post-colonial African countries and that is why I see the relevance of the Linguistic Imperialism Theory in our understanding of the experiences of teachers 'using' Shangani, a minority language, as the MOI.

Another important issue that Crystal (2003) raises in his citation above is that in the twentieth century the United States of America (USA) emerged as the world's economic powerhouse. What this means is that, the English language further strengthened its power over other world languages as a result of the economic status of the USA in the twentieth century. Thus, because of this reason, the other countries had to accept the use of English for them to be able to benefit in one way or the other from the economic powerhouse.

However, Phillipson (2015) opines that if the learning of the English Language is done in ways that encourage the marginalization of other languages and prevent as well as hinder their learning through linguicist policies then Linguistic Imperialism would be at play. This, according to him, was established in the British Isles when the English Language was imposed in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland as well as the Americas through destroying local languages and gradually eliminating other immigrant languages. What this means is that the political muscle of the British during the colonial period enabled it to place its language on the pedestal while the rest of the indigenous languages were rendered useless. Prah (2009:3) observes that,

> *In much of British colonial Africa, Western education and the use of English*
> *in education was started in the late 19th century…Africans were taught beyond*
> *the initial years of vernacular school, in the language of the colonial power.*

This means that, beyond the infant level, English was the sole medium of instruction and automatically it became more powerful than the indigenous Zimbabwean languages. As a result, what happened during and after colonialism fulfilled the words of one imperialist called Thomas DeQuincey that English would fulfill its predestined task of moving forward to achieve its eventual assignment of eating up, like Aaron's rod, all the other world languages (Pennycook, 1994). According to Phillipson this is the 'Stick' stage of Linguistic Imperialism.

I have given this background so as to foreground my discussion on the current situation in as far as the dominance of the English language is concerned now that the majority of the world education systems reflect what Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) calls linguicism. This can help me as the researcher to illuminate the experiences of teachers teaching in a predominantly Shangani community. Charamba (2012) feels that it is important to consider the historical background in trying to understand the present because what existed before can be useful lenses in the proper assessment of the extent to which change has taken place.

### 4.3.3 Neo- colonial Africa and Linguistic Imperialism

The end of colonialism in Africa and elsewhere in the world did not bring freedom to indigenous languages after so many years of being dominated by the colonial languages. According to Nhongo (2013) the dominance of English in education has continued into the 21$^{st}$ century. This is despite the fact that all countries formerly under colonial rule have gained political independence from their former colonisers and this time around it is strengthening its position under the pretext of globalization. It is still the English Language that is ruling the roost in post-colonial Africa. Phillipson, (2015) notes the system of maintaining European languages as languages of power is a key characteristic of former colonies, and to him the term 'post-colonial occludes a linguistic hegemony that has remained in place. This implies that as long as we still use the term post-colonial we are accepting that the continuous domination of European languages on the African indigenous languages. For example, Phillipson (2015) notes that in Singapore, all education is through the English medium whilst national languages are subjects only.

According to Pakir (2007:197) "English is the language of power, as in other former colonies, with the consequence that now more than half the population of Singapore use English as the home language." What is obtaining in Singapore today follows the logic of a city and country being a creation of colonialism and its post-independence rulers are appreciating that its economic and linguistic well-being would thrive best by its integration into global finance and

commerce (Phillipson, 2015). This is an indication that English is still dominating the linguistic environment in Singapore largely because the post-colonial rulers appreciate its economic and linguistic value at the expense of the indigenous languages which are just school subjects. This confirms my position that political independence did not guarantee freedom to indigenous languages which are still playing second fiddle to the English Language worldwide.

Phillipson (1992) observes that it is in Africa where there is sifting of local languages and imposition of alien languages and values on indigenous people. He adds that, the foreign colonial languages are more favoured now than they were before independence. It may be perplexing why after gaining political independence most (if not all) African countries still cling to these colonial languages. In Tanzania, for example, English continues to be the most preferred language in secondary and higher education regardless of the fact that the language which is used for most social functions is Swahili (ibid). There are several reasons why English has remained a powerful language even after the end of colonialism. One of the reasons is that it is the language of the current world power, the USA. George Bernard Shaw, born in 1956 once said that what was happening in his lifetime was Americanisation of the world. This implies that if America is in control of the world economy, its language automatically becomes the language of power.

According to Bourdieu (2001) in recent years the dominance of the English language has been in the guise of globalization and from Phillipson's (2010) point of view it is one dimension of linguistic imperialism. Phillipson (2015:3) observes that "It tends to be scholars from the UK and the USA (for example, Crystal, 2003) who see the expansion of English as unproblematic and implicitly condone linguistic imperialism." This means that Phillipson does not see justification in imposing English as a global language because to him it is a continuation of Linguistic Imperialism which he has no kind words for anyway. Just recently (28 May 2014 to be precise), the American President, Barack Obama said "Here is my bottom line: America must always lead on the world stage" (Phillipson, 2015:6). One of the ways of ensuring that America remains in the lead on the world stage is by ensuring that the English language continues to dominate all the other languages because there is power in language.

Phillipson (2015) contends that the American Empire and Linguistic Imperialism co-articulate. He notes that there are about 16000 business schools worldwide, half of which are in the US, a third in the UK and Europe. " After expansion in India and China, Africa is, 'the new frontier' for international business schools with the risk of this being a new 'colonial frontier' of

academic and economic imperialism" (ibid-9). If schools are using the English language, it follows that companies from English speaking countries will make a lot of money through the publication of books in the English language for use in the schools. Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar (2010) note that in school education, the frontier is well established with the increasing privatisation of education, which is in conflict with the human right to free education. As a result, the superpower's language continues to dominate other languages because those who own the English Language gain from an alchemy which converts into social and material benefit and advantage (Phillipson, 1992).It leaves a lot of questions on how teachers would experience using a minority language as the MOI in the face of the continued dominance of English in world politics. These are the lenses that the current research will use to establish and understand the experiences of teachers in using the Shangani language at the elementary level at the three schools under study.

Another reason why English continues to top the language world rankings is that the majority of the elites in post-colonial African states promote the use of the English Language as the MOI, with the alibi that for them to overcome the so called problems that may arise from societal consequences of linguistic pluralism, they have to use it (Prah, 2009). I think Prah is justified to say 'the so called' problems because these elites simply assume that there may be problems if linguistic pluralism is accommodated. He adds that, the real and unspoken reason is that they have a strong desire to strengthen their own social standing through the social elevation of the English language because they have a head start since they already possess sufficient competence in the use of the language.

Phillipson (2015) concurs with Prah's (2009) argument above when he states that elites in former colonies are also opting for English-medium education at all levels, and in their private and professional lives. If these elites are advocating the use of the English language (covertly or overtly) one would wonder the experiences that teachers would go through in trying to teach young minority language learners in elementary grades using that minority language where they are unlikely to receive support since those that should offer that support want to maintain the social distance between them and the majority of the population through the continued use of English.

Mutasa (2006) notes that, when it comes to defending the hegemonic position of English in post-independence Africa, the mindset of the elites is a real force to reckon with. This is because they continuously use European languages when conversing amongst themselves. In

addition to that, they ensure that their children attend those schools that uphold the use of these European languages as mediums of instruction (Charamba, 2012). This implies that, they send their children to the elitist schools which do not tolerate the use of indigenous African languages as mediums of instruction. As such, no meaningful support is likely to be offered for mother tongue education. Mutasa (2006) observes that since most of these elites are the current African leaders, there is no political will amongst these elitist bosses and their governments to uplift local languages to official languages of instruction in learning institutions. However, it is interesting to note that most post-colonial governments have promulgated 'mother tongue education' policies that are never implemented due to lack of commitment in supporting these policies. In chapter two I discussed in detail quite a number of African countries that have enacted policies and never followed up on them to ensure successful implementation.

The mentality by African elites that English should continue to dominate the education circles in many post-colonial countries has a bearing on language policy statements in these countries. Mtenje (2008) states that, the overall language policy picture in the Southern African region which Zimbabwe is part of is characterized by avoidance and that of declaration without implementation. The implication is that, language policy statements may be enacted in ways that subtly or obviously show that the English language should continue to dominate the indigenous languages. For example, the Ugandan language policy is one example that shows most African governments use the avoidance strategy in making policies to do with the use of indigenous languages. It states that local languages may be used as mediums of instruction in the rural areas where they are predominantly spoken. Can we really say that the Ugandan government is serious about the use of the indigenous languages in education? I would say 'No' because if it seriously wanted to promote the indigenous languages to become mediums of instruction it should have used its power to compel every teacher to use them in education. Instead, it says the languages *may* be used, leaving it to individual teachers to use or not to use the languages in education.

Again, the policy is unfair considering that those in urban schools learn through a different medium from the one 'used', in the rural areas. This is linguistic imperialism since Phillipson (2009) says linguistic imperialism is a variation of linguicism, which operates through ideologies and structures and unequal treatment of the groups identified by language. The Ugandan government is subtly saying the English language should be used despite the differences in proficiency of the language between urban and rural pupils. The net effect of this policy is that teachers would continue using the English language but of course disadvantaging

the rural folk who lack proficiency in the language. In chapter 2, I discussed the Zimbabwean 2006 Education Amendment Act on the use of local languages in education and it is more or less similar to the Ugandan policy. The fact that most African elites still want to perpetuate the use of English in education shows that they still have the colonial mentality that English is superior to indigenous African languages. Prah (2009) thus contends that the Westerners are no longer the key players in the game of the obliteration of African languages but rather, the huge sections of the elitist Africans and like I have indicated earlier, they do so in the guise of globalisation.

Phillipson (2015) notes that advocates of global English promote British interests worldwide, perpetuate linguistic imperialism, and condone linguistic dispossession. However, he thinks it is not proper to let English continue to dominate other languages. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2010) aver that the conjecture that the only language of globalization is English and is so in everybody's interest is blatantly false. This means that other languages should be accommodated in worldwide discourse so that the dominance of English over other languages can come to an end. Phillipson (2015:2) explicitly points out that, "The argument that English is 'owned' by all who use it ignores the inequalities that are generated by and through English." In education, the continued use of this foreign and second language makes the majority of these learners appear to be dull yet they are failing to master concepts that are taught via an unfamiliar language. This argument can be better understood through the analysis of Albert Einstein's argument below:

**Figure 4: Albert Einstein' Conception of Our Education System**
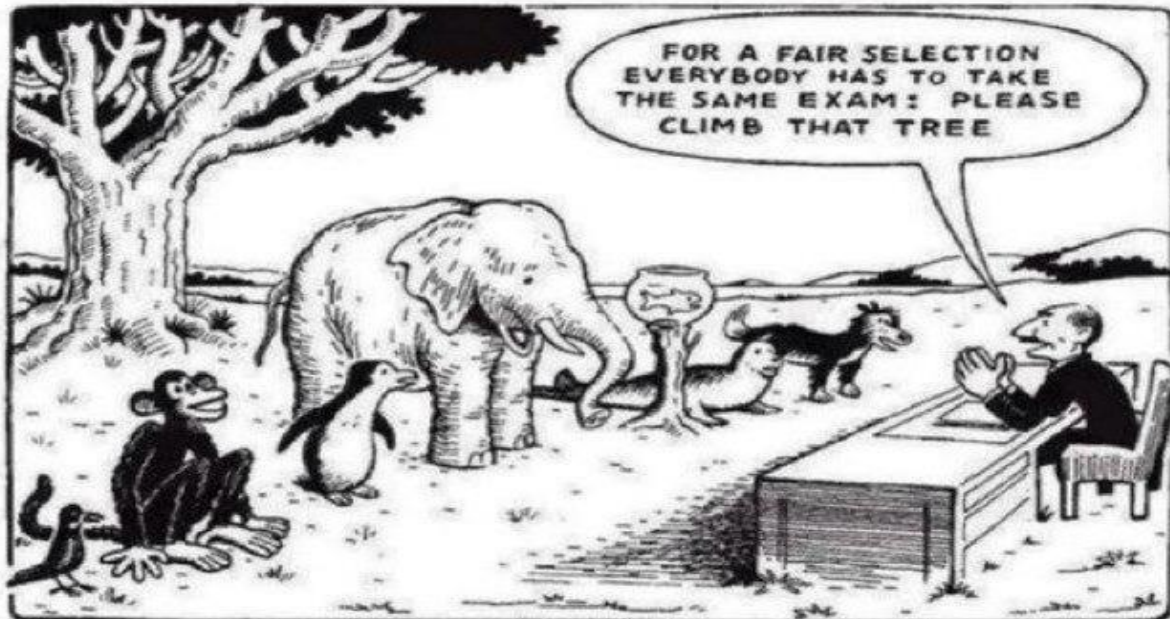


Our Education System

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

– Albert Einstein

Einstein is talking about the education system in general and he is saying that if we use the same yardstick to measure pupils' intelligence then some learners might feel stupid as they fail to grasp whatever is being taught just like a fish will do if asked to climb a tree. Going back to the issue of Linguistic Imperialism, learners who are forced to learn through the English language before they attain full facility in the language usually perform badly in school as they can hardly comprehend material coming in a foreign language. That is why Phillipson has maintained his position that Linguistic Imperialism should not be condoned. He states that he has nothing against English when used appropriately in education and elsewhere but his worry is that English has been and is being misused (Phillipson, 2015). But the question remains: How does the existence of English influence policy decisions and experiences of teachers in implementing the so called mother tongue policy in Zimbabwe? Phillipson (2015:5) clearly states that "Linguistic imperialism involves a mix of push and pull factors, local and external factors." These push and pull factors have contributed immensely to the continued supremacy

of the English Language in today's many education systems and obviously, this has a lot of implications on the implementation of mother tongue education policies. This also obviously means that those who are expected to implement are likely to have difficult experiences in implementing mother tongue education policies.

I find it critical at this point to look at another theory which largely informs this study: Gramsci's Hegemony Theory.

## 4.4 GRAMSCI'S HEGEMONY THEORY

Gramsci (1971) is not the first person to talk about hegemony. Ives (2004) notes that, before Gramsci the term hegemony was largely used to mean the dominance of one nation over others, particularly within fairly friendly alliances. This seems to suggest that before Antonio Gramsci proffered his hegemony theory, the general understanding was that hegemony was a result of employing coercive strategies to dominate over particular nations. Yilmaz (2010:194) states that, "The term hegemony originating from ancient Greek 'hegemonia' literary expresses the dominant and oppressive status of one element in the system over the others."

However, Gramsci brought another dimension of hegemony where he "broadened the concept of hegemony to include in it an analysis of the means by which ruling classes obtained consent of the subordinate groups of their own domination" (McLellan 2003:187). Gramsci is thus espousing that it is not always the case that the ruling class will use coercion to subject the working class to their hegemonic rule but also employ tactics that convince the proletariat that they should be dominated by the bourgeoisie. In other words, the bourgeoisie class uses consent to subject the proletariat to their hegemonic rule.

But how can one willingly accept domination? McLellan (2003:187) is quick to note that in the process of building the hegemonic status, the worldview of the bourgeoisie is so scrupulously spread by its intellectuals so as to become the 'common sense' of the entire society. Thus, Gramsci "redefined hegemony to mean the formation and organisation of consent" (Ives 2004:5). The proletariat is made to believe that their oppression is 'normal' and there is no reason to want to change the status quo.

Gramsci pays immense attention to language as a political subject, for example, to government policy with regards to language, everyday language practices and educational language curricula (Ives, 2004). He cartels this with the rich figurative control of linguistic concepts as instruments that can help in analysing political positions, exclusively the function of culture in

shaping people's behavior, beliefs and even their patterns of voting(ibid). Gramsci seems to be agreeing with the Theory of Linguistic Imperialism that language pervades all forms of imperialism because these linguistic patterns are critical in our analysis of political positions which in turn influence certain decisions by the ruling elites to continue to dominate the proletariat. According to Phillipson (1997: 242)

> *Hegemony is used in popular speech loosely to indicate dominance but in the substantial scientific literature spanned by Gramsci, hegemony is invariably seen as non-coercive, as involving contestation and adaptation, a battle for hearts and minds.*

Therefore, to convince the dominated that being oppressed has no problem, the bourgeoisie employ various non-coercive strategies to win the hearts and minds of the proletariat.

Ives (2004:82) gives one of Gramsci's famous quotes that,

> *Every time that the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it means that a series of other problems are coming to the fore: the formation and enlargement of the governing class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relationships between the governing groups and the national-popular mass, in other words to recognize cultural hegemony.*

Implicit in this quote is the fact that the language question leads to a whole lot of other problems. One of the problems according to Gramsci is the enlargement of the governing class and obviously their language would get preference over the rest of the languages. At the same time, there is need to make sure that more close and safe relationships need to be established. Gramsci therefore maintains that, "…power is not only dependent on force but also on consent" (Yilmaz, 2010:194). The governing class therefore seeks consent of the popular mass by making it believe that their language is less important than the language of the bourgeoisie.

In his theory, Gramsci identifies two levels of the superstructure which are: the political society and the civil society (Charamba, 2012). Guaba (2003) says that political society resorts to coercion to maintain its hegemonic position. The political powers therefore use their authority to put in place what Gramsci calls structures of coercion that would ensure their continued hegemony over the proletariat. These according to Althusser (2008) are the Repressive State Apparatus (RSAs). The police, army, courts and prisons make up the state's Repressive State Apparatus. In super power politics, the world power at any given time would use its RSAs to coerce countries to do what the world power needs including imposing their language on the weaker nations. As I alluded to earlier in this thesis, the United States of

America is the current super power. It ascended to the rudder of the world economy in 1945. It strengthened its position as the world power in 1990 when it allied with England and other European states after the fall of the Soviet Union.

From that time up until today, the superpower has been dictating what should and what should not be done in the different countries in this world. A quick example that comes to mind is the attack of Iraqi by America in the 90s on speculation that Iraqi had weapons that can cause mass destruction. Recently, it was attacked again on the same allegations and that led to the execution of its leader (Saddam Hussein) on 30 December 2006. This is just one example of many situations where America as a world power has used structures of coercion to maintain her political hegemony.

In this thesis, however, my focus is not on the political society but on the civil society. According to Barker (2008), the civil society is composed of associations external to formal state boundaries, which include the press, family, leisure activities and social class among others. According to Charamba (2012) the structures of the civil society are used by the bourgeoisie in their endeavor to attain consent (hegemonic order) of the ruled (proletariat).

Unlike in political society where the ruled are coerced to do certain things, the civil society works out strategies to convince the ruled that the ruler has the right to make choices for them and that those choices are good for them anyway. I should hasten to say that in the current super power politics, we can witness the Americanisation of the world at different levels. I will discuss the Americanisation of the world on the level of language practice and preference. This will be done with reference to Gramsci's (1971) conception of consent as the key stratagem used by rulers to compel the subordinate groups to use their language. I will therefore look at the Zimbabwean situation with regards to the hegemony of English and national languages (Shona and Ndebele) and how the consent strategy has been applied on the minority languages in general and the Shangani minority language in particular.

From the foregoing discussion one would note that linguistic imperialism and hegemony are closely related entities which can help explain the dilemma of mother tongue education policies. There is a strong relationship between imperialism and hegemony (Yilmaz, 2010). It follows that the political and economic instruments will also dictate the languages that would be officially recognized which will lead to the hegemony of particular languages over others.

However, according to Cox (1993) cited in Yilmaz (2010) Gramsci says that the major power itself induces keenness and support intuitively. For Gramsci therefore, the hegemony of a language is strengthened when the major power makes the dominated groups willingly accept that their language is inferior to that of the major power. I have said that America is the current world power and that due to this reason the English language enjoys a hegemonic position in the global economy. I should therefore discuss how Gramsci's conception of consent can be used as lenses through which we can explain why the hegemony of the English language continues many years after the end of colonialism.

The issue of technology has been used to convince the majority of formerly colonized nations to believe that we cannot do without the English language. English has been made the official medium through which technological knowledge can be accessed. Mutasa (2006:82) observes that,

> *Needless to say, English is ubiquitous and indispensable: Switch on a computer-the language it uses is English; touch a telephone-it uses English; step into a bank-communication is in English; open most newspapers and switch on a television-they use English. What this insinuates is that English become an epitome in the lives of the people and this has dire implications for the continued existence of African languages.*

The fact that most technological gadgets use the English language makes speakers of indigenous languages accept its superiority and look down upon their own languages. It is important to note that things have slightly changed and the computer now uses many languages, some of which are African languages. However, it may also be interesting to note that most information on serious issues can be largely accessed in the English Language. The implication is that the English language will be willingly accepted without question as the language of technology. In Gramscian thinking this is a form of a consent strategy employed by the major power to continue to dominate the weaker groups. As a direct result of this non-coercive strategy, the English language has continued to dominate the indigenous African languages in many post-colonial countries.

English language has also been viewed as the language of scientific advancement. Indigenous language speakers are made to believe that their languages cannot be used to express scientific terms. For example, Kadodo and Mhindu (2013) found out that some teachers and education officers thought that local languages lacked sophistication to cater for science and technology. These people have accepted the defeat of their own languages and this means that they are no

longer worried about why English continues to dominate their own languages. This kind of thinking has grim repercussions for the continued existence of African languages (Charamba, 2012).

According to Phillipson (2015) many people opt for the neo-imperial language because they feel that its linguistic capital is the one which can serve their professional and personal interests well. This is acceptance of domination willingly. In so doing, speakers of indigenous languages do not even consider the future of their own languages. They simply accept the neo-imperial language because they want to pursue their personal and professional interests.

A quick example that comes to mind is the history of the English Language in Hong Kong. Boyle (1997: 176) notes that, "One thing that emerges from a consideration of the history (of English in Hong Kong) is that, whether they thought they were culturally compromised or not, Hong Kong Chinese have always wanted English." He goes on to say that recent surveys by Littlewood and Liu in 1996 as well as Pennington and Yue in 1994 have revealed that so far there have not been any changes to that effect. " In the early days of missionary schools, as soon as the opportunity for English was offered by St Paul's school, Chinese parents grasped it vividly"(Boyle, 1997:176). This shows that these Hong Kong Chinese people willingly grabbed an opportunity at their disposal to make their children learn through the English language.

It may be surprising as to why they opted for English. The reasons are explicitly given by Boyle (1997) when he highlights that the Hong Kong Chinese have at all times viewed the English Language pragmatically. They have always seen it as a way of engaging in better business and at the same time those in possession of English rapidly felt supreme as compared to their counterparts without. Boyle (1997) further notes that those parents who wanted their children to enroll in good government schools had to agree to the English medium and the majority of them were actually pleased to have their children in schools where the English medium was used. Thus, their choice for the English language was not because they had been compelled to do so but because they considered the social prestige of the English Language and its usefulness commercially (ibid).

The super power ensured that the English language continues to dominate as a language of commerce and prestige so that non-English speakers will willingly accept its use while their own languages continue to play second fiddle even in their own countries. This is what Gramsci means when he talks about the civil society uses non-coercive strategies to perpetuate

the hegemony of a language over other languages. In as far as English language is concerned, it has remained a highly desirable commodity because of its utilitarian value in many parts of the world and Zimbabwe is no exception. Kadodo et al (2012) note that the expectancy theory proposes that for mother tongue to succeed it must guarantee that once people have learnt through it they are assured of a good life they yearn for.

If the super power has ensured that English continues to dominate in the job market whilst the indigenous languages play peripheral roles, it leaves a lot of questions as to how the so called mother tongue education policies will be viewed by the supposed beneficiaries of such policies. The expectancy value theory mentioned above definitely affects people's attitudes towards particular languages and this may make them accept the dominance of the former colonial languages if they are the ones that guarantee the good life. With this in mind, the experiences of teachers using Shangani as a medium of instruction can be better articulated using the Gramscian concept of hegemony where English and national languages are highly valued as compared to the minority languages in general and Shangani in particular.

Where language hegemony takes place, Ives (2004:89) notes that,

> *Language is transformed with the transformation of the whole civilization, through the acquisition of culture by new classes and through the hegemony exercised by one national language over others…and what it does is precisely to absorb in metaphorical form the words of previous civilisations and cultures.*

The implication is that, through the hegemony of one language over others, the civilisations and cultures are symbolically absorbed and this is done in a way that convinces the dominated people that there is nothing wrong with this continued dominance. This hegemony of English and/or national languages will definitely have a bearing on mother tongue policy implementation and the subsequent experiences of teachers in their quest to implement the policy. That is the reason why the Hegemony Theory by Gramsci has been incorporated in this thesis to help unravel the experiences of teachers in using Shangani as the MOI at the three schools under study.

## 4.5 THE NEED FOR THE LINGUISTIC DECOLONISATION OF THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE

Scholars like Prah (2009) and Mutasa (2006) are totally against this linguistic colonisation of African languages. These and other scholars believe that the linguistic decolonization process in Africa can only be achieved by ensuring that indigenous African languages come first in all significant discourses. In fact Prah (2009) advocates the use of indigenous languages from primary school through to the higher education level. He argues that "It is in these languages that the intelligence of Africans is most discerning and creative, these are the languages of mass society and hence its development" (Prah 2009:9). Prah is actually saying that Africans are intelligent but if they continue to accept the hegemony of English and never utilise their own languages their creativity and intelligence may never be realised. The use of these indigenous languages according to Prah will ensure Africa's development. This is because Prah (2009) believes that through using indigenous African languages as vehicles for accessing educational knowledge, the transmission of scientific and technological knowledge into the customs of the African commonalities will be ensured.

The belief that English is indispensable in the global economy was refuted by Phillipson (2015:9) who argues that,

> While English is of major importance for the global economy, assuming that it is so 'basic' that it is a requirement for economic success is contradicted by the fact that the economies of China, Japan and Korea succeed through using local languages in education, as do continental European countries.

He is saying that we cannot willingly accept English as the sole language through which knowledge in education can be imparted with the belief that it is indispensable. China, Japan and Korea among other countries have successfully used their indigenous languages and this has seen a phenomenal growth of their economies. The fact that people are thinking in their own languages is promoting creativity and innovativeness and creativity unlike a scenario where people are literary asked to dream in a foreign language. I agree with Phillipson's submission above that the English language can be done without and its presence in many African states has actually impeded development in science and technology. Phillipson (2015) argues that the belief that English is possessed by all its users disregards the disparities that are caused by and through the use of English.

As I have highlighted earlier in this chapter, Linguistic Imperialism (as propounded by Phillipson) and Linguistic Hegemony (by Gramsci) have had a negative influence on the mentality of the majority of Africans. However, Phillipson (1997:246) insists that, "…we need a paradigm shift, a radical rethinking of language-in-education policies worldwide, and how educational 'aid' addresses them." This means that the way people perceive their own languages in relation to English should change. Prah (2009:10) is quick to say,

> *We are not suggesting that English should not be taught in schools. We are saying that, as it is done in Germany, France, Sweden, Norway, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and many more, English should not supplant the role and position of the local languages. It should be taught as a subject, a contact language, as is done in all these countries and not allowed to replace the legitimate and rational functions of local languages.*

Thus, Prah (2009) is concurring with Phillipson (1992, 1997, and 2015) that Linguistic Imperialism should never be condoned and that local languages should take leading roles in education circles. There is an urgent need for the decolonisation of the mind (Ngugi, 1981) so that people would begin to believe in their local languages and use them as languages of teaching and learning, thus ensuring the continued existence of these languages.

The theoretical and conceptual underpinnings discussed in this chapter are useful lenses in the establishment of the experiences of elementary level teachers teaching in a predominantly Shangani community.

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

The chapter began by defining what a theoretical framework is and it was established that the theoretical framework offers a well-sustained justification to carry out one's study and enables the reader to appreciate one's point of view. It was also noted that it is the backbone of any research as it provides useful insights on theory upon which each research is based. A detailed discussion on UNESCO's position on the issue of indigenous languages in education was made and it was noted that UNESCO maintains that the best medium to impart educational knowledge is the learners' mother tongue. Learners, especially those at elementary level should be taught through a medium that they understand and it is obvious that they understand better when taught through their mother tongue. Various approaches to bilingual education were clearly outlined and I made it clear that when enacting a mother tongue education policy a

country should make it clear on which approach it is adopting to ensure better experiences on the part of the implementers of the policy.

Linguistic Imperialism was also identified as the major reason why indigenous languages are undermined and continue to play peripheral roles in many countries the world over. Closely related to the Linguistic Imperialism Theory is Gramsci' Hegemony Theory which was also discussed in considerable depth. It was observed that the current hegemonic status of the English Language is not so due to coercion by the owners of the language but consent by the dominated groups that it is superior. Various strategies have been used by the super power to ensure that the English language continues to dominate in world affairs. However, various scholars were cited as saying that this hegemony of the English language should not be condoned. It was also observed that issues of linguistic imperialism and the hegemony of one language over others have a detrimental effect on the likely experiences of teachers in implementing a Mother Tongue Education policy especially where a minority language is involved. The theoretical underpinnings discussed will obviously be useful lenses in establishing a meaningful understanding of the experiences of teachers in using the Shangani Language as the MOI at the elementary level (Grades 1 to 3)

Having established the theoretical underpinnings that inform this study, it is prudent for me to move on to the presentation and analysis of findings from the data collected using interviews, focus group discussions as well as observations.

# CHAPTER 5

# TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES ON THE USE OF SHANGANI AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Four I discussed in detail the theoretical framework guiding this study. In this chapter my focus is on the presentation of the findings of this study on the teachers' experiences on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of the findings. This chapter basically addresses my first key research question which sought to establish the experiences of the teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. The following categories emerged from the findings:

1. Challenges facing Shona speaking teachers in the implementation of Shangani medium of instruction
2. The advantages of being proficient in Shangani
3. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's lack of commitment to the language policy.
4. Higher Education's lack of commitment to the language policy.
5. The non-availability of teaching resources.

I noted that some of the responses given by the 15 participants had sounded more or less the same. Thus, where the answers were similar, I just picked one response to avoid monotony and redundancy in my presentation. According to Blaxter et al. (2001) the business of analysing data you have generated involves two closely related processes:

1. The management of the data gathered through the reduction of its magnitude and scope, so as to enable the researcher to adequately and meaningfully report upon it.
2. The analysis of the managed set of data, by conceptualising it and concentrating on what the researcher feels to be critically important or significant.

Thus, the categories and themes that I used in my analysis are meant to address these issues.

## 5.2 CHALLENGES FACING SHONA SPEAKING TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SHANGANI MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

It emerged from the findings that Shona speaking teachers face challenges with regard to the implementation of the Shangani medium of instruction. The findings show that their challenges are largely caused by their lack of proficiency in the Shangani Language.

### 5.2.1 Teachers' Shangani proficiency

It emerged from the findings that Shona speaking teachers are not proficient in the language that the learners speak, which is Shangani. In such a scenario, most teachers would opt for the English Language which is the ultimate language of the examinations in Zimbabwe but the disturbing factor is that the research findings revealed that the learners at the three schools are not yet proficient in the English Language due to their lack of exposure to the language at home yet educational knowledge has to be imparted in these young learners.This has led to a situation where the teacher is now expected to learn the language from the same pupils he/she has to teach. The figure below indicates the participating teachers L1:

**Participating Teachers' L1**

**Figure 5`: Participating Teachers' L1**

N=15
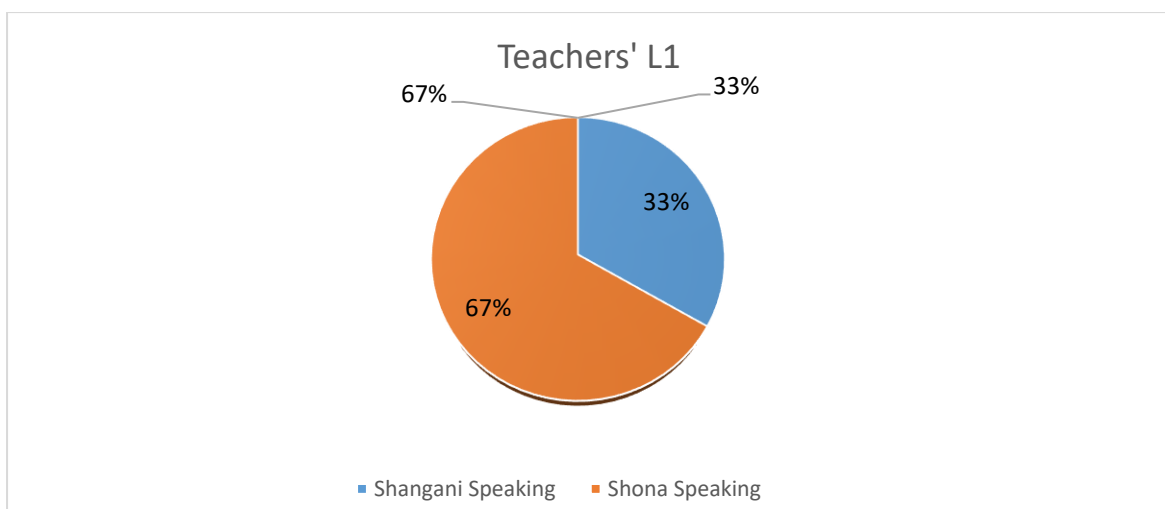


**Figure 4 above reflects the distribution of Shangani and Shona speaking teachers.**

From the interviews it emerged that out of the 15 interviewed teachers, 5 (33%) are mother tongue (L1) Shangani speakers and 10 (67%) are Shona. These statistics reveal that only a small percentage of teachers teaching at the elementary level where the L1 is supposed to be used by virtue of the learners' lack of proficiency in the English Language are L1 Shangani speakers. The majority of the teachers (67% as shown on Fig 1) are Shona speaking. It further emerged that out of the 10 Shona speaking teachers none of them was proficient in the Shangani Language as evidenced by the following statements in response to an interview question which sought to establish how eloquent the Shona speakers were in the Shangani Language. For example, teacher Tolerant from Mandleni Primary School said:

*I can't even speak a single word.*

Teacher Tolerant cannot speak even a single Shangani word yet he is teaching at the lower grades where the majority of learners speak Shangani and have limited proficiency in the English Language is limited. If it is true that he cannot speak a single Shangani word it may suggest that his communication with his learners is difficult because these learners are Shangani speaking. He cannot speak the language of the learner so it means the communication process is disturbed since the teacher's language is different from that of the learner.

In response to the same interview question, Teacher Chipo from Mandleni Primary School had this to say:

*I am not eloquent at all.*

In the same way, Teacher Patience at Bhizana Primary School also indicated that
she lacked proficiency in the Shangani Language when she said:

*I just know very few Shangani words, I am still learning. But I know the basic terms like greetings.*

All these sentiments are indicative of a desperate situation for these Shona teachers who lack proficiency in the Shangani Language which is the predominant language for the learners at the schools they teach. Teacher Patience actually stated that she is still learning the language. This implies that she has to teach through a language that she is still learning! These findings reveal that by and large, Shona speaking teachers lack proficiency in the Shangani Language which the participants from the three schools confirmed that it was the

majority language at the three schools under study. I can therefore say that the teachers' lack of proficiency in the Shangani language may suggest that there is a high likelihood of communication problems as these Shona teachers try to teach pupils at the elementary level.

These sentiments are an indication that the participating teachers are experiencing the use of Shangani at the elementary level with difficulty because they are not fluent in the language. For those that know just the basics, this may not suggest that they find it easy to deliver lessons in Shangani because communicating through a language means much more than just knowing the basics. Thus, it is a mammoth task for the majority of these teachers to use the Shangani Language as the language of instruction at the selected schools yet the majority of the learners are exclusively Shangani speaking.

During the focus group discussions with participating teachers from Mandleni and Ntolwane primary schools, the sentiments that teachers are not competent in the Shangani language were also raised. Some of the statements quoted verbatim were:

> *The policy is good for the kids but not for teachers because teachers cannot speak it [Shangani] (Teacher Paul from Mandleni Primary School).*

> *It is quite difficult to use it for teaching and learning because I am not a fluent Shangani speaker (Teacher Victoria from Ntolwane Primary School).*

Whilst these teachers appreciate the importance of teaching through a language understandable to the learner, their experiences of using it in their own situation is not an easy one as most of them are not fluent Shangani speakers. This situation prevailing in the three selected schools is consistent with Adegbija's (2004) observation that there is a disparity between the envisaged benefits for MTE and what actually takes place in the classrooms. At the three schools, the situation in the classroom is dire as the teachers who are supposed to use the Shangani Language to facilitate mastery of concepts are grappling with the Shangani Language. Thus, the benefits of teaching elementary pupils in their home language at the three schools under study may not be fully realised in a scenario where the teachers who should teach using a language are not even competent in it.

From the participating teachers' responses it emerged that Shona speaking teachers face challenges in 'using' Shangani as the medium of instruction due to their lack of proficiency in the Shangani Language as they strive to impart educational knowledge to their pupils at the elementary level. Of course there are challenges that both Shangani and Shona teachers face in the implementation of the policy on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction but the Shona speaking teachers' challenges are compounded by the fact that they lack proficiency in the Shangani Language.

**5.2.1.1 Shona teachers having to learn the language from their pupils**

The situation of the Shona teachers at the three schools under study has left them with no choice but to learn the language from their pupils. Even the Shangani speaking teachers expect these Shona speaking teachers to learn the language from the same pupils they teach. In response to an interview question that sought to establish the ways that would ensure the successful implementation of the mother tongue education policy, Teacher Nyasha of Bhizana School said:

> *Teachers should learn the language from the kids.*

Based on the response above, Teacher Nyasha is actually saying that those teachers who cannot speak the Shangani Language should learn the language from the pupils. The lack of proficiency in the Shangani language makes Shona speaking teachers find themselves in a situation where they have to learn the language from the learners they teach.

In response to an interview question which sought to establish who expects teachers to teach using Shangani, Teacher Barbra at Ntolwane Primary School said:

> *The situation itself! Imagine a child coming from home with no knowledge of English or Shona, what is the teacher going to do? Obviously you should speak the language that the child understands which in our case is Shangani. Even the parents and those at our district education office expect us to use Shangani.*

As evidenced in Teacher Barbara's response above, it is obvious that the situation forces her to use the Shangani Language despite her lack of proficiency in the language. The learners she teaches come from homes without the knowledge of either English (the second

language) or Shona (which happens to be her L1) and the teacher has no other alternative but to use the language that the pupils understand better. What this implies is that the Shona teachers are faced with a dilemma of having to use the Shangani language which they cannot speak so as to facilitate communication in the teaching and learning process. This indicates that communication between teacher Barbra and her learners is not effective, thus causes problems when she communicates with them.

As a result of this dilemma, most Shona teachers are forced by the situation to learn the Shangani Language from the very learners they should teach. In response to a semi-structured interview question, Teacher Patience from Bhizana Primary School said:

> *I am Shona speaking and I have to ask from my students...*

The statement by Teacher Patience above indicates that she is relying on what her pupils teach her to be able to deliver lessons using the Shangani Language. Shona teachers at Bhizana and Ntolwane primary schools highlighted that they are largely learning the language from the very pupils they teach since it is them that they interact with most of the time. What this means is that these teachers have to humble themselves to an extent that their learners should become their Shangani Language teachers! They have no option because they are not proficient in the language yet it is the one they should use to meaningfully transmit educational knowledge to the elementary level learners. These sentiments by teachers were confirmed in one lesson observation at Bhizana Primary School where the teacher would say something in Shangani and then ask the learners if what she would have said was the correct way of saying it. This makes it clear that the teachers are experiencing the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction with a lot of challenges as they lack the language proficiency that is required if one is to successfully implement the mother tongue education policy.

### 5.2.1.2 Humiliation felt by Shona teachers

It came out from the interviews that teachers who are not Shangani speaking, who are Shona, feel humiliated when they make mistakes when trying to speak the Shangani Language in their endeavour to impart educational knowledge in their pupils. I spite of the fact that Shona speaking teachers are not competent in the Shangani Language, the fact remains that they have to teach pupils and make sure that whatever they are teaching is understood by the learners. This is a problem because one cannot communicate the message effectively when

he/she lacks competence in the language that should be used as the medium of instruction. Some of the participating teachers have tried to adapt to the needs of their school setups by making individual efforts to learn the language. However, this has come with challenges as the teachers are bound to make mistakes in using the Shangani Language. In response to a semi-structured interview question which sought to establish the students' reaction when Shona speaking teachers used Shangani as the medium of instruction, some of the responses given were:

> *They are very comfortable but sometimes they laugh at me when I make a mistake and then tell me the correct word....It shows that they understand the language better. At the same time it also makes me feel embarrassed when they laugh (Teacher Tadiwa of Bhizana Primary School).*

> *I use very few Shangani words when teaching because I don't know the language. I am still learning it. But when I use the Shangani words the children laugh at me because sometimes I make mistakes. The pupils know that I am not a good Shangani speaker so they laugh at me (Teacher Mary of Mandleni Primary School).*

This response shows that both teachers Mary and Tadiwa feel embarrassed when students laugh at them and as a result of that Mary has decided to use very few Shangani words (maybe those she is very sure of in her teaching). In response to the same interview question teacher Chipo of Mandleni Primary School said:

> *They laugh at the teacher. I am not good at Shangani at all. When I try to explain difficult concepts to them using the language they laugh. My pronunciation is very poor.*

From teacher Mary's response it can be noted that despite the effort that she has made to learn the language, she makes mistakes when she tries to communicate with the learners using Shangani. Her pupils are aware of her limitations in the Shangani Language and that may be the reason why they laugh at her the moment she makes a mistake and from her response above it can be noted that it makes her feel really bad about the children's act. The fact that she is laughed at by her pupils shows that the Shona participating teachers

face humiliation at the hands of their students who know their incompetency in the Shangani Language.

I am justified then to conclude that teacher Mary is using very few Shangani terms (as indicated in her response above) that she is really sure of and never takes chances to try and use those terms that she is not sure of because she knows what that may cause: being laughed at by her learners. Teachers Chipo and Patience seem to be in the same predicament with teacher Mary. Teacher Chipo said she tried to use the Shangani Language to clarify complex concepts but her biggest challenge is pronunciation. When she fails to correctly pronounce the words, the learners laugh at her, thus feels humiliated.

These responses reveal that those Shona teachers who try to use the few Shangani terms they know in teaching and learning experience are being laughed at by the pupils which makes them feel humiliated. After one of the lesson observations, I, as the researcher, decided to thank and bid farewell to the pupils using the few Shangani terms that I had picked during my data gathering process and I made a mistake and the pupils were giggling. I had said: *Hikesile ngopfu* (meaning thank you very much). I then asked why they were giggling and one of them told me that what I had said was wrong and he then told me that I was supposed to say: *Hikesile ngovhu*.

At first when the teachers said that pupils laughed at them when they made a mistake when they used the Shangani Language, I thought that they were exaggerating their experiences but from the experience I highlighted above I ended up confirming that teachers face such challenges in the execution of their duties. This kind of experience may later cause teachers to develop a negative attitude because of fear of embarrassment.

For teachers like Chipo and Mary, their pupils simply laugh at them when they make mistakes which can then lead them to using the language minimally due to fear of being humiliated by the learners. This means that the experiences of Shona teachers like Mary and Chipo above have impacted negatively on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction.

These findings are an indication that Shona speaking teachers (who happen to be the majority) are enduring instead of enjoying teaching at the elementary level as they try to use the Shangani Language in their teaching. In the focus group discussion at Mandleni the Shona participants indicated that they lacked proficiency in the language prescribed in the

2006 Education Amendment Act to be used as the medium of instruction and this led to communication problems with the Shangani learners without the knowledge of the Shona (which is the L1 for most teachers at the three schools) Language which they thought could be useful in instances where pupils failed to grasp concepts taught through the English Language. Teacher Paul at Mandleni School stated that:

> *I actually noticed that they don't even understand deep Shona…*

This means that even if the Shona teachers decide to code switch to their own language, the pupils will still not understand the concepts since teacher Paul has confirmed in his response above that the Shangani speaking pupils do not understand the Shona Language. On the other hand, the teachers cannot articulate issues well in the Shangani Language because the majority of them claim to be still learning the language. What this means is that, in such a scenario, the teachers may hardly use Shangani as the medium of instruction for the benefit of these young elementary learners. These findings therefore validate Chilora and Harris' (2001) argument that the teachers' home language may be a hindering factor to the successful implementation of MTE policies especially if the teachers are instructed to implement such policies in regions where there are differences between the teachers' languages and that of the learners. In this case, it is the fact that the majority of teachers are Shona and this may derail the successful implementation of the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at the three schools under study.

## 5.3 THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING PROFICIENT IN SHANGANI

Shangani teachers' experiences are obviously different from those of their Shona counterparts since the issue of lack of proficiency in the Shangani Language does not apply to them. From the interviews it emerged that 33% of teachers at the three schools are Shangani speaking. They are proficient in the Shangani Language and consequently, they are enjoying the use of the Shangani Language for teaching and learning. When asked how they felt when delivering their lessons in Shangani, the responses given included the following:

> *I feel good because I know I am communicating. There is a difference*
> *between talking and communicating….When you are communicating to*
> *your students they will understand what you are saying but if you are*
> *talking they don't understand anything. Like when you are talking to*

*these young ones in English they will not be getting anything because they lack exposure. The same applies to using Shona, the pupils won't be getting full information because they don't understand it either* (Teacher Nyasha of Bhizana School).

From the above quotation, it is noted that Teacher Nyasha is happy that the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction is allowing communication to take place in his classroom. Implied in his response is the fact that those teachers who use either English or Shona are actually disturbing the acquisition of knowledge by the young learners as they do not understand these languages. From Teacher Nyasha's point of view, Shangani speaking learners need to be taught through the Shangani Language for meaningful learning to take place. These findings therefore confirm Cummins' (2000) there is no postponement on teaching new concepts when learners receive instruction for the different concepts in their L1 since they understand their L1 better than any other language.

Sharing the same view were the following responses:

*It makes my job easier because I will be explaining in a language familiar to the learners and also to me* (Teacher Takunda of Bhizana Primary School).

*I really feel happy. Pupils show understanding more when I use Shangani but we should also use English* (Teacher Anotida of Bhizana Primary School).

*I feel great because I know pupils are getting what I am saying (*Teacher Tatenda of Bhizana Primary School).

Because of their proficiency in the Shangani Language, Shangani speaking teachers' jobs have been made easier because they are using a language that, both the students and themselves understand better. This substantiates Broke-Utne and Alidou's (2005) contention that mother tongue education leads to better communication among teachers and learners thus, facilitating better teaching and learning. This implies that the Shangani speaking teachers are fully enjoying the benefits of the mother tongue policy as they meaningfully interact with learners in a language they understand.

From these findings, it can be concluded that those teachers who are Shangani speaking are better positioned to implement the Shangani mother tongue policy as compared to their Shona counterparts who are actually struggling to make themselves understood by the learners. It also follows that those learners who are taught by Shangani speaking teachers have what I can call academic mileage, that is, they are ahead in mastering educational knowledge as compared to their counterparts taught by Shona speaking teachers who struggle to make a point clear in the Shangani Language since most of them are still learning the language.

As many scholars have observed, the use of the learners' L1 especially at the elementary level gives them a strong foundation for future academic endeavours (for example. Benson 2004). This implies that the issue of teachers' proficiency in Shangani should be seriously considered if learners are to meaningfully benefit from the 2006 MTE policy. If the majority of teachers cannot speak the language like what most of the Shona speaking teachers indicated, it may suggest that at the three schools the policy may be unachievable. These findings are consistent with Thondlana's (2002) observation that the implementation of mother tongue education policy especially in the case of minority languages is even more difficult because the few teachers who are proficient in the languages are not deployed in the relevant areas. This can be attributed to lack of commitment by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to the language policy implementation.

## 5.4 THE MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION'S LACK OF COMMITMENT IN THE LANGUAGE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Inasmuch as proficiency in the Shangani Language is central for the successful implementation of the use of Shangani medium of instruction, the participating teachers felt that there is need for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) to be committed towards the implementation of the 2006 Mother Tongue Education Policy. However, research findings reveal that MOPSE is showing very little commitment towards the use of the minority language in the teaching and learning transactions at the three schools under study. Quite a number of issues were raised by the participants to show MOPSE's lack of commitment and I am going to discuss them in the ensuing discussion.

### 5.4.1 Lack of teacher support in primary education

From the interviews it emerged that, almost all the Shona speaking teachers are grappling with the use of Shangani as the language of instruction and this might be a reflection that MOPSE has not taken any initiative to train these teachers on how to implement the policy. Asked on what her feelings were towards the call for the use of Shangani as the language of instruction, Teacher Chipo from Mandleni Primary School said:

> *It is good but it is just lip service because there was no training of manpower on how it should be implemented.*

Sharing the same view on lack of training by teachers, Teacher Takunda of Bhizana Primary School said:

> *If the government had shown seriousness on its policy by training teachers I think we will be talking about a different story.*

Teacher Victoria of Ntolwane Primary School had this to say:

> *I can say teaching pupils at the elementary level using their language gives them a good foundation, but for this to be practical we need training especially us who are Shona speaking.*

When I asked her to elaborate on what she meant by lip service Chipo said:

> *I am saying using Shangani is good but if the teachers who should use it are not trained, how can they implement that? For most of us at this school Shangani is really a problem because most of us cannot speak it.*

Quite a lot of facts are encapsulated in these sentiments. From teacher Chipo's point of view, the policy that prescribes the use of Shangani as the language of instruction at the schools where it is the predominant language is good but the problem is that MOPSE is paying lip service to the implementation of the policy because the primary implementers of the said policy were not trained on how to go about it. In her response to the follow up question, she seems to be saying the policy is difficult to implement due to the teachers' lack of training since the majority of these teachers cannot speak the language.

From these findings, I can therefore say that some teachers at the three schools think there is lack of commitment by MOPSE on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. The fact that MOPSE did not make the expected effort to train teachers on how the Shangani Language could be adopted as the medium of instruction seems to suggest that it is not committed to the promotion of the minority language to the official status as has been stated in the 2013 Zimbabwe Constitution.

Teacher Victoria's response also points to the fact that if no training is offered to teachers this could affect the use of Shangani as the MOI may not be practical. Teacher Takunda (Shangani speaking) actually thinks that the fact that teachers were not trained on how the policy should be implemented is a pointer to lack of seriousness by the government. This makes teachers like Chipo feel that the policy is simply on paper but no serious efforts to implement it have been made by MOPSE to show its commitment to the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction.

The fact above was raised again in all the three schools where participants lamented the absence of support from the authorities. Teacher Pretty of Mandleni Primary School indicated that the government (represented by MOPSE) did not offer any in-service training for all non -Shangani speaking teachers yet it is not obvious that when someone is teaching in Chiredzi District schools he/she can speak the Shangani Language. The ministry responsible for education is simply assuming that by virtue of teaching at these schools, teachers are automatically able to speak the Shangani Language. However, from the interviews, it emerged that these were far-fetched assumptions since most of the teachers indicated that they are not even fluent in the Shangani Language. This is evidenced by sentiments such as the following:

> *The problem is that many teachers in these schools (Chiredzi District schools) are not Shangani speaking. Shangani speaking teachers should come back home* (Teacher Paul- Mandleni School).

This was in response to a semi- structured interview question which sought to establish the participant's perceptions on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. This particular participant sees the inability of teachers to speak the Shangani Language as a problem. He even feels that Shangani speaking teachers should be redeployed from wherever they are teaching to come and teach in their home area. This is a mere teacher who feels that if justice is to be done to the implementation of the policy, then those teachers who

speak the Shangani Language should be given the first priority to teach in these schools; yet MOPSE does not care whether or not the teachers can speak the language that the policy prescribes. This gives evidence that the use of the Shangani Language for teaching and learning is not MOPSE's priority since it did not consider the basics for successful implementation of a mother tongue education policy that is, training teachers on how to go about it.

The lack of proficiency in Shangani by most teachers at the three schools under study and subsequently lack of training in the language has impacted negatively on the implementation of the mother tongue education policy. As Benson (2004c) rightly notes, MTE is likely to be futile if there is no explicit formal tuition on multilingual approaches and practices. Teacher Tafadzwa from Mandleni Primary School stated that:

> *Teachers are not trained on how to teach Shangani…I think another thing is lack of seriousness on the policy makers. As a result, on the ground pupils are deprived of their mother tongue because most of us cannot speak the language.*

For Teacher Tafadzwa, policy makers are not really serious about the policy because they have not trained the teachers on how they could use the Shangani Language for teaching and learning. As a direct result of this, these young learners are deprived of the right to learn through a language they understand, that is Shangani. For those that are taught by Shangani speaking teachers, mastery of concepts in the various curriculum areas is enhanced since their teachers would be using Shangani in teaching which is comprehensible to them. Therefore, this participant actually acknowledges that on the ground the pupils are deprived of their right to learn through their Shangani Language because she was not trained on how to do it and cannot even speak the language. The term 'on the ground' suggests that MOPSE may be assuming that the policy is being implemented but the case is different on the ground due to the fact that it did not train the teachers on what they are expected to do in implementing the policy. It may also suggest that no follow up was made to check whether the policy was being implemented or not.

From both the focus group discussions semi-structured interviews with the participating teachers, the issue of lack of seriousness by MOPSE was also raised. After one participant had indicated that Shona speaking teachers were not serious about using Shangani as the MOI, Teacher Tolerant of Mandleni Primary School burst:

> *We were not told how to use it! We were never trained in the Shangani Language.*
> *So how can we be blamed for not using Shangani if the ministry itself is not taking*
> *it seriously?*

Asked on whether or not there was any relationship between her experiences and the factors that influence the implementation of the policy, Teacher Victoria of Ntolwane Primary School had this to say:

> *I think there is a relationship because I am experiencing the use of*
> *Shangani this difficult way because I have not been trained.*

> *I think the policy hits hard mostly on Shona teachers like me because*
> *we do not know the language in depth yet we are expected to even use*
> *it for teaching. I think we need training on what we should do or have*
> *somebody teach us the language at least* (Teacher Tadiwa of Bhizana
> Primary School).

What these responses from teachers Tolerant, Victoria and Tadiwa mean is that policy makers simply produced a policy document but did not communicate with the teachers on how they could implement it. This means that the policy is likely to be interpreted differently as no central interpretation of the policy was given. This is despite the fact that policy states that the most commonly understood language (in this case Shangani) may be used as the medium of instruction up to Grade 7 level. In response to an interview question which sought to establish if she had anything to say regarding her experiences, teacher Pretty said that the policy makers have made no attempt to make the policy functional. She said:

> *I think I would say the policymakers should make this policy functional*
> *because if that is not done this very noble policy can die a natural death*
> *because most of the teachers don't know how to go about it.*

From Pretty's point of view, a very noble policy may never be implemented due to the fact that MOPSE has not made it functional. She thinks that training teachers on how to use Shangani as the medium of instruction was a pre-requisite to ensure the functionality of the policy. Apparently, Pretty indicated that she is Shangani speaking but she still feels that she needed to be trained on how to use the Shangani Language as the MOI. This seems to suggest that there was need for MOPSE to have a clear position on what the teachers were expected to do in as far as the use of Shangani as the MOI is concerned. For example,

MOPSE should have stated if teachers should use it exclusively for all the teaching and learning transactions at the elementary level or employ code switching from English (formerly the sole official language in Zimbabwe) to Shangani or vice versa. This confirms Burton's (2013) observation that due to lack of adequate training in the local languages, teachers lack the expertise to efficiently assess and supervise the students. Due to that lack of training, teachers' experiences are not anything to admire since teacher Pretty's response above shows that she feels that she needed to be trained on what exactly she should do in the implementation of the policy.

In response to an interview question on their perceptions on the policy that allowed the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction some of the issues raised indicated that the policy could be a very brilliant idea if it had support from government in the form of in-service courses on how to use the Shangani Language as the medium of instruction. For example, teacher Chipo said:

> *I think that if it had full support it was going to be a very brilliant*
> *idea. It is good to use a language that the child can understand.*
> *(Probably Chipo is talking of support from MOPSE).*

Teacher Tafadzwa had this to say in response to an interview question that required her to comment on the learners' reaction when she used Shangani in teaching:

> *I think it shows that they understand more when their language is*
> *used.*

Implied in both Chipo and Tafadzwa's responses is the fact that, though it is a brilliant idea to have a policy that promotes the use of Shangani as the MOI which facilitates mastery of concepts, it lacks the expected support from MOPSE. If there is no direction on how a policy should be implemented, the likely result is chaos and confusion as each teacher is likely to do it his/her own way. The fact that the teachers were not trained on how to teach Shangani could be easily identified through the different ways in which teachers tried to implement the policy. In short, it was found out that there was no systematic way in which teachers used Shangani as the language of instruction in all the three schools.

However, two of the participating teachers felt that the ministry had shown commitment to the teaching of the Shangani Language. One teacher had this to say in response to a question

which sought to establish the adequacy of the support offered by the ministry to the teaching of Shangani:

> *100% support. The District Education Officers (DEOs) want us to use it in teaching and learning. They say it when they come for supervision. Even at the Heads' meetings they say it* (Teacher Pretty of Mandleni Primary School).

This response suggests that the education officials give the teachers the instruction to use Shangani in their teaching. From my own point of view, this is a welcome development because they are making a follow up on the implementation of the policy by instructing teachers to use Shangani Language for teaching and learning. The sentiments raised by teachers in the earlier discussion that MOPSE is not supporting them seem to make the teachers appear to be resorting to a victim-like mentality about what is not done to them instead of focusing on the positives that MOPSE has done in an endeavour to make minority languages like Shangani get the recognition they deserve. However, the last statement in Pretty's response above suggests that officials simply say that Shangani should be used without complementing it by showing support through manpower training on how to use the language as the MOI. This may suggest that for MOPSE the use of Shangani is simply a word of mouth without providing the necessary training and this is how the teachers are experiencing the implementation of the policy. In the interview, one participant indicated that MOPSE has not made an effort to deploy resource persons in these schools to assist the Shona teachers who lack proficiency in the Shangani Language. Teacher Tanya indicated that:

> *...it is necessary to ensure that the school has a Shangani resource teacher so that non-Shangani speaking teachers can consult with him whenever they have problems.*

In the case of Ntolwane School where teacher Tanya teaches, there is no resource teacher appointed by the school or district office to help those teachers who are not yet proficient in the language. For those schools that have resource teachers for Shangani (e.g. Mandleni and Bhizana), the resource persons are of little or no help because they too were not trained on how Shangani should be taught. This is an indication that, teachers do not have a fall-back position in the event of failure to teach Shangani. This means that it is highly likely that

their experiences in their quest to implement the mother tongue education policy are difficult.

It might, however, be interesting to note that the education officials have not made an attempt to consider the language the teacher speaks in their criteria for the recruitment of teachers in the district. Teacher Pretty said:

> *Shangani teachers should be deployed to the school for the benefit of*
> *the learners.*

This implies that the deployment of teachers by the provincial and district offices has not considered Shangani speaking teachers for the schools in predominantly Shangani schools. Teacher Pretty seems to be saying the Shona teachers who make up the majority at her school are not the best people to teach at her school as pupils actually benefit less from them since they are not Shangani. Most of the teachers at Mandleni and Ntolwane Primary Schools, participants indicated that if Shangani speaking teachers could be deployed in these schools, it could improve the situation.

In schools where there are Shangani speaking teachers some school heads have not considered deploying them to the lower grades (Grades 1 to 3) for the benefit of the learners. Teacher Patience had this to say in response to a semi-structured interview question,

> *I feel Shangani speaking teachers should be deployed to teach in the*
> *lower grades.*

This means that school heads should allocate Shangani speaking teachers to teach in the infant grades so as to bridge the gap between home and school but from the above sentiments it shows that they are not doing it. This scenario is a replica of what was found in Malawi in 1996 where Chilora and Harris (2001) lamented that despite the promulgation of the policy that from standards 1 to 4 learners in all Malawian schools were to receive instruction in their mother tongues immediate effect. (Ref. No.IN/1/4 dated 28 March 1996), government maintained the previous policy on teacher posting, i.e. posting of teachers was done in consideration of the need of particular regions and districts and not necessarily because they were proficient in the language spoken in the particular area. The implementation of that policy was a dismal failure because of this reason and the Zimbabwean one being discussed in this thesis has had similar challenges.

### 5.4.2 Ambiguity in policy statement

One of the things expressed by the participating teachers was that they felt that the 2006 Education Amendment policy statement contains ambiguity. They felt that the policy makers are not serious on the use of Shangani as the MOI because the policy was stated in a way that reflected non-commitment on the part of the policymakers.

Teacher Tolerant (Shona speaking) of Mandleni Primary School indicated that the policy never said Shangani should be used as a medium of instruction but it said teachers may use the languages if they saw the need to do so. As a follow up, there was a lot of discussion as to whether or not the authorities were serious about the policy if their policy gave them room to use or not to use Shangani as the medium of instruction.

Most teachers had a feeling that MOPSE was not committed to the use of the minority language as the medium of instruction because from how the policy is stated it was the teachers' choice to use or not to use the Shangani Language as the MOI. From the Mandleni focus group discussion the general sentiments from the participants were that MOPSE should have stated clearly that the learners' mother tongues should be the medium of instruction especially at the elementary level where most learners would have not gained facility in the second language and not to leave it in the hands of individual teachers to use or not to use these languages.

From these findings it can be said that teachers like teacher Tolerant (who said he couldn't speak a single Shangani word) would be vindicated if they decide not to use the Shangani Language in the teaching process since the way the policy is stated allows him to choose not to use the language by the use of the word 'may', but of course at the expense of the learner. Therefore, one can be justified to say that the fact that the policy to use indigenous languages is stated in a non-committal way validate the teachers' view that the policy makers are not serious on the use of these languages in education.

The use of the word 'may' in sub-section 4 of the policy shows that it is left in the hands of an individual teacher to use or not to use the local languages mediums of instruction. This confirms Bamgbose's (1991:111) observation that "…language policies in African countries are characterized by avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation and declaration without implementation." The avoidance strategy has been used in the statement of the 2006 Zimbabwean mother tongue education policy and this has been strengthened by

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the fact that no training has been offered to the teachers on how the policy can be implemented. This, however, puts the teacher in a quandary because educational knowledge has to be imparted to these young learners who only know one language, that is, Shangani. This means that the teachers' experiences are likely to be difficult under such circumstances.

The teachers are aware of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's lack of commitment on the use of Shangani as the language of instruction. In response to a question which sought to establish if the teachers had adequate support on the use of Shangani as the language of instruction Teacher Tolerant stated:

> *No support. We were not even told how to use it.*

Teacher Paul had this to say:

> *Support- very little. I can actually say there is no support.*

Asked to elaborate, he lamented:

> *The problem is that they say we should use Shangani but they are not doing anything to train us on how to do it. It's actually individual effort that I can now speak one or two Shangani terms* (Teacher Paul- Mandleni Primary School).

This seems to suggest that the responsible ministry is just saying that the Shangani Language should be used without giving the necessary support to enable the teachers implement the policy. This shows that the issue of using Shangani as MOI is just a word of mouth.

Teacher Mary said:

> *There are no workshops that were done with us to train us on how to teach Shangani. Munhu anonongoita zvaanenge afunga* (A teacher does what he/she thinks).

This implies that no action has been taken to ensure that the policy is meaningfully implemented. It is just lip service that the Shangani Language could be used in education yet nobody is taking the policy seriously.

Asked whom the teacher referred to as 'they' in the vignette preceding the one above, Teacher Paul said:

*From the school administration, the district inspectors and even the government itself. As custodians of the policy, I think they should have made sure that we are trained on how the language could be used.*

From teacher Paul's point of view, all the supposed custodians of the policy seem to be deliberately ignoring the implementation of the policy as they have not made an effort to give direction as to how the policy should be implemented. It may be interesting to note that teacher Paul is referring to government officials as the custodians of the policy yet the teachers should be the custodians of the policy. This raises questions as to who should take responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the policy as teachers continue to blame the government for their failure to use the Shangani Language as the MOI. From the teachers' point of view, MOPSE simply cascaded down the policy to schools but never equipped the teachers with the requisite skills through training on how to go about it. However, as Benson (2004c) notes, if there is a discrepancy between the first language of the teachers and that of the learners compounded by lack of training on the strategies they should employ to carry out mother tongue based instruction, it is highly likely that they would shun the 'unknown benefits' of MTE and revert to the 'known bad'.

What this implies is that training of teachers is indispensable if a MTE policy is to be successfully implemented. The fact that MOPSE did not train teachers on how to implement the use of Shangani as the MOI, as articulated in the 2006 Education Amendment Act, may suggest why the policy is stated in non- committal way. This is despite the fact that the participants at all the three schools indicated that the majority of learners come from Shangani speaking backgrounds and would benefit fully if teachers had received training on the implementation of the policy. This may explain why most teachers, as discussed earlier in this discussion, stated that they are facing a lot of challenges in trying to implement the mother tongue education policy at the three schools because they just do it without guidance from the responsible ministry.

In addition to lack of seriousness on the policy makers as evidenced by the ambiguity in its statement, some school administrators have displayed negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as the MOI and this is what I am shifting my attention to now.

### 5.4.3 Negative attitudes by school administrators

Some Shangani speaking teachers claimed that the district office is in full support of the policy. This is evidenced by the following responses to a question which sought to establish whether or not the teachers had adequate support on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction:

> *We have enough support from the district office but our school head is not very supportive because he is Shona* (Teacher Tatenda-Bhizana Primary School).

> *We have a problem with our admin. It's not supportive at all* (Teacher Takunda- Bhizana Primary School).

This seems to suggest that the ministry, through the district education inspectors, is in support of the use of the Shangani Language but the problem on its implementation comes as a result of negative attitudes of non-Shangani speaking school heads. Teacher Tatenda actually showed emotion as she gave her response to show that the issue of negative attitudes by her Shona speaking headmaster was an impediment to the implementation of the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI. Obviously, the negative attitude of the Bhizana Primary School head is affecting the proper implementation of the policy since he discourages teachers from using the language as the MOI in line with the policy provisions. This confirms Baker's (1992) argument that if stakeholders have unfavourable attitudes towards the proposed language shift, all the efforts to come up with a clear cut language policy through language planning or even availing both human and material resources can all be a futile undertaking.

At Bhizana Primary School, where the majority of the participants were Shangani, the issue of their problematic headmaster was also raised where Teacher Nyasha and Patience actually indicated that, their headmaster discourages them from using Shangani as medium of instruction. If this is true, it implies that those who want to abide by the policy expectations discover that it is complicated to follow policy provisions in the face of opposition by non-Shangani speaking school heads. It is clear therefore that because of head teachers' negative attitudes, this becomes a problem to the teachers who are trying to implement it because they are being discouraged by colleagues.

However, it may also be interesting to note that the negative attitudes by the supposed upholders of the policy may be an indication that the responsible ministry may have not done enough to sensitise the school heads on the need to teach pupils at the elementary level using the Shangani Language. On the other hand, the negative attitudes by Shona speaking school heads may be an indication that they still regard their Shona Language as superior to the so called minority languages like Shangani as was the case during the colonial period. Teacher Tatenda lamented the opposition her Shangani Language is facing at Bhizana Primary School saying:

> *...The fact that our administration is not taking it seriously makes it very difficult for us to use it.*

Teacher Patience had this to say in response to a semi-structured interview question which sought to establish if she had adequate support on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction:

> *To some extent, yes because the timetable caters for Shangani and Shona. On the other hand there is no support from the admin. Sometimes they discourage us from using the L1.*

Based on the above quotations, it seems the school administration which should enforce the implementation of the mother tongue education policy is not taking that policy seriously. The administration at Bhizana Primary School even discourages teachers from following policy on using Shangani as the MOI at the elementary level. One then wonders about the experiences of a teacher who is expected by the ministry to use Shangani when the school administration is actually against it. In a focus group discussion at Bhizana Primary School it emerged from both Shangani and Shona speaking teachers that the administration was not supportive at all and some were even reprimanded openly by the school head for using Shangani as the medium of instruction. To quote teacher Takunda verbatim, their head passes comments like:

> *Your use of Shangani is too much!*

Instead of the school head commending these teachers who are doing what the policy says, he actually sees it as 'using Shangani too much!' These lamentations reflect how the primary implementers of the policy experience the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction

especially when no clear cut procedure of doing it has been provided for the successful implementation of the policy.

## 5.5 LACK OF HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTRY'S COMMITMENT IN TRAINING TEACHERS ON THE USE OF SHANGANI AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

To make issues even more convoluted, participants indicated the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development which is responsible for the training of teachers (particularly teachers' colleges) has not yet started the training of teachers to teach the other indigenous languages to use them as mediums of instruction in line with the official status that these languages have been accorded in the 2013 constitution. One participant stated in the interview that if the policy was to be meaningfully implemented, there should be a link between MOPSE and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD) because:

> *…right now colleges are not training teachers who can use Shangani*
> *Language in education* (Teacher Paul).

Teacher Tanya at Ntolwane Primary School had this to say:

> *I feel that colleges in the province should start training teachers who*
> *can use all the indigenous languages in this province.*

The two responses by the two teachers at two different schools is evidence that as far as these teachers know, colleges in Masvingo Province have not started training teachers who can teach Shangani. The responses above actually are a cause for concern because the policy that liberalises the use of the Shangani Language and other 'minority' languages was promulgated in 2006 and nine years down the line (my data gathering was done in 2015) only 1 out of 10 primary teacher training colleges has taken the initiative to train teachers in the so called minority languages.

This means that in addition to lack of commitment by MOPSE on the implementation of the policy, the MHTESTD has not shown commitment either because it is the ministry responsible for human capital development. If it was committed to the implementation of the policy, I think by now the bulk of the teachers' colleges would be training teachers in these minority languages. To further strengthen my argument on the lack of commitment

by teachers' colleges to the use of the minority languages in education, these colleges are not training teachers in these languages three years after the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe has elevated 15 languages to official language status to make them 16 official languages including English. As it stands, all the participating teachers said for Zimbabwean indigenous languages, they were only trained in either Shona or Ndebele when they were still at college and this explains why they experience challenges in implementing the policy. As a result of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education's lack of commitment on human capital development of Shangani teachers,

> *...there is a serious shortage of knowledgeable manpower to teach Shangani* (Teacher Paul).

Implied in this response is that, yes Shangani is being taught in these schools but those that are doing it are doing so without adequate knowledge. In all the three focus group discussions the participants (both Shona and Shangani teachers) indicated that the three colleges in the province are letting the schools in Chiredzi District down because at least one of them should be offering Shangani by now. In the interview, Teacher Takunda said:

> *I think at least one college should train Shangani teachers. We have three teacher training colleges in Masvingo but not even one is training Shangani teachers. I think colleges are letting us down.*

This is clear evidence that the MHTESTD has not shown commitment to the implementation of the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI at the three schools under study. Research findings, however, show that some universities in Zimbabwe are offering degree programmes in the so called minority languages (e.g. Venda, Nambya, Tonga and Shangani among others). In the focus group discussion at Mandleni, Teacher Pretty highlighted that one university in the province is offering bachelors' degrees in the so called minority languages (Shangani included) but the disturbing factor was that most of the graduates would use the qualification to seek better paying jobs in and outside Zimbabwe. This scenario, according to Teacher Nyasha in the focus group discussion at Bhizana School, renders the situation hopeless and he did not see the Shangani Language being meaningfully taught in the schools and used the MOI in the foreseeable future.

The implementation of Shangani as the medium of instruction is also impeded by lack of teaching resources and this is what follows in this discussion.

## 5.6 LACK OF TEACHING RESOURCES

According to the data generated from the three primary schools (Mandleni, Bhizana and Ntolwane) one of the key variables that contribute to the success of any language policy is availability of teaching and learning resources. As argued by McNab (1989) the problem of resources cannot be ignored as absolute shortages may undermine implementation. In my endeavour to establish how teachers at the three schools experienced the use of Shangani as the MOI, I asked individual teachers about resources they use to teach the Shangani Language. From the interviews it emerged that all books for all the curriculum areas except the Shangani and Shona subjects, were in English. Some of the responses given verbatim were:

> *Aaa no. Our textbooks are in English but we have Shangani textbooks*
> *for the Shangani subject which has been recently introduced* (Teacher
> Tatenda of Bhizana Primary School).

In concurrence was teacher Nyasha of Bhizana Primary School who said:

> *No. Our textbooks for these subjects are in English. But for Shangani*
> *we have lots of books which are just lying idle because teachers do not*
> *want to use them.*

These responses show that textbooks for the different subjects on the curriculum are in English, just as they were before the promulgation of the 2006 Education Amendment Act. This means that the teachers 'use' Shangani as the medium of instruction in a situation where the textbooks are using the English medium. Teacher Patience's response to the same question is in concurrence with teacher Tatenda's above. She said:

> *For Maths and other subjects books are in English but for Shangani*
> *books are in Shangani.*

Teacher Mary of Mandleni School also said:

> *Umm no. They are for the Shangani as a subject. The books for the*
> *different subjects are all in English.*

This shows that there is a challenge of resources to support the use of Shangani as the language of instruction as all the textbooks for the different content areas are still in the

English Language as it used to be before the enactment of the policy in 2006 and the 2013 constitution.  This is actually a challenge if teachers are expected to teach using an indigenous language yet the textbooks are in a second language. Asked how they balanced the equation where they were expected to teach the elementary level through the Shangani Language yet their textbooks were in English, teacher Patience said:

> *We translate. We translate from English and then emphasise the concepts in L1.*

Teacher Mary also showed that translation is inevitable in her situation where all the textbooks are in English. She said:

> *How can I be expected to teach without resources? It's really hard because we have to translate to the L1 from English and translate again to English*

According to teachers Patience and Mary quoted above, the teachers translate the information from textbooks from English to Shangani because pupils have to learn through the language they understand better (Shangani) yet the books are in the English Language. This means that teachers are using the wrong tools to do the job. This speaks volumes on the experiences of teachers who are expected to do the job with the wrong tools. This might mean that there are likely to be problems in the implementation of such a policy. Lartec et al. (2014) reiterate that in implementing MTE-MLE, goals are not being attained where there is deficiency of materials. Hence, there is need for the provision of the books and instructional materials that are helpful to the pupils which will increase their understanding.

During the individual and focus group discussions at the three schools, the participating teachers lamented the shortage of resources that support the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. The Shangani speaking participants indicated that they had to write as many charts in Shangani to augment their efforts in trying to impart educational knowledge to their pupils. At Bhizana Primary School (where most of the teachers were Shangani), it emerged that the teachers felt that the issue of just stating that indigenous languages may be used as mediums of instruction without complementing it with resources is a reflection that authorities are not serious about the use of these languages in education.

Their sentiments that all the textbooks were in the English Language were confirmed during lesson observations where I established that the textbooks were not translated to Shangani

but were exclusively in the English Language. It was therefore evident that teachers experienced the use of Shangani with a plethora of challenges, the lack of teaching materials in the Shangani Language being one of them. Teacher Takunda of Bhizana School indicated that there was a shortage of resources like computers which he thought if they could be availed some of their challenges could be addressed. These findings were similar to those of Abidogun's (2012) research findings on the teachers' experiences on the use of Yoruba as the MOI where he found out that the syllabuses as well as the course books used in the schools were all written in the English Language yet they were expected to teach using the Yoruba Language. Therefore, teachers are the ones who suffer where a MTE policy is promulgated without support from the government.

On the issue of the availability of resources for the teaching of Shangani as a subject, it emerged that there are a variety of textbooks which were availed by the government through the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF). Some of the responses given were:

> *...we have Shangani textbooks for the Shangani subject which has been recently introduced (Teacher Tatenda of Bhizana School).*

> *We have textbooks here for the Shangani subject but we did not receive any training on how to use them (Teacher Chipo of Mandleni Primary School).*

The responses above show that the government has availed resources in the form of textbooks for the Shangani subject. The fact that at least textbooks are there for the Shangani subject is commendable because that is a milestone in the recognition of these so called 'minority' languages. Before these languages were uplifted to official language status, they were seen by the majority language speakers as inferior to the national languages, that is, Shona and Ndebele. Now that textbooks have been availed in Shangani (a minority language) I see it as a positive development towards the recognition of such languages in Zimbabwe.

In addition to that, in all the focus group discussions, it was agreed that MOPSE had availed textbooks in large numbers to the schools for the teaching of the Shangani subject. In the classroom observation, I also discovered that in each class, there were piles of textbooks for the Shangani subject. These findings show that the responsible ministry has made

tremendous efforts to avail textbooks for the Shangani subject. This means that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is not ready to develop or support Shangani as the MOI, but support it as a subject.

**5.6.1 Shona teachers and the teaching of the Shangani subject**

It is, however, depressing to note that the participants face a great deal of challenges in using the available Shangani textbooks to teach Shangani subject. For Shona teachers, it is actually a nightmare to be tasked to teach the Shangani subject. In the interview, Teacher Paul of Mandleni Primary School lamented:

> *The Shangani textbooks that we have are for the subject which we are expected to teach again but we can't even read the books. The whole thing makes our life very difficult.*

Concurring with the above response, Teacher Mary said:

> *There are Shangani textbooks that came some years ago but we can't read the Shangani Language.*

According to teachers Paul and Mary quoted above, there are textbooks for the Shangani Language. These responses are evidence to prove that the government has made great strides to ensure the teaching of Shangani as a subject. However, the response also points to some challenges for Shona speaking teachers like Paul who cannot read Shangani. It is understood why these teachers cannot read the Shangani Language because earlier in this discussion findings confirmed that most of the Shona teachers are not yet proficient in the Shangani language. This may suggest that there is a shortage of specialists to teach the Shangani subject. Thus, the Shona teachers at the three schools are teaching Shangani despite their inability to read the Shangani textbooks due to the fact that there is a shortage of specialist teachers to do the job.

In the focus group discussion the same issue was raised where most Shona speaking teachers grumbled that they were being asked to do the impossible; teaching a language they could neither speak nor read. In the focus group discussion at Mandleni Primary School, one participant admitted that he could not read the language so he never bothered himself trying to read the textbooks because to him it is just like the Greek Language which he does not know at all.

These findings manifest the challenges faced by Shona speaking teachers in the teaching of the Shangani subject. They experience the teaching of Shangani with a lot of hitches as they cannot even read the language in the textbooks. One might wonder: How can a Shona speaking teacher who is not proficient in Shangani be expected to teach the Shangani subject? Difficult to believe as it may sound, this is what is taking place at the three schools under study. I even confirmed that in each class timetable were slots for three languages: Shona, Shangani and English. This is what Shona teachers are experiencing: being tasked to teach Shangani despite their incompetency in the language.

There are five teachers who claimed that they have made individual efforts to learn the language but from the focus group discussions it was evident that there are deeper Shangani terms that they are yet to learn. In addition, according to them there is no Shangani dictionary which they can consult with when they come across incomprehensible words in the textbooks. In the interview, teacher Pretty said;

> *There are textbooks for the Shangani subject but we don't have a dictionary, it's really needed.*

Teacher Anotida of Bhizana Primary School stated that:

> *We don't even have a Shangani dictionary to refer to if we want to find English equivalents of certain Shangani words. We are also forced to teach both Shona and Shangani, so pupils end up confusing the languages.*

With reference to the statements above, there is a need to have a Shangani dictionary because it is not enough to just have the Shangani textbooks without a dictionary. I think if these teachers who are making individual efforts to learn the language could get the dictionary it would go a long way in developing their competence in the language. As it stands, their experiences are that they teach the Shangani Language without the much needed dictionary for consultation in cases where they encounter difficult words in the Shangani textbooks. Most of all, the issue of teaching in a language that the teachers are not proficient in is a problem in this situation.

The individual interview responses were confirmed in all the three focus group discussions where it emerged that all teachers were in dire need of a Shangani dictionary with English equivalents to help them to do self-tutoring and learn the language. However, these

sentiments about the non-availability of a dictionary may be an indication of how dire the situation of Shona teachers is because it may not be possible for a person to learn a language through a dictionary and be expected to master and teach through that language. These findings therefore reveal the extent to which the shortage of resources is contributing to the difficult experiences that the teachers at the three schools under study undergo as they try to implement the 2006 language policy.

## 5.6.2 Lack of a standardised orthography

The research findings also revealed that both the Shangani and Shona speaking teachers experience challenges in teaching the Shangani subject because there is no standardised orthography for the Zimbabwean Shangani Language. For example, in response to an interview question teacher Takunda averred that:

> *We are using the South African Shangani that they call Tsonga because*
> *we do not have a standardised orthography for our own Shangani.*

The implication is that the piles of textbooks that I saw for the Shangani subject are written in South African Tsonga. Teacher Mary concurred with teacher Takunda's response above when she said:

> *The Shangani in the textbooks is from South Africa and there are*
> *differences here and there with the Shangani they speak here. So when*
> *we try to speak the language we confuse the spoken Shangani with the*
> *written.*

In line with the response above, teachers are using textbooks with the Tsonga Language which differs here and there with Zimbabwean Shangani. Thus, teachers teach the Shangani subject using textbooks that have the Tsonga Language because there is no standardised Zimbabwean Shangani orthography.

These responses point to the fact that despite having piles of textbooks to teach the Shangani subject, teachers find it hard to use them since the Shangani in the textbooks is different from the one that is spoken in Zimbabwe. In the focus group discussion at Bhizana (where the majority of the participants were Shangani) it emerged that they had challenges in comprehending some Tsonga terms which they find in the textbooks because they are different from the Zimbabwean Shangani. The situation is even worse for Shona speaking

teachers (who are not proficient in the Shangani Language) who are expected to read and teach using textbooks with the South African Tsonga Language yet the pupils (from whom most of them are learning) speak the Zimbabwean Shangani Language. Teacher Tafadzwa from Mandleni Primary School confirmed the absence of a standardised orthography for the Shangani subject when she said:

> *Some people say the Shangani in the textbooks is the one spoken in South Africa and it is slightly different from the one they speak in Zimbabwe.*

Obviously, if Zimbabwean Shangani had a standardised orthography, there would be no reason for using South African Tsonga. According to Tafadzwa's response above, the Tsonga Language is slightly different from the Zimbabwean Shangani but the teachers at the three schools under study have to use those textbooks using the Tsonga Language. They have to use what is available.

These lamentations were evident even during observation where Teacher Tanya would ask pupils to read a Shangani comprehension passage and then ask one student (whom she claimed to be proficient in Shangani since she learnt her Grade 1 in South Africa) if the other pupils had read well. During the interview discussion, the same teacher had said she could understand Shangani but could not read it. This means that teachers are expected to teach a subject they can neither speak nor read. This is despite the fact that they teach at the elementary level where the foundation of education is laid and where the use of the learners' mother tongue is indispensable for the mastery of concepts.

It has been established by many researchers from across the globe that teaching children in their first language improves their learning significantly (for example, Benson, 2004b, UNESCO, 2007, 2006; Young 2009). What is taking place at the schools under study means that the teachers may use the Shangani Language to a lesser extent due to their inability to read and speak the language despite their knowledge of the importance of teaching young learners through their L1. As Benson (2004c) rightly notes, teachers who lack competence in the learners' L1 and training on how to go about it would continue to use the foreign language, but of course, to the disadvantage of the learners. They may end up using the second language, which according to Cummins (2000) has detrimental effects on how children develop their thinking, thus affecting their cognitive development and this is what was found in this study.

Apparently, it emerged that the Shangani subject is now examined at Grade 7 level. What this means is that expertise is required on the teachers who teach the subject for them to meaningfully prepare the pupils for the Grade 7 Shangani examination. At Mandleni School, it emerged that the 'specialist' teacher is not even of Shangani origin. These findings show that the teachers are experiencing challenges in implementing the use of Shangani as the MOI at the three Chiredzi district schools as most of them are enduring its use under very difficult conditions. The use of South African Tsonga to teach Zimbabwean Shangani also confirms McNab's (1989) observation that in most developing countries the implementation of MTE policies is usually done in situations where there are limited resources yet the majority of the people in those communities would be requiring education. Mcnab further argues that the problem of resources cannot be ignored as absolute shortages may undermine implementation. The situation discussed above has left teachers at the three schools in a dilemma where they grapple with the implementation of a policy which expects them to use the Shangani Language as the medium of instruction with very limited resources.

## 5.7 CONCLUSION

The chapter has highlighted the findings based on research question one; 'What are the teachers' experiences on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction?' It was noted that the majority of the teachers at the three schools are not proficient in the Shangani Language and this heavily influences the kind of experiences they have in teaching in predominantly Shangani communities. They grapple with delivering lessons as they are teaching pupils through two unfamiliar languages, that is, English and Shona. Shona teachers are also laughed at when they try to communicate through the Shangani Language and some of them have decided to do self-tutoring or learn the language from their pupils to try and improve their proficiency in the language.

The Shangani teachers, however, enjoy using the language to teach the various subjects on the curriculum. However, they do so in the face of resistance by Shona speaking administration staff members who look down upon the language. All the teachers lack training on how the mother tongue education policy should be implemented so the obtaining situation is that individual teachers use it the way they feel would benefit learners. As a result, some have used the alibi of their lack of proficiency to justify why they are not using the Shangani language as the MOI.

The research findings also revealed that teachers are supposed to use the Shangani Language as the MOI where there is an acute shortage of textbooks for the various curriculum areas which are still in the English medium. The Shangani textbooks are actually Tsonga textbooks from South Africa which is different from the Zimbabwean Shangani and this has been caused by the fact that the Shangani Language has not been standardized in line with its official language status as stated in the 2013 Zimbabwean constitution. All these factors have made the life of most of the teachers at the schools under study unbearable in the face of a myriad of challenges. The next chapter presents data on how the teachers are affected by their experiences discussed in this chapter.

# CHAPTER 6

## THE WAY IN WHICH TEACHERS ARE AFFECTED BY THEIR EXPERIENCES ON THE USE OF SHANGANI AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I unearthed the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the Medium of Instruction (MOI). In this chapter, I am turning my focus to my second research question which sought to establish how the teachers are affected by their experiences on the use of Shangani as the MOI. I will mainly use data collected through observation whilst at the same time triangulating it with data gathered through semi-structured interviews. The following thematic areas are used in the discussion:

1. Content taught

2 .Teacher and learner activities

3 Shona Speaking teachers' lack of Shangani proficiency

4.  Humiliation felt by teachers

5. Teachers' self confidence

6. Shona speaking teachers' self-confidence in using the Shangani medium

7. Shangani speaking teachers' self-confidence in using the Shangani medium

8.The use of English/Shona code-switching

9. The use of Shangani/English code-switching

10. Learners' participation when taught through Shona and/or English

11. Learners' participation when Shangani is used as MOI

12. Shortage of resources

13. The unavailability of a standardised Shangani orthography

14. Resistance by some school administrators and its effects on policy implementation

15. Parents' support of Shangani as the medium of instruction

16. Learners' behaviour when taught in Shangani

## 6.2 THE WAYS IN WHICH TEACHERS ARE AFFECTED BY THEIR EXPERIENCES WHEN SHANGANI MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IS USED

### 6.2.1 Content taught

From the lesson observations, it emerged that teachers at the three schools are teaching content that is appropriate for the grades they are teaching, that is, the content that is suitable for Grades 1,2 and 3. For each of the 15 participating teachers, I observed one lesson and the choice of the subject observed solely depended on the subject on the timetable the timetable. As a result I observed teachers teaching various subjects which include English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Shangani and Environmental Science. Some of the lesson themes that were taught were: Materials and technology-properties of man-made things (Grade 3-Bhizana Primary School); Days of the week (Grade 1-Mandleni Primary School); Comparatives and Superlatives (Grade 2 –Bhizana Primary School), English Comprehension (Grade 2-Ntolwane Primary school); and Addition of numbers below ten (Grade 1-Ntolwane Primary School).

However, the mastery of content by the learners was contingent upon the language that was used as the MOI. Apparently, the choice of the major language of instruction was a result of which language the particular teachers were proficient in. This means that Shangani teachers largely used Shangani in teaching while the Shona teachers used either English throughout or code mixed English and Shangani or English and Shona. However, this is in conflict with what they said during the interviews as none of them ever stated they teach in Shona as well.

As underscored in the preceding chapter, the majority of the teachers at the three schools were Shona speaking and not proficient in Shangani. How they delivered the content differed depending on their proficiency in Shangani as evidenced in the subsequent discussion. The dialogues to illustrate this come in the subsequent discussion. It is important to mention that whenever I demonstrate through the use of the teacher-learner dialogue, I use the letter T for the teacher and P for the pupils.

### 6.2.2 Teacher and learner activities

Most of the teachers highlighted teacher and learner activities as one of the factors that impact on them either positively or negatively. During the teaching and learning process, the teachers engaged their learners in various activities as they tried to impart different concepts into their learners. In general terms, the teachers used different methods and as a result some lessons were teacher dominated while others were child centred. For the purposes of this discussion I picked two lessons; one which was learner-centred and another which was teacher dominated. I made a critical review of those lessons, stating the steps taken, media used and tasks given.

At Mandleni Primary School, I observed Teacher Pretty teaching an English comprehension lesson to her Grade 3 class. In her lesson, there was both teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction. After introducing her lesson and asking pupils to define new words from the passage she said:

> T: Can you tell us who your neighbour is. The person sitting next to you is your neighbour.
>
> P1: Tinyiko is my neighbour.
>
> P2: Mable is my neighbour.
>
> T: From the chart that I have pastedon the chalkboard I want you to identify Zimbabwe's neighbours. Tiko hinga dzonga kwe Zimbabwe hi------------(A country south of Zimbabwe is-------------)
>
> P: Tiko hinga dzonga kweZimbabwe hiSouth Africa.
>
> T: Yes but I want you to say your answer in English.
>
> P: The country to the South of Zimbabwe is South Africa.
>
> T: Now I want you to get into groups of four. I want you to read the passage about Zimbabwe's neighbours and I will ask you questions on the work cards I have given you.
>
> P:(silence)
>
> T: Didn't you understand what I said. I said: Nilaba kurhi muhlaye mhaka ye ndzimana leZimbabwe nabomakhelwani nilaba kurhi mutahlamula xivutiso xingatsaliwa xiphepheni (I want you to read the

*passage about Zimbabwe's neighbours and I will ask you questions on*

*the work cards I have given you). Are we together?*

*P: Yes.*

After this the pupils were told to read the passage and later they gave feedback on the work that they had done in groups, that is, answering questions on the work cards. I observed that the answers they gave showed that the pupils had understood what they read and their teacher's explanations of the teacher were clear. Where they failed to understand the teacher explained in Shangani and the lesson was a success. The use of the chart with the map of Zimbabwe and its neighbours was very relevant as pupils easily linked what they had read from the passage with what they could see on the chart. As a result, it was very easy for the pupils to answer the questions about Zimbabwe's neighbours.

I observed that Teacher Pretty's lesson was learner-dominated because most of the activities were done by the pupils and she acted like a facilitator in the lesson. Her duty was largely on directing learners in their activities and her proficiency in the Shangani language contributed to the success of the lesson because she used it to explain unclear instructions and concepts. After the lesson I asked her how she felt about her lesson presentation, and she commented that she felt contented that this lesson was successful and that the use of Shangani during the lesson was helpful to the learners as some could not understand other concepts, as a result she was obliged to use a little bit of Shangani in order to ensure that her learners grasped the content that was taught.

Teacher Tadiwa of Bhizana Primary School taught an Environmental Science lesson on Materials and Technology. Her main focus for the lesson was on properties of man-made materials and in particular, materials that stretch. The teacher introduced her lesson by asking pupils to identify man-made things. Her question was asked in English but the pupils gave their answers in both English and Shangani. Some of the answers given by the pupils were: bhasikirhi (bicycle), movha (car), and dress among others. After that she said:

*T: Take out your Environmental Science textbooks. I want you to open on page 77. Are you now on page 77?*

*P: Yes (from about 6 pupils).*

*T: We want to look at properties of man-made materials on page 77. We want to talk about materials that stretch, for example, this rubber band that I am holding. It can stretch kureva kuti inenge ichiwedzera (meaning it will be increasing in length). I want you to look at the list of things and identify materials that stretch. (Silence for about half a minute). What else can stretch?*

*P: (Silence)*

*T: We also have elastic. Do you know elastic? Elastic hamuizivi? (Don't you know elastic?)*

After talking to herself for a long time she paused for a while and then continued trying to explain what elastic is. She did not have the actual elastic so she just tried to explain by giving example of clothes where elastic is normally found. Apparently all her explanations of what elastic is and those in the dialogue above were in Shona.

After her explanations she asked a question:

*T: So think of materials that stretch. Hapana material yamuri kuona here inostetcheka (don't you see any material that stretches?)*

*P: Spider.*

*T: Can a spider stretch.*

After this, Teacher Tadiwa went on to identify the materials that stretch on page 77 and pupils simply repeated after her. Afterwards, she gave her pupils an individual written exercise. Evidently, Teacher Tadiwa's lesson was teacher dominated. From my own point of view, the major cause for this is that her explanations were not clear to her learners due to the fact that she continuously used English and Shona which pupils seemingly could not comprehend. As a result, one pupil, as evidenced in the above dialogue gave the answer 'spider' for materials that stretch, which could mean he had not understood the question in the first place.

The two lessons I have discussed in this section are just an example of the general teacher and pupil activities in the lessons observed. From the discussion above, I can say the teachers' proficiency in the Shangani language influenced the kind of activities that learners were engaged in. Teachers who could use the Shangani medium when teaching were flexible enough to even give pupils group or pair work whilst those who were not proficient

in Shangani used methods that only allowed chorus answers or individual responses to the teacher. However, it is important to note that it is not only language that influences the success or failure of a lesson. Basic pedagogy has it that poor lessons without adequate planning and resources also play a role in lesson failing. Therefore, in this discussion the language variable is discussed in full awareness of the other factors that contribute to the success or failure of lessons.

After the lesson I asked her how she felt about the lesson she presented and she responded that she was very frustrated since some of the designed activities were not done. She felt her poor Shangani would take her nowhere, and that was the reason she used Shona in the lesson, which however, she felt did not help the learners. I then concluded that due to this reason, there was communication breakdown between most Shona speaking teachers and their learners as evidenced in the discussion below.

### 6.2.3 Shona Speaking Teachers' Lack of Shangani Proficiency

As I highlighted in the previous chapter, all the Shona speaking teachers at the three schools under study are not proficient in the Shangani language. This affects them in several ways. One way in which they are affected is that they fail to communicate meaningfully with their learners which in turn cause them to fail to control their classes and to perform their lesson activities as teachers.

The struggles that the Shona speaking teachers go through due to their lack of proficiency in Shangani were evident in lesson observations. Because of their failure to communicate meaningfully with the learners in Shangani, some Shona speaking teachers are left with no choice but to largely use English in lesson delivery. However, this creates problems as learners fail to understand concepts since most of these young learners are yet to achieve adeptness in the second language. In an Environmental Science lesson by teacher Tafadzwa of Mandleni Primary School (Shona speaking) on Landforms and Maps, it was observed that the lesson was largely teacher dominated. In her introduction she used the English language to introduce her lesson as follows;

> *T: We are learning about landforms. Which landforms can you see?*

> *P: (No response)*

She then started to explain what landforms are in the Shona language. Pupils were then asked to open their Environmental Science textbooks on page 18 where they were supposed to identify various landforms on that page. Teacher Tafadzwa then asked her pupils to go outside to identify different landforms but she was using Shona and English in her delivery. From my observation of how pupils responded to the teacher's questions, it was evident that the majority of the learners could not understand what the teacher was saying.

She was virtually talking to herself as she alternated between Shona and English which apparently the Grade 2 learners could not comprehend. Most pupils were busy playing whilst the teacher tried to deliver her lesson. The level of learner participation during that lesson was very low because the teacher consistently used two foreign languages to deliver the concepts. When the learners responded to some of the teacher's questions they did so in Shangani despite the fact that she would have asked the questions in either Shona or English as evidenced in the following excerpt:

> *T: I said tarisai panezvakatikomberedza, ndezvipi zvinhu zvamuri kuona zvatingati malandforms? (From the environment, which landforms can you identify?)*
>
> *P1: Hibona xitshabyana. (I can see a hill)*
>
> *T: What else can you see? What other landforms can you see?*
>
> *P2: Hibona xihlahla (I can see a tree).*

The answer by the second pupil is evidence that there was communication breakdown between Teacher Tafadzwa and her pupils because the answer 'tree' is wrong and may suggest that pupil 2 had not understood the question. The dialogue between Teacher Tadiwa and her pupils that I gave earlier in this chapter also shows that there was communication breakdown between her and the learners as she ended up giving them almost all the answers that she expected from them.

The fact that she repeated a single question over and over again yet the pupils could not give the expected answers also confirms this. This shows that lack of proficiency in Shangani by teachers like Tafadzwa and Tadiwa make communication between them and their pupils ineffective. Despite the fact that Teacher Tafadzwa took her learners outside to see the actual landforms, it was evident that the pupils had not grasped the concept because the majority were unable to give correct answers on the questions that the teacher had written on the

chalkboard. This shows that the failure by the teacher to use Shangani as the MOI impeded the mastery of content by the learners. It also means that the teachers' efforts were in vain as she could not achieve her objectives since the pupils did not understand the concepts. Thus, the teachers' efforts in teaching become futile because of communication break down between the two parties. This has caused teachers to be affected in several other ways that I provide in the ensuing discussion.

The lack of proficiency in Shangani by the Shona speaking teachers has also affected them in the sense that they feel they are not doing justice to the learners they teach. Teacher Mary of Mandleni Primary School had this to say in response to an interview question which sought to establish how her learners' attitudes affected her:

> *It makes me feel I am not doing justice to them. I should be fluent in*
> *Shangani for me to use it in class, but I am not yet fluent in the language.*

In other words Mary's lack of proficiency in Shangani makes her feel that she is short changing these learners who should receive instruction in a language they understand better. Even in the lesson that I observed her teaching, it was evident from her explanations that she was trying to make herself understood by infusing some few Shangani words in an otherwise English MOI. But like she said in her response above, she is not fluent in the language and this makes her feel she is short-changing her learners.

Sharing the same sentiments that their lack of proficiency make them feel they are short-changing the learners is Teacher Chipo from Mandleni Primary School. In response to an interview question which sought to establish how she feels when delivering her lessons in Shangani to her Grade 2 class, despite her lack of proficiency in the Shangani language, teacher Chipo admitted:

> *I really feel I am doing a good thing but my Shangani is not really good,*
> *so I end up not using it.*

Her response shows that despite her knowledge that using Shangani for her students is the right thing to do, she ends up not using it owing to her incompetence in the language. This was evident in her Mathematics lesson where in her introduction she used English whilst code-switching to Shangani but due to her limited Shangani vocabulary bank, she ended up using English to Shona code-switching. This therefore means that the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development and MOPSE's lack of

commitment in training teachers in Shangani has a ripple effect on Chipo's learners who have to receive instruction in two foreign languages, Shona and English.

The fact that MOPSE did not change the deployment system upon the enactment of the 2006 Education Amendment Act and the 2013 Constitution make the Shona speaking teachers endure the use of Shangani as the MOI as well as teaching it as a subject. Teacher Tafadzwa of Mandleni Primary School lamented her lack of proficiency in Shangani and said she is ready to be redeployed to another school where the pupils are not Shangani. In response to a follow up question on an interview question which wanted to establish if given a choice she would not want to teach in a school where the predominant language is Shangani, her response was:

> *Yes, because I feel I am not doing justice to these learners because I can't speak the language they understand. I feel that I should be transferred to another school where Shona is the major language. However, I am trying to learn the language on my own but I am still very far from becoming fluent.*

This response shows that, like teacher Mary above, teacher Tafadzwa thinks her students are not benefitting fully from her because she cannot speak the language they understand. As a result of the trials she goes through in her day to day operations at her school, she said given a choice she would not want to teach at a school where the predominant language is Shangani. From my own point of view, this teacher is justified to think that way because her Environmental Science lesson which I made reference to earlier in this chapter was largely unsuccessful and one of the major reasons was that she was using English and Shona which learners did not understand in addition to other factors which contribute to the success of a lesson such as preparedness and availability of relevant media. That may suggest why she lamented lack of seriousness by the policymakers in her response below to my interview question;

> *I think another thing is lack of seriousness on the policy makers. As a result, on the ground, pupils are deprived of their mother tongue because most of us cannot speak the language.*

Her failure to meaningfully communicate with her learners makes her feel that she is depriving her pupils their right to learn through their mother language. She blames all this

on policymakers who are not showing seriousness on the policy by not training teachers who cannot speak the language like herself.

In Chapter 5 I indicated that some teachers pointed out that due to their incompetence in the Shangani Language, they have humbled themselves to become their learners' students of Shangani. This was observed in two lesson observations: one at Bhizana and the other one at Ntolwane schools. At Bhizana Primary School teacher Patience who was observed teaching a Grade 2 class asked her learners if what she had said in Shangani was the correct way of saying it. Her lesson was on jobs done at home by mothers, and she gave an example such as 'sweeping,' in the Shangani language upon which she asked her learners if she had said it correctly. She then said it again correctly after being corrected by her learners. For example, after being corrected she said, 'Mhani vaswiyela', 'Mhani vasweka' meaning mother sweeps and mother cooks respectively. Earlier she had said 'mhai vaswiyela' and 'mhai vasweka' where the first word in those examples was taken as it is used in the Shona Language.

The fact that I discovered it through lesson observation that there is a communication breakdown between teachers who are Shona speaking and the Shangani speaking learners showed that the teachers' incompetence in the Shangani Language affected the teaching and learning transactions in their classrooms. This confirmed the teachers' sentiments that MOPSE had shown very little commitment to the use of Shangani as the MOI because individual teachers are now learning the language from their pupils instead of getting formal training from MOPSE.

The findings of this study have shown that teachers are posted to schools without considering whether or not they are proficient in the Shangani language, therefore it might also be right to say that the education officials are not very serious about the teaching of Shangani because non-proficient teachers cannot be expected to use the language as the MOI when they concurrently have to learn it.

Another teacher whom I observed teaching and at the same time learning from her students was teacher Victoria at Ntolwane Primary School, she was teaching a comprehension topic in English to her Grade 2 class. There were new words in the passage which she wanted to explain to enable her learners to understand the passage. She tried to explain the meaning of the phrase like 'petrol attendant' in Shangani. She then sought confirmation from the pupils

to find if she had said it correctly. Her pupils then confirmed if it was correct or told her the correct way of pronouncing the terms.

Therefore, Victoria's lack of proficiency is forcing her to learn the Shangani language. As a result of this method of teaching whereby teachers have to ask from their pupils if what they would have said is correct evidently impacts on the time taken by these teachers in delivering their lessons. More time is taken in trying to negotiate meaning between the learners and their Shona speaking teachers. This obviously means that some curriculum areas are ignored since a lot of time is spent in one lesson. This may explain why teacher Victoria gave the following response to an interview question:

> *What I am simply trying to say is we are facing serious challenges in trying to implement this policy.*

Implied in her response above is the fact that the teachers are trying to implement the policy but they are doing so with a lot of challenges. This is how they are affected by their lack of proficiency in the Shangani language which happens to be the language for the bulk of the pupils learning at the three schools.

However, the fact that the pupils communicated to the teacher and amongst themselves using the Shangani Language could mean that classroom interaction serves as an excellent way for the teacher to co-teach/co-learn each other's languages. In the three schools however, the Shona speaking teachers seem to see this as a challenge and not a way of making them learn the Shangani Language.

The Shona teachers' lack of proficiency in the Shangani language also made them fail to control their classes. In another lesson observed at Ntolwane Primary School, teacher Barbra was evidently in trouble as she failed to control the students in a Grade one class as she was delivering a Mathematics lesson basically using English as MOI. Here and there she used Shangani words to tell the pupils to keep quiet. The failure by teacher Barbra to control her pupils during lesson delivery meant that ultimately her learners would grasp very little as they were busy with other things while the teacher was trying to impart new knowledge in these learners. In all these instances, it is clear that the non- Shangani speaking participating teachers are grappling with teaching Shangani speaking pupils because of their incompetence in the Shangani language.

## 6.3 HUMILIATION FELT BY TEACHERS

During the lesson observations I noted that when teachers failed to pronounce words correctly or say out wrong words their pupils laughed at them and in some cases correct them. In Teacher Mary's Maths lesson, she tried to code-switch to Shangani but she mispronounced the words. She said:

*What is tinharhu plus hlanu*? (What is 3 plus 5?)

It was noted that her pronunciation of the first Shangani word in that example was wrong because before she even finished saying out the utterance, the pupils were laughing. Mary had tried to use the code-switching strategy to clarify concepts but she was laughed at by the learners for poor pronunciation. I noticed that she felt humiliated.

The same thing happened at Bhizana Primary School where teacher Patience was conducting her lesson on the work that the mother does at home. The dialogue went on like this:

*T: Mhai vatirha hini khaya? (What work is done by mother at home?)*

*P: (laughing) Mhani vaswiyela (mother sweeps)*

*T: Ok it's Mhani not Mhai. Ok.*

In the above excerpt, the pupils laughed at the teacher for using the Shona equivalence for mother, instead of the Shangani term. The good thing is that the pupils corrected her when she made the mistake unlike in Teacher Mary's case where the pupils just laughed at the teacher without correcting her. In fact, the expression on Teacher Mary after her pupils laughed at her showed that she felt humiliated – and I witnessed that**.**

As a direct result of the possible humiliation that some teachers may experience when they fail to pronounce certain Shangani words correctly, they use English which they think is neutral. After Teacher Mary was laughed at by the Grade 1 pupils for her poor pronunciation in her Mathematics lesson, she consistently used English throughout the lesson. Despite the fact that only a few pupils grasped the concept, she used English due to her lack of competence in the Shangani language which is accessible and understandable by the learners. This therefore means that so far, the implementation of the policy on the use of

Shangani to a larger extent remains a pipeline dream as the majority of the teachers are not fluent in the Shangani language.

In the interview, teacher Tolerant of Mandleni Primary School highlighted that his pupils laugh at him when he makes mistakes in an endeavour to communicate through the Shangani language. When I asked him to comment on his learners' reaction, he said:

> *It belittles me to be laughed at by students.*

In response to a similar interview question, teacher Mary of Mandleni Primary School said:

> *I feel I should not use it. I feel very humiliated.*

These responses give enough evidence that Shona speaking teachers are negatively affected by their inability to speak the Shangani language. Teacher Tolerant says he feels belittled to be laughed at while teacher Mary simply thinks she should not use the Shangani language as the MOI. This means that in such a scenario, the ideals of MTE are simply ignored because teachers are not proficient in the language the learners understand best, which in this case is Shangani.

## 6.4 TEACHERS' SELF-CONFIDENCE

The issue of proficiency by teachers at the three schools caused differences in confidence levels of the teachers. I am going to discuss the issue of teachers' self-confidence separately; where I would talk about Shona speaking teachers first and then Shangani speaking teachers later.

### 6.4.1 Shona speaking teachers' self-confidence in using the Shangani medium of instruction

Some Shona speaking teachers are code switching from English to Shangani as they deliver their lessons to try and explain difficult concepts and clarify some points. However, their lack of proficiency in the Shangani language is affecting them negatively to an extent that it was evident in the speeches of the majority of them that they lacked confidence whenever they brought in a Shangani word or expression during lesson delivery. Cases in point are: Patience of Bhizana Primary School, Mary and Chipo of Mandleni Primary School, Victoria and Barbara of Ntolwane Primary School.

In a lesson observation where she was talking about work done by mother at home, Teacher Patience would say a word and ask her learners if what she would have said was correct. For example she said '*mhai vasweka*' and immediately after that she asked, "Is that how I should say it?" If she was very sure that she had said it right, there was no need to ask from the learners if that was correct. Apparently, she was right to ask from the learners because they ended up correcting her, saying it should have been '*Mhani vasweka*' (Mother cooks). This shows that the lack of proficiency in the Shangani language makes teacher Patience lose confidence each time she tries to use the Shangani terms when delivering her lessons.

At Mandleni Primary School, Teacher Mary and Teacher Chipo also showed lack of confidence when teaching using the Shangani language. As a result, they too use Shangani when they are very certain that what they are saying is correct. Most of Teacher Mary's communication was in English with code-switching to Shangani being used here and there. For example, in her Maths lesson she said, '*What is tinharu plus hlanu*?' (What is 3 plus 5?) Her question shows that she just knows numbers in Shangani and is not sure of the other terms as she only managed to code-switch to Shangani numbers and not on any other word. This may be caused by the fact that she was afraid of making mistakes and according to findings in Chapter 5 this leads to being laughed at by the pupils. The fact that she does not use Shangani always shows that she cannot use it freely to impart knowledge in her learners because she is not yet fluent in the language.

Lack of confidence was also evident in teacher Victoria at Ntolwane School. There were a lot of hesitations and false starts each time she code-switched from English to Shangani. For example, she said, 'tse-ka-ni tekani book re English', instead of just saying, 'Tekani buku re English' (Take out your English textbook). She was hesitant in speaking the first word because she was not sure of the pronunciation of the word. All this was evidence of lack of self-confidence by the Shona speaking teachers in using the Shangani MOI due to their lack of competence in the language, therefore she lacks self confidence.

However, there are some Shona teachers who showed some confidence as they code-switched to Shangani. A case in point is Teacher Tanya of Ntolwane Primary School. She was teaching a Shangani lesson and she was code-switching between Shona and Shangani. Although she did not use many Shangani words, the few that she used were expressed confidently.

**6.4.2 Shangani speaking teachers' self-confidence in using the Shangani medium**

Unlike their Shona counterparts who displayed lack of confidence in lesson delivery, Shangani teachers like Pretty (of Mandleni Primary School), Takunda, Tatenda and Anotida (of Bhizana Primary School) were very confident in lesson delivery. They were very flexible in their use of Shangani as they presented their lessons which included clarifying concepts and asking questions. In fact, from the lesson observations I noted that teacher Tatenda was more comfortable expressing herself in Shangani than in English. This implies that, if teachers are proficient in the learners' language they are more comfortable in delivering lessons than those who are not proficient.

The following conversation between Teacher Anotida of Bhizana Primary School and her pupils shows that Shangani teachers are better placed to implement the language policy:

*T: Nimani angatsala papila? (Who wrote the letter?)*

*P: Ni John.*

*T: Vathirhisa hini kufamba? (What mode of transport did they use?)*

*P: Vafamba hi xitimela.*

*T: Vateka masiku mangani kufika Harare? (How many days did they take to get to Harare?).*

*P: Vateka masiku manharhu.*

In the conversation above, Teacher Anotida freely expressed herself and she showed confidence as she delivered her lesson. The other Shangani speaking teachers also displayed confidence and this confirmed the fact that the Shangani speaking teachers are enjoying the use of Shangani as MOI.

## 6.5 THE USE OF ENGLISH/SHONA CODE-SWITCHING

Due to their inability to meaningfully communicate through the Shangani Language some of the participating teachers have resorted to code-switching. From the lesson observations, it emerged that the pupils at the elementary level at the three schools have not yet mastered the English language so the teachers cannot use it exclusively as the MOI, even those that are not proficient in Shangani. As a result of this, some Shona teachers have resorted to

code-switching from English to Shona as a way of trying to explain difficult concepts or wanting to emphasise a point.

In a lesson observation at Mandleni School, teacher Tolerant was teaching a Social Studies lesson on Wealth and Money and he used English to deliver his lesson but when it was clear to him that pupils had not mastered what he was saying, he would switch to Shona as evidenced in the following excerpts from his lesson:

> T: Who is the richest person that you know?
>
> P: John
>
> T: Which John? I mean the richest person in this community.
>
> P: (no answer)
>
> T: I am saying, ndiani munhu akafuma chaizvo (who is the richest person) in this community?
>
> P: (No answer)
>
> T: Hey! Who has cars, shops and a lot of money muno munharaunda medu? (in our community)
>
> P: Mr Mlambo.
>
> T: Good. What makes you think he is the richest? Sei tingati VaMlambo (Why do we say Mr Mlambo) is the richest?
>
> P: Unezvilo zvothala unethi mhovha thokutala nemuzi wahombe (Because he has many cars and a big house).

This shows that the teacher's lack of proficiency in the Shangani language has forced him to switch to his L1 (Shona) in trying to make his point clear to the learners. Teachers Barbara and Mary of Ntolwane and Mandleni schools respectively are also using the same strategy of code-switching from English to Shona in their lesson delivery. They switched to Shona in an endeavour to clarify concepts in their lessons.

However, I observed that the teachers had to repeat their questions even after code-switching as the pupils struggled to make sense of what the teacher would have said. For example, in the excerpt above in teacher Paul's lesson, he had to repeat the same question in a different way (still code-switching to Shona) for pupils to be able to get his question right. This implies that, despite the fact that Shona speaking teachers have resorted to code switching

from English to Shona, it is not of much help to the learners who grapple with the comprehension of both the English and Shona languages.

Therefore, code-switching to Shona is clear evidence that the Shona participating teachers are in trouble in trying to impart knowledge to the Shangani speaking students through two unfamiliar languages; English and Shona. The teachers have difficulty on the use of English/Shona code-switching but the learners are suffering most because they are the ones being taught in two unfamiliar languages. Thus, the code-switching strategy is of less help to them.

## 6.6 THE USE OF SHANGANI/ENGLISH CODE-SWITCHING

Through the lesson observations, I noted that some Shona participating teachers who can speak a few Shangani words and all the Shangani speaking teachers (except Teacher Nyasha) employed code-switching from English to Shangani during the delivery of their lessons. Basically, I observed that they used code-switching to clarify concepts. They use code- switching to Shangani as a strategy to aiding learners' understanding. That can be noted in the following conversation:

*T: Can you tell me any three man made things?*

*P: (no answer)*

*T: Nibyeleni zvilo zvinharhu zvingalungiswa hivanhu. (Can you tell me any three man made things?)*

*P 1: Bhasikhirhi (bicycle)*

*P2: Movha (car)*

In the excerpt above, the teacher made use of inter-sentential code switching to help the learners understand the question. The fact that pupils promptly gave their responses soon after the teacher had asked the question in Shangani, showed that the code switching technique is an effective tool in enabling Shangani learners to master difficult concepts.

Unlike their Shona counterparts who are affected negatively by lack of proficiency in the Shangani language, Shangani speaking teachers are enjoying the benefits of mother tongue education (MTE). This implies that they are affected positively by their ability to communicate in Shangani.

In a lesson observation at Bhizana Primary School, teacher Tatenda was teaching the concepts of 'before', 'between' and 'after' in a Mathematics lesson. She used the L1 (Shangani) to help learners to understand the terms and how to use them on the days of the week. The level of learner participation was very high and there was no doubt that the learners and the teacher were moving together towards the achievement of the lesson objectives. The pupils were even free to give their responses in Shangani and there was no doubt that learning was taking place.

Towards the end of the lesson, the pupils were given an exercise on the concepts they were taught and as they were writing one could see the confidence. They had to tackle an individual exercise and it was noticed that they had fully grasped the concepts. This means that for Teacher Tatenda, the policy that allows the use of Shangani as MOI is something to celebrate as she is in a position to communicate concepts meaningfully with her learners through the Shangani language. This may explain why she responded in the manner she did to an interview question which required to establishher feelings about the call for the use of Shangani as the language of instruction at her school:

> *I think it is good. Maybe it will improve our pupils' performance. The*
> *language has been marginalised for too long.*

Teacher Tatenda thinks that the fact that the marginalisation of the Shangani language was the cause for poor results at her school and she is hopeful now that the pupils' performance would improve because of the policy that allows the use of the Shangani Language as the medium of instruction. She indicated that previously it was very difficult for her and her Shangani speaking counterparts to use the Shangani language. In response to an interview question Teacher Tatenda said:

> *It was very difficult for us to use Shangani back then because only two*
> *languages (English and Shona) were recognised in education.*

This implies that Tatenda is happy at the recognition that the Shangani language has received through the 2006 Education Amendment Act and the 2013 Constitution. I noted that Shangani speaking teachers like Tatenda are benefitting a lot from the policy as the performance of their learners is set to improve because they can now quickly master concepts taught through Shangani. Later, in the day after I had finished my lesson observations for that particular day at Bhizana Primary School, I went to the head's office

to bid farewell to the Teacher in Charge (who was the Acting Head on that particular day). In the office I noted a chart which showed the school's pass rates for the Grade 7 National Examinations. Here are the statistics:

2012 it was 10%
          2013 it was 19 %
          2014 it was 45 %

Looking at these statistics, one is justified to conclude that the use of the learners' mother tongue is a contributory factor to the learners' performance because since 2013, the pass rate at Bhizana Primary School has been on an upward trend. The fact that this research established that there are more Shangani teachers at this school as compared to the other two may mean that learners at Bhizana School are getting instruction largely in Shangani due to the numerical advantage of the Shangani teachers at their school. This has contributed to the increase in pass rates at the school over the years.

To further confirm my argument above, Teacher Takunda of Bhizana Primary School said:

> *It's one of the most important things to be done. Understanding of concepts and even following what the teacher is talking is only possible if Shangani is used.*

When I observed him teaching an Environmental Science lesson on natural materials, I came to fully understand his response above that he had given earlier in an interview. As he was teaching his lesson, he took his pupils outside where they identified different types of natural materials. He was using Shangani to teach as well as to give his learners instructions on what next they were supposed to do. As he asked them questions, most of them raised their hands to show that they wanted to give an answer. I noted that most of the responses they gave were correct.

After the tour, he took back his pupils to the classroom where the same concepts were explained again in English in preparation for a written exercise. I noticed that even when the teacher was then explaining in English the pupils showed understanding by participating in the lesson because they had already grasped the concepts earlier taught through the Shangani medium. These findings therefore show how the Shangani teachers are benefitting from the use of Shangani as the MOI. For these particular teachers, the use

of Shangani gives them an opportunity to enjoy teaching as concepts and explanations are meaningfully communicated to the learners.

The use of a language that pupils understand makes communication effective as supported by Benson (2004c) when he notes that, in contrast to learners in immersion programmes who simply recite without a meaningful grasp of issues at hand, bilingual learners actively take part during lessons and they exhibit greater self-esteem. What this means is that for pupils to participate meaningfully in the learning process, they have to understand the MOI. From the findings of this research, it emerged that the levels of learner participation differed depending on which language the teacher was using to deliver the lessons.

### 6.6.1 Learners' participation when taught through Shona and/or English

The lack of proficiency in the Shangani language has caused some teachers to largely use either English or Shona or both in delivering lessons. This has affected the levels of understanding by learners as evidenced by low levels of participation.

Learner participation in all lessons where teachers largely used English and Shona was generally very low. In Teacher Tolerant's Social Studies lesson, I observed that he had to ask a single question several times before the learners could give responses. This can be illustrated in the following dialogue between Teacher Tolerant and his pupils:

*T: How can you tell that somebody is rich?*

*T: What things does a rich person have?*

*P: (Silence)*

*T: His belongings will show that he is rich. So what things do rich people have?*

*P: sh...Shops.*

*T: What other things do rich people have? Think of the rich people you know, what things do the have/*

*P: (Silence)*

*T: Vanhu vakapfuma vane mota nedzimba hombe (Rich people also have cars and big houses).*

Generally, the way pupils raised their hands showed that they had doubts about the answers they were about to give. The fact that pupils took so long before they could answer the question shows that Teacher Tolerant's continued use of the English Language affected the pupils negatively because they could not participate freely where a second language was being used.

In Teacher Barbra's Mathematics lesson, the participation of pupils where they were supposed to give individual answers was also very low. However, where they gave chorus answers, almost all pupils took part. It is however interesting to note that, chorus answers may not give a full reflection of the individual performance of learners as they are likely results of rote learning. Rote learning is not encouraged because it cannot sustain motivation, interest or alertness among the pupils (Malawi Institute of Education, 2004:3) yet these factors are the key ingredients in any learning endeavour. Therefore, the fact that pupil participation was very low when the teacher posed questions that required individual answers may be a reflection that the use of Shona and English hindered their mastery of concepts and understanding of the content taught. I can therefore say teachers with low proficiency levels in the Shangani language have problems in meaningfully communicating with their learners.

### 6.6.2 Learners' participation when Shangani is used as MOI

Through observation of lessons, it was evident that the participation of learners was higher when teachers used Shangani as medium of instruction compared to when they either used English throughout or used English/Shona code-switching. Even when teachers code-switched between English and Shangani the participation of learners was higher compared to what happened when English and Shona were used. Cases in point are Teacher Pretty's English comprehension lesson, Teacher Tatenda's Mathematics lesson and Teacher Takunda's Environmental Science lesson.

This was evident in lesson observations where most learners raised their hands so as to give an answer to a question a teacher would have asked in the Shangani language. For example, in Teacher Tatenda's Mathematics lesson where she was teaching the concepts of 'before' and 'after', her pupils raised their hands confidently showing that they were eager to give answers. What I observed during that lesson is that, most of the answers given by the learners were correct. More than three quarters of the class raised their hands and those that were given a chance to answer the question gave correct answers. This means that the

interaction between the teacher and the pupils was effective because a familiar language was used.

In another lesson observation at Mandleni Primary School, Teacher Pretty was teaching an English comprehension lesson to her class. When it became clear that her pupils could not give the meaning of the new terms in English she asked the question in Shangani. She said:

> *Matwisisa yini ne neighbours? (What do you understand by the term neighbours?)*

Almost all pupils in the class raised their hands because it seemed their minds had been opened by the teacher's use of Shangani. From the above discussions, it can be noted that proficiency in Shangani makes teachers enjoy teaching pupils who actively take part through high participation during the delivery of lessons.

In the focus group discussions at Mandleni and Bhizana schools the Shangani participating teachers insisted that the language that enabled them to successfully impart knowledge and skills in learners was the Shangani language. This is an indication that their proficiency in the Shangani language has made their job very simple as they are certain that what they are teaching to the learners is fully understood.

However, both the Shangani and Shona speaking teachers indicated that all the subjects in the curriculum except Shangani, had no resources as the textbooks and teachers' guides are in English. This was also confirmed through observation of lessons taught by Teacher Nyasha; Teacher Tafadzwa and Teacher Victoria (each representing the three schools). For this reason, as discussed in chapter 5, they translate content from English to Shangani for learners' mastery of concepts. I am now moving on to discuss how the shortage of resources affects the teachers.

## 6.7 SHORTAGE OF RESOURCES

From the interviews and lesson observations it emerged that teachers are greatly affected by the shortage of resources to teach using the Shangani language. The following response from Teacher Victoria of Ntolwane Primary School gives substantiation that translation is inevitable for her lessons:

> *Our textbooks are in English but we translate to Shona and Shangani*
> *when we want to explain concepts. In my case I consult with other*
> *teachers and pupils who speak Shangani.*

Most of them rely on the charts they write because the textbooks are all in English. Below are charts that were displayed in Teacher Victoria's class:

**Figure 6: Charts used by Teacher Victoria to teach Shangani**
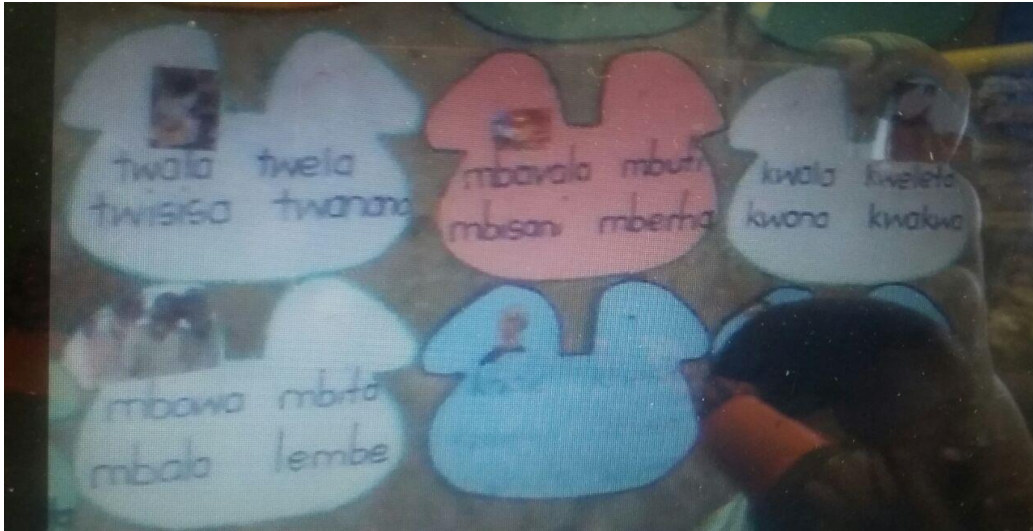


The charts in fig. 1 above are some of the materials that teacher Victoria is using to make learners understand particular concepts in the subjects like Social Studies, Home Economics and Environmental Science. From her response above, one can note that teacher Victoria will have to first consult with other teachers or school pupils to get translation of a difficult concept that she needs to explain to her learners using the Shangani language that the learners understand.

Interestingly, at Ntolwane Primary School all the teachers at the school, except one student teacher, are Shona speaking. One wonders how much time would a non-proficient Shangani speaker need to translate materials from English to Shangani in an endeavour to help the poor Teacher Victoria who cannot do the translation on her own! But how is she affected by this experience? In response to an interview question which sought to find out if her experiences on translation affected her perceptions on the use of Shangani as the MOI, she said:

> *Definitely because translation is time consuming since one has to consult. It then makes me feel that we need to hold on a little bit on using Shangani until such time when things are in place.*

As evidenced in the above quotation, Teacher Victoria stated categorically clear that translation is time-consuming especially for her because she has to consult with other teachers since she cannot do it on her own. As a direct result of that, she feels that the use of Shangani should be postponed until all cogs are in place for the proper implementation of the policy. It is very unfortunate that the shortage of resources compounded by the teachers' incompetence in the Shangani language has affected teachers such as Victoria which makes her feel that this is not the right time to implement the policy. Evidently, the young learners who desperately need instruction in the Shangani language which they understand better are the ones who suffer the most if this policy is to be abandoned. This is because a strong foundation to learn another language is laid if learners are fluent and literate in their L1 (UNESCO, 2010) hence the need for sustaining a MTE policy.

In addition to that, Trudell (2016) confirms through the findings of *The Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa* of 2002-2011 (LOITASA) that better attainment in education is guaranteed if the child's home language is used in education compared to when they are made to learn in a language that they are still learning. Therefore, abandoning the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI is not an option, considering that the young learners at the elementary level need it if meaningful learning is to take place.

Other teachers also concurred with Victoria that translation is tedious and time consuming. For example, when I asked if the shortage of resources affected her perception towards the call for the use of Shangani as the MOI, Teacher Mary from Mandleni Primary School said:

> *Yes it really affects me. How can I be expected to teach without resources? It's really hard because we have to translate to the L1 from English and translate again to English*

In a follow-up question where I asked why she had to translate so many times, she said:

> *… Don't you know that the exercises and exams are in English? But the policy says from Grade one to three we use the L1 to teach.*

For teacher Mary the translation exercise is cumbersome because she has to first translate from English to Shangani when clarifying difficult concepts and then translate again to English because the exercises should be written in English despite the fact that instruction can come through the Shangani medium. Therefore, teachers have to endure this time consuming exercise because there are no resources.This ultimately waters down the benefits of MTE because as Dutcher (2003) observes, if there are no resources, poorly trained teachers as well as insufficient language growth, MTE is eventually unsuccessful.

Even Teacher Tatenda of Bhizana Primary School who is Shangani speaking finds translation boring and unbearable. In response to an interview question on the issue of translation she said:

> *Of course it's tedious to translate from one language to another. It means we spend a lot of time teaching one lesson because after teaching in Shangani you have to teach everything again in English because when they write they have to use English. It makes me think more should be done if this policy is to fully benefit these young souls.*

From teacher Tatenda's point of view, the fact that they have to teach in Shangani yet when it comes to written work learners are expected to write in English, leads them into translating content from English to Shangani and then teaching everything again in English. In fact, this is what I observed her doing when delivering her Mathematics lesson. Like she said in her response above, this makes the whole exercise time consuming and wearisome. She therefore thinks that more has to be done if the policy is to benefit the young elementary level learners. My understanding was that teacher Tatenda is simply using a polite way to tell the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) to avail resources in Shangani so that the young learners can enjoy the benefits of Mother Tongue Education.

In addition to the above, teachers also indicated that sometimes they find it difficult to translate some words from English to Shangani. In response to an interview question, Teacher Tanya of Ntolwane Primary School said:

> *There are no resources, so if we could have these, the policy could be easier to implement. Some words are difficult to translate from English to Shangani.*

Implied in Tanya's response is the fact that unavailability of resources makes the Mother Tongue Education policy difficult to implement. Teacher Tanya therefore faces problems in translating some words from English to Shangani in her endeavour to teach through the Shangani medium. The unavailability of textbooks for the various curriculum areas is affecting teachers in that they have to struggle with translation and in some cases they fail to get the correct Shangani equivalents of particular English words. This can be noted in the following excerpt:

*T: Matwisisa yini ne filling station? (Can you explain the meaning of the term filling station?)*

*P: Filling station hindawu vemovha vakuma oyili. (A filling station is a place where motorists refuel their cars.)*

From the above excerpt it can be noted that both the teacher and the pupil failed to get the Shangani equivalent for the term filling station (a place where motorists buy fuel for their cars). This implies that, it may be difficult to get all the Shangani equivalents for the English words in the textbooks hence the need to avail resources in the Shangani language to support a mother tongue based instruction at the elementary level.

In response to an interview question which sought to establish if the fact that textbooks for the different subjects were in English and that as teachers they had to translate to Shangani when teaching affected her perception towards the call for the use of Shangani as the MOI, Teacher Tafadzwa of Mandleni Primary School had this to say:

> *Yes. Because it makes me feel that the policy makers are not serious on*
> *the issue so I end up not taking it seriously as well.*

The lack of seriousness on the part of MOPSE for not availing resources is now making teachers like Tafadzwa not to take the policy seriously as well. This seems to suggest that teachers like Tafadzwa may end up not putting enough effort in ensuring that they use the appropriate medium of instruction because they think policy should first show seriousness by availing resources in the Shangani medium. This is in line with McKenzie and Walker's (2013) observation that one of the central contributory factors to the success of a MTE policy is that government should show strong political will to introduce mother tongue learning. If this is not done the policy may not succeed and that is why teachers like

Tafadzwa are no longer taking the policy seriously because government has not shown seriousness on the policy as well.

The sentiments raised in the discussion above make me conclude that lack of seriousness by policymakers has led them to ignore the issue of resources to support a mother tongue based instruction at the three schools. As such, it has led teachers; both Shona and Shangani speaking, to be affected negatively as they all agreed that translation is time consuming and boring.

## 6.8 THE UNAVAILABILITY OF A STANDARDISED SHANGANI ORTHOGRAPHY

The findings of this research discussed in the previous chapter showed that the textbooks of the Shangani subject have the South African Tsonga, apparently because there is no standardised orthography for the Zimbabwean Shangani language. This affects the teachers at the three schools in different ways. For example, some teachers, especially Shona speaking find it difficult to pronounce some of the words. In a lesson observation at Ntolwane School where Teacher Tanya was teaching a Shangani comprehension lesson, there were evident glitches in her reading when she tried to demonstrate good reading.

Again, in the focus group discussion Teacher Tanya indicated that it was really difficult for her to read the Tsonga language in the textbooks despite the fact that she indicated that she had made significant strides in learning the Shangani language. She then indicated that at least she was fortunate to have a pupil in her class who had done her Grade 1 in South Africa so she helped her with pronunciation of certain words which were different from the Zimbabwean Shangani. What this means is that, the lack of a standardised orthography for the Shangani language is making teachers to be at the mercy of their students who have to assist them with reading the Tsonga language which is in the textbooks.In response to an interview question, Teacher Paul of Mandleni Primary School said:

> *The other factor, the spoken language is different from the written*
> *form. There is no standard Zimbabwean Shangani. This makes it*
> *difficult for me to learn the Shangani language*

From teacher Paul's point of view, how Shangani is spoken is different from what they read in the textbooks. This means for a person like him, who is trying to learn the language,

it becomes confusing because of those differences. Teacher Mary from Mandleni who had earlier stated that there were differences between spoken Shangani and the one in their textbooks said the following in response to a follow up question:

> *The Shangani in the textbooks is from South Africa and there are differences here and there with the Shangani they speak here. So when we try to speak the language we confuse the spoken Shangani with the written.*

From this response it can be noted that the lack of a standardised Shangani orthography is impacting negatively on Shona speaking teachers who are making frantic efforts to learn the Shangani language for them to be able to use it as the MOI in line with the Constitution and the 2006 Education Amendment Act. Mary says when she tries to speak Shangani she ends up confusing the spoken Shangani and the written form. This therefore means that for teachers like Mary, teaching at a school where Shangani is the predominant language is a nightmare because her efforts to learn the Shangani language are thwarted by the confusion she encounters between the spoken and the written, which happens to be the South African Tsonga. During the lesson observations, I noted that there were many Shangani textbooks but as both Shangani and Shona teachers stated, they have South African Tsonga which has variations here and there with the Zimbabwean Shangani. This can be demonstrated in the following examples from the Grade 3 Shangani textbook (Hluvuko wa hina Tangha 3):

**Figure 7: Variations of the language in the textbooks and the Zimbabwean Shangani**

i) *Loko mavele yagayiwa ku huma mugayo*. (page 1)(When grains are ground they produce mealie-meal)
The term '*mugayo*' in the example above is from the South African Tsonga. In Zimbabwean Shangani they use the term '*mapa*' for mealie-meal.

ii) *Loko xifake xi thlokoliwa xa kandzeliwa hi xigugu xa timanga*. (page 10)(When maize grains are pounded, they are cooked and mixed with peanut butter). The term '*xigugu*' in this example is from the South African Tsonga language meaning peanut butter. In Zimbabwean Shangani, the term for peanut butter is 'dovi'.

iii) *Mwana wanyarhi i damani*. (page 50) (A young one of a buffalo is a calf). The term *damani* in this example is a Tsonga word which means calf. In Zimbabwean Shangani they use the term '*xinyarhana*' for calf.

iv)  *Nhwanyana loyi a nga lokohiko wa hubuta a songa masangu yakwe.* (page 74) (A hardworking girl wakes up early and removes her mat). '*Masangu*' is a Tsonga word meaning 'mat.' In Zimbabwean Shangani the term '*xitheve*' is used to mean 'mat'

These are just a few examples of differences that are found between what the Shangani in Zimbabwe speak and what is in the so-called Shangani textbooks (which in fact are XiTsonga textbooks) in the schools. Obviously, these variations pose a lot of challenges to those Shona teachers like Mary and Tanya who are trying to learn the Zimbabwean Shangani Language.

It is however interesting to note that even Shangani speaking teachers like Takunda of Bhizana Primary School are also affected by the lack of a standardised orthography for the Shangani language. In response to a question in which I sought to establish if the lack of a standardised orthography affected his perception towards the call for the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction, he said:

> *Yes it does. It makes me think that Shangani is not seen as important as the other languages because Shona and Ndebele have their standardised orthographies. So how can we use a language in teaching yet it is not officially recognised. There is a disparity there.*

From the response above, teacher Takunda is saying that if he is to compare Shangani and other African indigenous languages such as Shona and Ndebele, he will come to a conclusion that Shangani is not viewed with the same lenses as these other languages because of the lack of a standardised orthography. This means that the situation makes him think that as long as Shangani does not have a standardised orthography, it remains an unofficial language. He is saying Shangani is not an official language but interestingly, the 2013 Constitution has accorded it an official language status.

The fact that his language is not standardised makes Shangani speaking teachers to continue feeling inferior to majority language speakers such as Shona and Ndebele because his response seems to suggest that these majority languages are more important as compared to Shangani by virtue of them having standardised orthographies. The issue of negative attitudes by some administrators towards the Shangani language also affects teachers in different ways. Generally the show this by resisting the use of Shangani as the MOI and this is what I am shifting my attention to at this juncture.

## 6.9 RESISTANCE BY SOME SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND ITS EFFECTS ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The findings of this study indicated that the administration at Bhizana Primary School is not supportive to teachers who want to use Shangani as the MOI. This was evidenced by teachers' responses (both Shangani and Shona speaking) which I cited in the previous chapter. Even I, as the researcher also noted that the administration at that particular school was not really interested in issues to do with Shangani on the first day I arrived at the school for data gathering. When I told the school head that I had finally come for data gathering he said,

> *I am going out for a meeting now. My deputy is also going and for the whole week we won't be here. But vanoita zveShangani vacho varipo. Mongovaonawo (those who are interested in Shangani are there. You can see them)*

This kind of response especially to a visitor speaks volumes on the attitudes of such an administrator towards the Shangani language. He indicated that those interested in Shangani were there and could assist me showing that his absence during my data gathering did not matter since he was not interested after all. In such a scenario, it is obvious that teachers who are trying to implement the policy are negatively affected by the school administration's negative attitudes towards the Shangani Language.

For example, it may be surprising to note that some Shangani speaking teachers are not taking full advantage of being proficient in the language and use it to meaningfully teach concepts to their pupils at the elementary level. For example, during a lesson observation I discovered that despite being Shangani, Teacher Nyasha used English to teach his Environmental Science lesson on Materials and Technology-Natural materials. He consistently used the English language to teach, despite the fact that the level of learner participation was very low.

On one or two occasions he even code-switched to Shona! He never bothered to explain the concepts in Shangani even when it was evident that the learners wanted him to communicate in Shangani by giving their responses in Shangani. It really surprised me to see Teacher Nyasha doing this in an actual lesson yet in the interview he had indicated categorically that the Shangani language was the ideal language for his learners. Later, in the focus group

discussion, he indicated that the school head had reprimanded him for using Shangani and what I saw in the lesson was meant to show me how the negative attitude by their administration was affecting teachers at his school in general and him in particular.

The above assertion is confirmed by interview responses by teachers at the school. For example, Teacher Anotida of Bhizana Primary School said:

> *…And worse still the administration is not serious on the teaching of Shangani as a subject. So using it in teaching other subjects may not be realistic given our situation.*

Teacher Anotida is saying the administration is not taking the teaching of Shangani as a subject seriously, so using it as the MOI for the other subjects is not realistic given their circumstances. This means that these teachers use the Shangani as the MOI against the will of the administration. This can be confirmed by the following interview response from teacher Tatenda:

> *If he comes for lesson supervision he discourages communication in Shangani but if one switches from English to Shona he doesn't complain.*

The school head actually discourages teachers from using the Shangani language! What is surprising is that when the teachers switch to Shona he would not complain. Even those Shona speaking teachers who are making an effort to use the Shangani as the MOI confirmed that their Shona speaking head was against it. For example teacher Patience said:

> *…On the other hand there is no support from the administration. Sometimes they discourage us from using the L1.*

This explains why teacher Anotida cited earlier in this chapter stated that using Shangani as the medium of instruction is not realistic given their situation where the one who should uphold the policy is in the forefront de-campaigning it.

Since the administration at Bhizana Primary School is not supportive, efforts by both Shangani and Shona speaking teachers in using Shangani as the MOI for the benefit of the learners seem to be going down the drain because the success of a MTE policy hinges heavily on the support it gets from the school administration. How the teachers at Bhizana Primary

School are affected by the negative attitude of their administration towards the Shangani language can be summed up by Teacher Tatenda's response below:

> *The fact that our administration is not taking it seriously makes it very difficult for us to use it.*

Thus, the administration at Bhizana Primary School is actually a barrier to the implementation of the 2006 Education Amendment Act which allows even minority languages like Shangani to be used as mediums of instruction.

## 6.10 PARENTS' SUPPORT OF SHANGANI AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

It emerged from the research that many parents of children who learn at the three schools support the use of Shangani as the MOI, and this affects the teachers in different ways. In response to a question which sought to establish what the teachers thought were the parents' perceptions towards a policy that promotes the use of Shangani as the MOI, the teachers gave varied responses which pointed to mixed attitudes. Some of the responses given were:

> *Their attitudes are positive. They like their language so much. (Teacher Patience- Bhizana Primary School).*

> *Parents like it but most of them are worried if their children will pass the final examinations at 'O' level (Grade 11 equivalent) if they don't get enough practice in English at an early age…they seem not to be sure of what they want. But what I know is that they are totally against the use of Shona in the classroom. (Teacher Tatenda- Bhizana)*

> *Some parents like it but those who have foresight are against it. (Teacher Tafadzwa- Mandleni).*

> *Parents support the use of Shangani. They want it to be used. Even non Shangani speaking parents want them to speak Shangani. (Teacher Pretty- Mandleni Primary School).*

The responses above indicate that according to teachers, parents generally are for the use of the Shangani Language as the MOI but they have other concerns with regards to the exclusive use of the Shangani language. For example, the issue of the 'O' Level (Grade 11

equivalent) national examinations that come through the English medium is a cause for concern for some parents. On the other hand, Teacher Pretty suggests that even those parents that are not Shangani are for the idea that their children should learn through the Shangani Language. These findings show that from the teachers' point of view parents have mixed attitudes towards the policy where some are for it while others are against it.

The support or lack of support by the parents also imply mixed experiences for both Shona and Shangani speaking teachers because if parents for example, are saying they do not tolerate the Shona language in the classroom it would mean that Shona speaking teachers might have difficult experiences as they are likely to use the forbidden language due to their limitations in the Shangani Language. In response to an interview question which endeavored to establish the attitudes of parents on the use of Shangani as the MOI one teacher had this to say:

> *...most Shangani speaking parents want it. Some actually complain if they hear us using Shona. They say they are Shangani and their children should not be polluted with the Shona language. (Teacher Paul- Mandleni Primary School)*

This shows that despite the fact that Shona speaking teachers received no training on the use of Shangani, some parents still expect them to use it for teaching. However, the teachers highlighted that there are also Shona speaking learners in their classes and the fact that these particular parents do not want to hear any Shona being used in the classroom actually means that they are being selfish. The sentiments above show that these parents actually see a teacher who uses Shona for teaching as polluting their Shangani language. In a focus group discussion at Ntolwane Primary School, it emerged that sometimes teachers are told point blank by parents that they should not use Shona to teach their Shangani children. Obviously, this affects teachers who are not proficient in the Shangani to the extent that as Teacher Victoria stated, they should find their own means to learn the language for them to be able to use it as the MOI.

The issue of the parents' support towards the use of the Shangani MOI means that both sets of teachers faced challenges in trying to implement the use of Shangani since those with positive attitudes towards their language gave the non-fluent teachers a torrid time by reprimanding them not to use Shona in their lessons despite their deficiencies in the language. For those who displayed negative attitudes, Shangani teachers experience some

resistance from such parents who insist that teachers continue with the old system of prioritising English and the national languages at the expense of a Shangani-based instruction.

## 6.11 LEARNERS' BEHAVIOUR WHEN TAUGHT IN SHANGANI

Since most of the learners at the three schools had not yet achieved competence in the English Language, they showed a willingness to learn when their teachers used Shangani language to deliver their lessons. In the lesson observations, I noted that even when the teachers decided to use either English or Shona, some learners would give their responses in Shangani. This can be demonstrated in the following conversation between Teacher Tafadzwa in her lesson:

*T: What can you see?*

*P1: Hibona ntshava*

*T: What other landforms can you see?*

*P2: Hibona mbuthi. (I can see a goat)*

*T: Good*

Giving a response in Shangani when the question has been asked in English or Shona may mean that the pupils have a high regard of their language. However, teachers may fail to comprehend what the learner would have said to an extent that they acknowledge wrong answers like in the example above. Possibly teacher Tafadzwa is not aware of the meaning of the word 'mbuthi' that is why she said 'good' after that pupil had given his answer.

The pupils' behavior of responding in Shangani while the teacher has inadequate competence of the Shangani Language also affects teachers in implementing the use of Shangani as the MOI as well as teaching it as the subject. In response to an interview question on the learners' attitudes towards the use of Shangani in the process of learning the following responses were given by some of the teachers:

> *They like their language. You find that when they are playing at break time they are speaking their Shangani. So it shows they like the language. (Teacher Mary- Mandleni Primary School)*

*Most of them like it, they really love their language. They even participate more when Shangani is used than when we are using English (Teacher Tatenda –Bhizana Primary School)*

All these sentiments indicate that most learners like their language. If, according to teacher Mary, pupils use their Shangani language (not Shona or English) it implies that they like communicating in their language and they want to be identified as Shangani speakers. Teacher Takunda's response suggests that pupils are aware that they can master concepts better in their own language that is why they like their language.

In the lesson observations I noted that the learners conducted themselves in a manner that showed particular interest in what they were learning. For example in Teacher Takunda's Environmental Science lesson, I could see smiling faces as the pupils learnt about natural materials. They were relaxed and participation was high to show that they had grasped the concepts that their teacher was teaching them. Most of them were paying attention as the teacher explained concepts using the Shangani Language. Therefore, this means that pupils behave in a manner that makes it easy for the teachers to deliver their lessons.

What this means is that, the pupils enjoy learning through the language as evidenced by the following response by teacher Takunda:

*They have positive attitudes for the language. For example, in the last national examinations only 5 students wrote Shona while the rest wrote Shangani at Grade 7 level. And even when we are teaching they are happy when we use Shangani to explain various concepts. Even the so called slow learners can grasp concepts.*

The choice by all the Grade 7 pupils except 5 at Bhizana Primary School shows that when they were still forced to write Shona at Grade 7 they did so just because they had no choice. Otherwise, they want to be examined in their own language. Therefore, the mastery of concepts even by the slow learners make the job of their teachers enjoyable because every teacher enjoys when the pupils he/she is teaching grasp the content they have learnt. This was evident in the lesson observations when teachers showed happy faces as they meaningfully interacted with their learners during the lessons. The fact that most pupils at this particular school chose to sit for the Shangani examination while only 5 chose the traditional Shona examination may also suggest that Shona speaking teachers are getting a

rude awakening that their Shona language is no longer relevant in Shangani speaking schools like Bhizana Primary School.

However, some teachers claimed that some pupils displayed unruly behavior when teachers use the Shangani Language. This can be evidenced by the following response from teacher Tafadzwa to the question on learner attitudes:

> *Shangani speakers like it but Shona speakers do not like it. They actually start playing or talking to friends the moment we use the Shangani Language.*

This seems to suggest that Shona speaking pupils do not pay attention when teachers use the Shangani language as MOI. This would mean a challenge to teachers who are using Shangani as the medium of instruction because the pupils may fail to master the concepts taught in Shangani. At the same time these pupils may start fidgeting whilst the teacher is delivering the lesson. I actually observed this in Teacher Takunda's lesson where a group of 3 pupils was constantly reminded to keep quiet during the lesson. They were not paying attention and apparently, they were using the Shona language in their conversation.

These actions by pupils with negative attitudes towards the Shangani language disturb the smooth flow of the lesson. What it means is that, these pupils will not gain much from the lesson and at the same time their colleagues would be distracted by the noise that they will be making. This obviously affects the teacher in his/her lesson delivery. In the focus group discussion it emerged that the fact that in their classes they had one or two Shona students meant that they had to emphasise the points again in Shona for the benefit of those few learners. This is how teachers are affected in their endeavor to cater for the two groups of learners in their classes.

## 6.12 CONCLUSION

The chapter has highlighted how the teachers at the three schools are affected by their experiences on the use of Shangani as the MOI. It was noted that most of the Shona speaking teachers' lack of proficiency has caused them to fail to control their classes as they switch from English to Shona. It was also noted that their self-confidence is low when they try to communicate using the Shangani language. Most of them were hesitant when they wanted to code switch to Shangani because some of them feared being laughed at by students when

they made mistakes. The chapter also highlighted that the Shangani teachers' job has been made easy by the use of Shangani as the MOI as it is comprehensible to the learners. They showed a lot of confidence as their learners highly participated in the lessons where Shangani was used throughout or when they code switched to Shangani. The lack of support and resistance by some non-Shangani speaking teachers and administrators on the use of Shangani as MOI was also fingered out as one of the most hindering factors to the implementation of the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI. I am now shifting my attention to why teachers are experiencing the use of Shangani as the MOI the way they do.

# CHAPTER 7

# REASONS FOR TEACHERS TO EXPERIENCE THE USE OF SHANGANI AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION THE WAY THEY DO

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

My previous chapter discussed in detail how teachers are affected by their experiences on the use of Shangani as Medium of Instruction (MOI). In this chapter my focus is on the reasons for the teachers to experience the Shangani medium of instruction in the way they do. I will look at the possible reasons for the teachers' actions, based on findings presented in chapters 5 and 6. In this chapter I will engage my theoretical and conceptual underpinnings. These will be useful lenses in establishing the reasons why teachers in the schools under study are grappling with the use of Shangani as the MOI. The following are the broad themes that emerged from the data:

1. Government and Education stakeholders' negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as MOI.
2. Mental colonisation of African stakeholders and a low regard of African languages as vehicles towards accessing education.
3. Negative attitudes of Shangani parents towards their own language.
4. The hegemony of English at high school and on the job market.

## 7.2 REASONS FOR TEACHERS TO EXPERIENCE THE USE OF SHANGANI AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN THE MANNER THEY DO

### 7.2.1 Government and Education stakeholders' negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as MOI

The experiences discussed in the last two chapters show that teachers at the three schools face a lot of challenges in their endeavour to use Shangani as the MOI. The findings revealed that the teachers are teaching in the face of inadequate resources, lack of training, lack of support by MOPSE and resistance by administrators among others. This is the situation on the ground despite the fact that, as I highlighted in my Theoretical Framework chapter, several articles from UNESCO see these as prerequisites in MTE policy implementation (for example,

UNESCO, 2003, 2008, and 2011).But what might be the reasons for this situation? My answer to this question is that this is a reflection of negative attitudes of all education stakeholders from the top (central level) to the bottom (local level). I will discuss this in detail in the ensuing discussion.

As I discussed in Chapter 5, the government through its Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has shown very little support for the use of Shangani as the MOI. This shows that, due to negative attitudes by MOPSE, teachers face a lot of challenges on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. The Zimbabwean government's lack of political will to support the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction is indicative of its  the negative attitudes towards the use of indigenous languages in general and Shangani in particular as the MOI. For example, as demonstrated in chapter 5, Teacher Chipo of Mandleni Primary School said:

> *The policy makers are not showing seriousness on the implementation*
> *of the policy.*

Sharing the same sentiments was Teacher Barbra of Ntolwane Primary School who said:

> *There is lack of commitment by government on seeing to it that the*
> *policy is implemented.*

From the responses above, it is clear that teachers feel that the government has not shown a will to support the use of Shangani as the MOI, and obviously this is because of the negative attitudes of the government and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. As a consequence this has had a bearing on the implementation of the policy. Teacher Chipo actually thinks that the policy makers are not showing seriousness on the policy implementation. In other words, the research participants are saying the policy makers are not concerned about the use of Shangani as the MOI. This is a reflection of negative attitudes towards Shangani by stakeholders at the central level.

The negative attitudes may be largely attributed to colonial thinking that the indigenous African languages should play peripheral roles whilst English is considered the language for all official and serious transactions (Adegbija, 2004; Kamwendo, 2010; Ngugi, 1981 and 1993).In fact, Ngugi (1981) opines that there is need for the decolonisation of the African minds because in many post-colonial states the English Language is viewed as the yardstick to determine somebody's level of intelligence and capability in different disciplines like the sciences and the arts. Ngugi's (1981) observation is in line with several studies which have revealed that the

majority of Africans in many post-colonial states shun their own languages in preference for the English language despite the detrimental effects it has on their mastery of concepts in education. A study by Tshotsho (2013) as discussed in chapter 2 revealed that despite the fact that 11 languages have been declared official languages, in practice, English and Afrikaans still command a higher status compared to the other nine languages. Tshotsho (2013) reports that the South African government is yet to avail the physical and human resources required for the promotion of multilingualism. This suggests that the recognition of the other 9 languages in the South African education system is yet to be achieved as the South African government is yet to avail adequate resources to promote multilingualism.

In another study, Mutasa (2015) states that proponents of mother tongue instruction in South Africa have negative attitudes towards African languages because through the word of mouth they support it, knowing very well that they do not mean what they say, in fact their actions show that they are against it. He says they do not practise what they preach. This implies that the government of South Africa has not taken the issue of using mother tongues as MOI at university level seriously hence the continued use of English in many programmes in all the universities in South Africa. This may explain why Nkosi (2014) notes that theoretically; the South African language policy is democratic and promotes the use of indigenous African languages. However, she observes that despite the fact that the language policy for higher education is for the use of indigenous African languages as mediums of instruction, English still dominates in most university programmes.

In addition to the, Nankindu et al (2015) report that in Uganda, just like in other East African countries, English language remains the language through which people can access scientific and technological knowledge as well as job opportunities and state business. This means that Nankindu et al (2015) are confirming my point above that African governments in general have displayed a negative attitude towards the local languages whether policies that seem to promote the use of these languages as mediums of instruction are in place or not. Maintaining the English language's colonial position speaks a lot about the way African leaders perceive the potential of African languages as vehicles through which educational knowledge can be imparted. The findings of this research confirm that Zimbabwe is no exception as compared to its African counterparts in as far as the marginalisation of indigenous minority languages is concerned. Linguistic imperialism still reigns supreme because African leaders have shown through their practices that English is more important than any other language. In the three schools under

study, the negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction by asking untrained teachers to use Shangani as MOI without adequate resources.

In a research carried out by Nankindu et al (2015) in the urban district of Kampala, they came to the conclusion that the 1992 Uganda Government white Paper on Education shows that the Ugandan government simply recommends the use mother tongues in the lower grades of primary school not because it acknowledges multilingual diversity but because it wants to use these local language to be launch pads to prepare for instruction in English from primary 5 upwards. This means the Ugandan government has a low regard of indigenous languages because it still holds onto the colonial mentality that English should be given a special status wherever it exists alongside indigenous African languages. This is consistent with Webb and Kembo-Sure's (2000) assertion that generally, speakers of African languages hold their own languages in low regard and this is starting from government level where policy statements on the use of these languages are never supported with the ideals of MTE that are clearly spelt out in UNESCO (2003).

These studies are an indication that the use of indigenous African languages in education is negatively affected by negative attitudes of stakeholders towards these languages. In this study, the findings discussed in chapters 5 and 6 revealed that the negative attitude by the Zimbabwean government has had a negative impact on the use of Shangani as MOI at the three schools. This negative attitude by MOPSE has caused the Shona speaking teachers to grapple with the teaching of Shangani speaking pupils because they lack proficiency in the Shangani language due to lack of training.

As cited in Chapter 2, the negative attitudes by most post-colonial states are reflected through using the avoidance strategy in policy statement (Bamgbose, 1991).The Ugandan language policy cited above is clear testimony that most post-colonial states in Africa use the avoidance strategy. It states that, up to primary four, indigenous languages are to be used as mediums of instruction in the rural areas where they are predominantly spoken, while in the urban areas the English language will be the MOI throughout the primary cycle (Nankindu et al, 2015). This shows that the Ugandan government is not committed to the use of these languages as mediums of instruction because the use of indigenous languages has been relegated to the rural areas while those in the urban areas (where most if not all government officials live) are taught in the English language.

Roy-Campbell (1998) in Prah (2000) cited in chapter 2 argues that if government officials lack the confidence in their own language due to real unawareness of the possibilities of language or class interest, what can one expect from the common people? Therefore, if the Zimbabwean government is not showing seriousness towards the implementation of a policy which promotes the use of local languages as mediums of instruction by not training teachers on how to use the Shangani Language as the MOI, it shows that the government itself has negative attitudes towards the use of local languages as mediums of instruction.

The implication is that it still wants English to be at the pinnacle of the education system, just as it used to be during the colonial period. As Phillipson (2015) notes, those of the elite class in post-colonial states prefer for education through the English medium from the lower to the highest levels of and even in their professional and personal lives. This can be evidenced by the kind of support they give to indigenous minority languages if they are to be used as mediums of instruction. Therefore, the negative attitudes by stakeholders towards the use of Shangani as the MOI, is the major reason why teachers at the three schools are facing the challenges that I discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

To further confirm the argument above on the issue of negative attitudes by the Zimbabwean government on the use of Shangani as the MOI, the participants indicated that no follow up has been made so far to ensure that the policy is being implemented. In response to a question which sought to establish the best way to guarantee the implementation of the policy on the use of indigenous languages in education, Teacher Nyasha of Bhizana Primary school had this to say:

> … *Policy makers should make a follow up on the policy. If people know that no one will ever ask them if something is being done they will simply ignore that policy. You know, people are resistant to change.*

In concurrence on the fact that no follow up has been made on whether or not the policy is being implemented was teacher Victoria of Ntolwane Primary school who said:

> *No serious follow ups are being made on whether the policy is being implemented or not.*

If the policy makers have not made a follow up on their policy 10 years after the promulgation of the 2006 Education Amendment Act and three years after the 2013 Constitution, can we really say there is political will to support mother tongue education? No. There are several ways

in which the Zimbabwean policy makers have shown a negative attitude and lack of seriousness about the implementation of the policy.

This is characteristic of a situation where linguistic imperialism is taking place. As cited in Chapter 4, Ansre (1979) cited in Phillipson (1992) states that linguistic imperialism is a phenomenon which is characterised by mental domination of the speakers of a language by another language to an extent that the conquered people end up getting convinced that they are capable and obliged to use that unfamiliar language only in all the meaningful transactions in their lives such as philosophy, literature, education, governments, the administration of justice and so on. In other words, where such domination would have occurred, the mind-sets of even the noblest in these communities become twisted to an extent that they fail to realise the full potential of the local languages.

As cited in Chapter 4, Phillipson (1992, 1997) states that the Linguistic Imperialism theory helps to account for linguistic hierarchisation which will then enable critiques to establish the structures and ideologies which facilitate the dominance of some languages on others.In the case of Africa, the dominance of the English language on the indigenous African languages is prevalent and both government officials and the general populace believe that their own languages are not capable of performing serious transactions like education, the judiciary, government and even literature.

As I noted in Chapter 4, Phillipson (1992) observes that the practice of marginalizing indigenous languages and imposing foreign languages on people is most prevalent in Africa. What is happening at the three schools therefore confirms that Linguistic Imperialism still reins supreme in Zimbabwe as the Zimbabwean government has shown negative attitudes towards the use of indigenous African languages in general and Shangani in particular as MOI. Rather, it still prefers the use of the English language since teachers get pedagogy in the English language while minority languages like Shangani are not even considered in teacher training. This situation confirms Phillipson's (1992) observation that, the former colonial masters' languages are more preferred currently than they used to be prior to the independence of Africa from colonial bondage. This is what the Zimbabwean government is subtly doing because it has shown a negative attitude towards the use of Shangani as the MOI at the same time silently promoting the imperialist hegemony of the English language on the African indigenous languages.

Another way in which MOPSE has shown a negative attitude towards the use of Shangani as the MOI is that, despite the fact that its 2006 Education Amendment Act says that the most commonly spoken language may be used in schools where those languages are spoken; it has not changed its deployment system. This means the policy pronouncements in the 2006 Education Act and 2013 Constitution are merely statements of intent (Desai, 2012) which are not supported by actions to show seriousness on those pronouncements. As discussed in the last two chapters, the Shona teachers who participated in this research are not proficient in the Shangani language.

The fact that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) has not considered the teachers' languages on deployment has led to the outnumbering of the Shangani speaking teachers by the Shona speaking teachers. In fact at Ntolwane Primary School there is no single Shangani qualified teacher whilst at Mandleni there was just one Shangani teacher teaching at the elementary level, while the rest were Shona. It is only at Bhizana Primary School where there were four Shangani teachers out of the six teaching at the elementary level.

These Shona teachers are the ones who suffer the most when it comes to the use of Shangani as the MOI as result of their inability to speak the Shangani Language. All the responses above are coming from Shona speaking teachers. They feel that the Shangani speaking teachers should be deployed in Shangani speaking schools because they think that they are better placed to implement the policy as compared to them who are still learning the language. This situation is a reflection that the Zimbabwean policy makers seem to be uninterested in the promotion of the indigenous languages, which according to Mutasa (2006) is a characteristic of most post-colonial African elitist governments.

What these findings reveal confirm Mutasa's (2006) observation that the rule by elites in most post-colonial states offers no hope for the upgrading of local languages to meaningful statuses owing to their insatiable desire to continue using the former colonial languages. There seems to be very little political will to support the upliftment of these languages. This therefore means that, linguistic imperialism has been the reason why the policy makers have not supported the use of Shangani as the MOI because they want to confirm the superior position of the English Language for their own benefit.From these findings, I can say that if MOPSE had considered deploying Shangani speaking teachers to Shangani speaking schools the use of Shangani as the MOI would be better implemented as compared to the current situation where some Shona teachers are using Shona to teach the Shangani children. As a result of the

fact that there are no strict measures in place to ensure that they use the Shangani language as the MOI, some teachers like Tolerant, Barbra and Chipo were found to be code switching from English to Shona as they delivered their lessons.

From the discussion above, it can be observed that what the Shona participating teachers said regarding the MOI is not what they do. They were observed teaching and were found to be largely using English language to teach and employing code switching to either Shona an Shangani because of their lack of proficiency in the Shangani language, yet in the interviews they had said they use Shangani as the MOI.

Therefore, this means that the Shangani medium of instruction is still not being implemented the way it should, it is to a larger extent a word of mouth in the schools which participated in the study. This is in line with what Tollefson and Tsui (2004) that I cite in Chapter 2 say about the implementation of MTE policies. They noted with concern that usually, there is a discrepancy between expressed standards and the actual support for indigenous languages. This means that policy statement is not supported by availing resources and training manpower and this leads to a situation where teachers would simply do what is convenient to them like what is happening in the three schools under study.

This confirms Obanya's (1999) and Bamgbose's (2000) research findings that there is no consistency between the implementation strategies for language policies and the real policy. This usually happens where policy statement is stated in a non-committal manner and where there is evidence of lack of political will to support a mother tongue education policy as evidenced by the findings of this research. This confirms Mtenje's (2008) argument that in general terms, avoidance as well as declaration without implementation characterize the language policy picture in Southern Africa.

What emerged from this research links closely with Prah's (2009) contention that it is no longer the superpowers (Westerners) that are working towards the annihilation of indigenous African languages, instead, it is the work of the African elites and, they do so in the guise of globalisation.

MOPSE has not shown commitment towards the use of Shangani as the MOI because it has not considered the language spoken by teachers when deploying teachers to particular schools. This is because of the government's negative attitude towards the Shangani language. If attitudes towards the Shangani language were positive, MOPSE would have ensured that

proficient Shangani teachers were deployed at Shangani speaking schools to ensure its use as medium of instruction. Sending in non-Shangani speaking teachers to these schools is a subtle way of saying the Shangani language is not important and should not be used as the MOI. That is why the Shona teachers at the three schools are grappling with teaching Shangani speaking children because of their limited knowledge of the Shangani Language.

Linguistic imperialism is also characterised by not allocating enough resources to support mother tongue education (Phillipson, 1992). This happens even in a situation where there is a policy that seems to be in place. This gives evidence that negative attitudes by government has led to lack of political will to support MTE. As discussed in Chapters five and six, textbooks for the various curriculum areas are in the English language and teachers have to translate. In response to a semi structured question Teacher Chipo of Mandleni Primary School said:

> *We need resources for us to teach Shangani well. If the textbooks are*
> *still in English it means that the teacher should translate from English*
> *to Shangani then back to English again because the students are tested*
> *in English.*

In Chipo's response above, it is apparent that the English Language is the government's preferred language of instruction because the textbooks are still in English and the pupils are examined through the English language as well. This may explain why the policy is stated in a way that suggests avoidance, that is, the indigenous African languages may be used as mediums of instruction. The subtle meaning of that statement is that the English language is the medium of instruction but teachers 'may' use the local languages as MOI. Stating a policy in such a manner implies avoidance and manifests the lack of political will to support mother tongue education. This situation confirms Desai's (2012) observation, as discussed in chapter 2 that language policy pronouncements are simply a word of mouth which is never taken seriously because for most African governments, the use of these local languages is not even their priority.

In other words, I can say that the Zimbabwean education stakeholders are not showing interest in ensuring the implementation of the 2006 Education Amendment Act on the use of local languages as mediums of instruction because the basics of MTE policy implementation that are very explicit in many articles written by scholars that support MTE (for example, Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Prah 2009 and UNESCO, 2003 and 2007).At the three schools under study, teachers are grappling with translation because the government has not availed resources in the

Shangani language to show that it is not really serious about the endorsement of indigenous African languages as vehicles through which education can be accessed.

The issue of negative attitudes by the stakeholders at the central level in education has also contributed to the problems that teachers are facing in their quest to impart educational knowledge to the young Shangani elementary learners. The situation in the three schools where teachers are facing many challenges in trying to use the Shangani Language as the MOI has also been caused by the fact that there is no link between the ministries that should work together to ensure the implementation of the policy, that is, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) and that of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development. What is currently taking place in Zimbabwe is in sharp contrast with the ideals of MTE that UNESCO (2003) spells out that, producing materials, providing for the training of adequate and knowledgeable teachers who are abreast with the cultures of the people they will teach are the requisite factors to consider if a teacher is to be able to teach using their local language. This is what lacks in the Zimbabwean context because the two ministries have not worked together to produce knowledgeable manpower to implement the use of Shangani as MOI.

The findings of this research compare well with what took place in Malawi in 1996 after the promulgation of a policy that advocated the use local languages yet teachers were not trained on the use of those languages. The implementation of that policy was largely unsuccessful due to the teachers' lack of competence in the local languages that they were supposed to use as mediums of instruction (Chilora and Harris, 2001). The situation at the three schools is a replica of what I have discussed above and this, again, is a reflection that the Zimbabwean policy on the use of indigenous languages in education does not have political backing and this has contributed to the difficult experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the MOI at the three schools under study. Teachers at the three schools expressed dismay over the fact that colleges in the province are not training teachers who can teach Shangani. In response to a semi structured interview question, Teacher Takunda of Bhizana Primary School said:

> *The Government should make it a policy that the Shangani language is offered in Teachers' Colleges. That would be the first step in recognising the language as an official language and then it can be used fully for teaching and learning.*

Teacher Takunda is actually saying Shangani is not yet an official language because it is not yet offered as a subject in Zimbabwean Teachers' Colleges. This therefore shows that despite the fact that the 2006 Education Amendment Act liberalises the use of Shangani as the MOI and that the 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution has accorded it official language status, the situation on the ground is reflecting the opposite.

The findings discussed in chapters five and six revealed that the Shangani Language is yet to have a standardised orthography! This therefore means that the Shangani language is yet to gain recognition in Zimbabwe for teachers to meaningfully use it as the language of teaching and learning. This is different from what took place in Cambodia's Bilingual Education Programme for Youths and Adults from the Bunong community that I discussed in depth in chapter 2 where Cambodia's Ministry of Education and Sport has ensured that the Bunong language has an approved orthography (UNESCO, 2007) before the implementation of the bilingual education programme. This is not the same with what is taking place with regards to the use of Shangani as MOI in the three schools in Chiredzi District in Zimbabwe. From my own point of view, this situation reflects the perpetuation of Linguistic Imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) in post-colonial African states where the stakeholders are displaying negative attitudes towards their own languages by training teachers in the English language and the National languages while the minority languages are thrown to the periphery.

The findings of this research paint a gloomy picture as to whether the Zimbabwean indigenous languages would gain the recognition that they deserve especially in education circles. This is because the current situation reflects that the Zimbabwean the government through its relevant ministries has not made it a point that colleges in Masvingo province begin to train teachers in the Shangani Language in addition to the traditional Shona and English languages.

Also, the fact that the three primary teachers' colleges are not training teachers in Shangani yet there are only two indigenous languages in the province (Shona and Shangani) is an indication that the government has a negative attitude towards the use of this minority language as MOI. This is happening despite the fact that teacher training is a vital cog in the success of Mother Tongue Education programmes. As cited in Chapter 2, Benson (2004b) states that instruction is likely to be ineffective if teachers are not made to undergo specific formal training on multilingual strategies and practices. In other words, if teachers are made to implement a MTE policy without having undergone training, they will not be able to effectively implement that policy. As a result, the hegemony of English is subtly perpetuated in the post-colonial nations

by not taking the development of these indigenous languages seriously. This means that just like in the colonial period, the post-colonial government is still comfortable with English occupying the top position whilst the indigenous languages like Shangani continue to be dominated in education circles hence the perpetuation of Linguistic Imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) and the hegemony of English (Gramsci, 1971). This is the reason why teachers are facing challenges on the implementation of the policy.

It is not only at the government level where negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as MOI are evident. Going down the educational hierarchy, research findings as discussed in Chapter 5 revealed that some school administrators have negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as the MOI an obviously, this has contributed to the challenges faced by Shangani speaking teachers in their endeavour to implement the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI. As I highlighted earlier in chapter six, the teachers face challenges from the school administration and other Shona speaking teachers whom they said they have a negative attitude towards them and their language. This may suggest that due to MOPSE's negative attitudes, school administrators were not oriented on the need to use Shangani as the MOI hence their continued despising of the Shangani language. This has caused Shangani speaking teachers face resistance in their endeavour to implement the use of Shangani as MOI.

In a research carried out by Siiner (2016) on university administrators as forced language policy agents at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, it was established that the policy on the recruitment of foreign researchers and students which led to the need for using the English Language in the learning and communication transactions did not come from within but it was the Danish government's globalisation strategy. The direct result of using English at the university was that it obscured the foreign staff members' understanding of Danish workplace culture and university administration. In addition to that, Sprog til tiden (2008) as cited by Siiner (2016) states that the use of the English language has had a detrimental effect on the Danish language hence it was critical for universities to develop language policies that ensured that the Danish Language maintains its position.

However, findings by Siiner (2016) revealed that this has not happened because there is lack of political will to allocate resources towards the Danish Language for its position and status to be ascertained. To make matters worse, the administrators are not proficient in the English Language. This means that the administrators are forced to implement two conflicting policies without adequate support from government and this obviously has a bearing on the

implantation of the policy. This situation is almost similar to what is going on in the three schools where administrators are failing to ensure the implementation of the use of Shangani as MOI maybe because the policy was simply imposed on them by government.

In addition to the lack of political will to support a mother tongue based instruction in the three schools and negative attitudes by some administrators, the research findings revealed that the teachers' attitudes contributed to why they experienced the use of Shangani the way they do. Generally, all Shangani teachers displayed a positive attitude towards the Shangani language whilst some Shona teachers had negative attitudes. However, the negative attitude by their colleagues, (precisely Shona teachers) negatively impacts the participating Shangani teachers' willingness to implement the policy. On the other hand some Shangani speaking teachers think that failure by their Shona counterparts is a reflection of negative attitudes and this contributes to the Shona teachers' challenges in teaching Shangani speaking learners.

**Fig 8: The teachers' attitudes towards the 2006 language policy on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at the elementary level.**
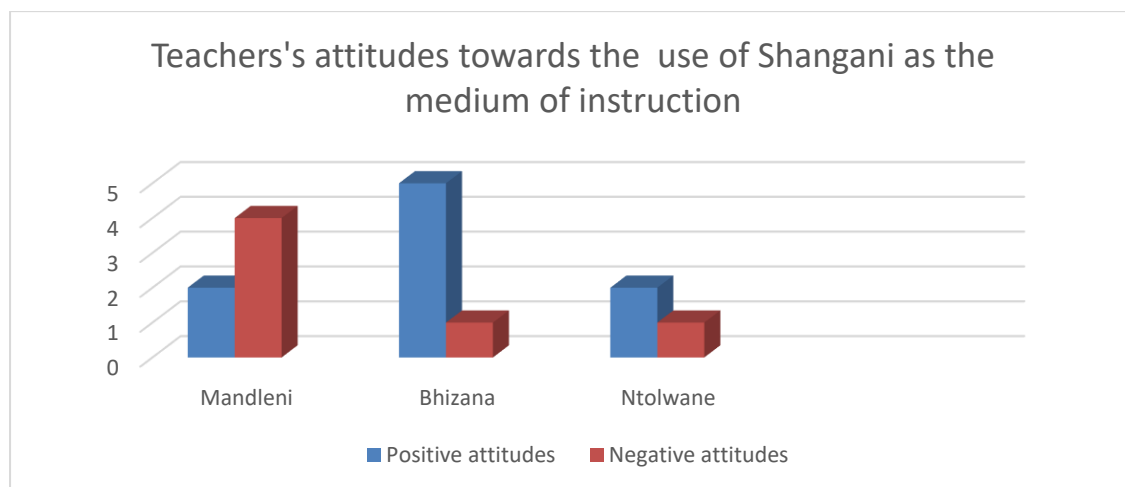


**Figure 8** above shows the attitudes of teachers towards the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. It reflects the general attitudes of teachers per each of the three schools under study**.**

The findings as revealed on Figure 8 above indicate that at Mandleni Primary School, four out of the six interviewed teachers had negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at the elementary level. Generally, teachers have negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as the MOI. The negative attitudes by some Shona teachers towards the use of Shangani as MOI were also evident in the lesson observations. Even when

the teacher was sure that he/she was not communicating anything to the learners, no effort was made to try and use the simplest Shangani word.

At Mandleni and Ntolwane schools some teachers had problems in controlling the pupils when they chose either to use English throughout or code switch to Shona. The Mandleni Grade 2 teacher (Teacher Tafadzwa) who was teaching a lesson on landforms and maps cited in chapter 6 seemed to be teaching just for the sake of it because she never bothered whether the pupils were paying attention or not. Teacher Tolerant actually reprimanded one student who gave his answer in Shangani and even commented that he should only speak Shangani in a Shangani lesson and not the Social Studies lesson. He said:

> *No Shangani in this lesson my friend. Maybe when it is Shangani time. Is that clear?*

What this particular teacher is saying is that, the learner should not use the Shangani Language in a Social Studies lesson but should rather use English- which the teacher was using in his lesson delivery. These findings show that some Shona teachers actually think English is 'the' language and indigenous languages like Shangani do not have a place in education. This means that the colonial mentality is still prevalent in stakeholders in the Zimbabwean education system, the mentality that English is superior to the local languages and should be the MOI in the teaching/learning enterprise. Maybe, that is why one of them in the focus group discussion stated that there was no need to teach using the Shangani language because the learners as well understood Shona. To quote Teacher Tolerant verbatim:

> *These pupils also understand Shona, so why bother ourselves using Shangani?*

The response above seems to assume that since the Shangani language speakers can also speak Shona by virtue of them interacting with the few Shona speaking classmates there is no need to teach them using their Shangani language but being able to use a language for functional communication does not mean that one can understand everything that comes via that language. What is embedded in these sentiments is that despite the fact that they are in their own territory, the Shangani pupils should learn through Shona because the also 'understand' it. This was said despite the fact that most pupils had Shangani names like *Tinyiko, Tsakani*, *Katekiso*, *Tsikani* and *Kesani* among many others. The fact that the pupils had Shangani names was clear evidence that they were Shangani and that it is probably the language they used at home.

However, the findings above show that these teachers do not consider all this but simply have negative attitudes towards the Shangani language and this has had a negative impact on their mastery of Shangani which they need to use in the teaching and learning process. The arguments above confirm Nhongo's (2013) observation that some indigenous languages suppress and dominate other indigenous languages, in addition to being suppressed by the English Language which has enjoyed a high status since the colonial period.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, Phillipson (1992) observes that the continued dominance of French in independent Mali as well as the advocacy for the Bambara language is perpetuating the destruction of the rest of the Malian indigenous languages. This implies that the effects of Linguistic Imperialism are more severe on minority languages as they are dominated by both the former colonial languages as well as the national languages and this is what is happening in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Speakers of the Shona Language (National Language) look down on Shangani (minority language) just as it used to happen in the colonial period and this has negatively impacted on Shangani teachers' willingness to implement the 2006 Education Amendment Act .

What this means is that the negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as the MOI starts right at policy level down to the grassroots (in the classroom). If almost everyone involved in the implementation of the so called mother tongue education policy has negative attitudes towards the use of Shangani as MOI, then it is obvious that the policy will not succeed under such circumstances. The arguments raised in the discussion above can be summed up in one statement: all of this is because of negative attitudes of all education stakeholders from central down to local level.

However, one may begin to ask why all these stakeholders have negative attitudes towards the use of local languages as mediums of instruction despite the presence of legislations that seem to be in support of the use of these languages in education. From my own point of view, this is a reflection of the colonisation of the African mind. I will discuss this in detail in the subsequent discussion.

### 7.2.2 Mental colonisation of stakeholders and a low regard of African languages as vehicles towards accessing education

In Chapter five I discussed in detail the fact that the majority of teachers at the three schools are not proficient in the Shangani language yet they teach at the elementary level where learners are only proficient in the Shangani language owing to their poor backgrounds. What one might ask is: Why in the first place are all teachers, regardless of their Shangani proficiency, should teach in Shangani? The answer can be that the policy makers do not regard Shangani as an important language. In other words, the teachers are experiencing the use of Shangani as MOI the way they do because the Zimbabwean government seems to be having a low regard of local languages in general and Shangani in particular.

This low regard of an African language, Shangani, by the policy makers has cascaded to the grassroots where I found out that even the teachers who teach Shangani speaking pupils have a low regard of the language and most of them prefer to use the English language, the former colonial master's language. This according to Ngugi (1981) is a reflection of the colonisation of the African mind which I feel is detrimental to the development and recognition of African languages. The issue of the colonisation of the minds of Zimbabwean education stakeholders has largely contributed to the challenges faced by teachers in implementing the policy because they are not seeing these indigenous languages as suitable for the access of education. To me, this is the reason why textbooks and examinations for the various subject areas are still in the English language.

The fact that the teachers and policy makers alike have not shown commitment towards the use of Shangani as MOI confirm Phillipson's (1992) argument that linguistic imperialism has had indelible effects on how African indigenous languages are viewed in this post-colonial era. That is why in the whole of Africa, African languages still suffer marginalisation and have not been recognised as official languages (Kamwangamulu, 2003; Prah, 2009; Kamwendo, 2010).The acceptance of English by the Zimbabwe education stakeholders seem to be agreeing with Crystal (2003) that English is a global language and its spread as a global language is inevitable. This is a very unfortunate development because African nations would continue to suffer oppression of former colonial languages despite the fact that they claim to be independent politically.

The other factor that makes me think that the elites in the Zimbabwean education fraternity are disregarding Shangani as a vehicle towards accessing education and that they are suffering from mental colonisation is that they are making non-Shangani speaking teachers teach the Shangani subject and use it as MOI yet they cannot read or speak the language. This obviously affects the way the policy is implemented because ultimately teachers would use the language that they are proficient in. As cited in Chapter 2, Thondlana (2002) was cited as saying that the implementation of mother tongue education policies particularly in the case of minority languages is more complicated because the few teachers who are proficient in the languages are not deployed in the relevant areas.

In addition to that, Stites (1999) says that the unavailability of minority language teachers and texts is the major explanation why bilingual education projects in the Zhuang area of China have been failing. What this means is that imposing Shona speaking teachers to teach the Shangani subject and use it as the medium of instruction is a subtle way of saying that Shangani should not be used but rather, other 'more important' languages should be used, hence linguistic hegemony. In other words, the Zimbabwean education stakeholders are intentionally suppressing the Shangani language because it is clear that the Shona speaking teachers would not be able to meaningfully teach the subject or use the Shangani Language as the MOI.

In Chapter six I discussed the challenges that teachers face in trying to read the Shangani textbooks for the Shangani subject. Shona teachers who are not even proficient in spoken Shangani are expected to teach the Shangani subject using textbooks written in South African Tsonga. This means that the colonial mentality may still be prevalent in Zimbabwean policymakers because they seem not to see Shangani as an important language to an extent that they ask non Shangani speaking teachers to teach the subject. In simpler terms, there is linguistic hegemony of both the English and Shona languages at the three schools because the Shona speaking teachers end up using either English or Shona when teaching Shangani speaking learners due to their incompetence in the Shangani language.This confirms one of Gramsci's (1971) famous quotes which says:

> *Every time that the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it means that a series of other problems are coming to the fore: the formation and enlargement of the governing class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relationships between the governing groups and the national-popular mass, in other words to recognize cultural hegemony.*

From my own point of view, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education does not want the Shangani Language to develop because the Shona speaking teachers whom they ask to teach the subject are not doing it. In other words, the Zimbabwean government is reluctant to promote the use of local languages because it still believes that these local languages cannot be vehicles through which educational knowledge can be imparted, just like it used to be during the colonial period.

As Benson (2004b) states, colonial thinking amongst people in most post-colonial states that indigenous languages are of lesser value compared to the European languages may be one of the contributing factors to the hesitance to implement MTE policies. This is the Zimbabwean situation and it is unfortunate that local minority languages continue to suffer marginalisation in post-colonial states while the English language continues to dominate in all meaningful communication transactions.

It is obvious that the stakeholders in the education fraternity still believe that the English Language is superior to all other languages and the indigenous languages should continue playing peripheral roles in serious matters like education. However, as I indicated in Chapter 4 of this thesis, some African academics like Mutasa (2006) and Prah (2009) do not condone the linguistic colonisation of indigenous African languages. They advocate for the linguistic decolonisation of African languages through using them in all major discourses. Researchers like Prah (2009) actually think that Linguistic decolonisation of African languages should begin by advocacy for the use of these indigenous African languages from primary to tertiary level.

However, this cannot happen if Africans still look down on their languages. Thus, there is need for what Ngugi (1981, 1993) calls the 'decolonisation of the African minds' so that every African begins to realise the full potential of African languages as vehicles through which educational knowledge can be imparted. Regrettably, Nkosi (2014) notes that, the greater part of African states are linguistically dependent on their former colonisers which implies that Africa is yet to conclude the linguistic decolonisation process. There is need therefore for African states to shake off this colonial mentality that the indigenous African languages cannot perform the same functions that the former colonisers' languages perform. As long as this has not happened, teachers at the three schools will continue to grapple with the use of Shangani as the MOI.

**7.2.3 Negative attitudes of Shangani parents towards their own language**

Another reason why teachers experience the use of Shangani as the MOI the way they do is that some parents have negative attitudes towards Shangani. They look down upon Shangani, their own language. As a result teachers find it difficult to implement the use of Shangani as the MOI, as discussed in chapter 5. As evidenced in chapters five and six, it is clear that some Shangani parents do not see the value of allowing teachers to use the Shangani MOI because they want their children to learn through the English Language which has economic benefits for their children. The fact that the government has not empowered the Shangani language and other indigenous languages economically makes some parents opt for the English language.

Therefore, the fact that English can help its users to access employment makes the Shangani people willingly accept its hegemony at the expense of their own language. This confirms Gramsci's (1971) linguistic hegemony theory which states that a super power itself induces eagerness and collaboration intuitively. Therefore, the dominance of a language over other languages is reinforced if the dominated groups reach a point where the major power subtly makes them to willingly accept that their language is inferior to that of the major power. Gramsci (1971) therefore maintains that "power is not only dependent on force but also on consent." The Shangani speaking parents have sadly accepted that their language is inferior and should not be used but the superior language, English, should continue with its hegemony on the indigenous African languages.

Studies have shown that it is very true that speakers of indigenous language look down upon their own languages opting for a foreign language which ironically most African pupils are not competent in. For example, studies carried by de Klerk (2002) and Nkosi (2011) revealed that where indigenous languages are mediums of instruction, some African parents and students' attitudes towards that practice were negative. This means that, some parents and pupils alike do not think that African languages can be vehicles through which educational knowledge can be accessed. In addition to these studies, as discussed in chapter 2, research among the Ibo in Nigeria indicates that, the attitudes of both pupils and their parents are greatly more favourable to English than to Ibo, despite the fact that educational failure is prevalent (Okonkwo, 1983 in Phillipson, 1992).

The negative attitudes of parents and pupils towards the Shangani language as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 are negatively affecting the implementation of the use of Shangani as MOI in the three schools and I can rightly finger Linguistic Imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) and

Linguistic Hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) for this kind of mentality. The process of implementing the Shangani as medium of instruction is therefore drawn back by parents who look down upon their own language (Shangani) thinking that English is 'the' language when it comes to educational transactions. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, Phillipson (1997:246) insists that "…we need a paradigm shift, a radical rethinking of language-in-education policies worldwide, and how educational 'aid' addresses them." Therefore, the recognition of indigenous languages should begin at government level for the parents and pupils to realise the potential embedded in their own languages.

### 7.2.4 The Hegemony of English on the Job Market and Higher Education

From the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussions it emerged that the policy on the teaching of Shangani and its use as the medium of instruction only applied to the primary school since at high school and tertiary levels the Shangani Language is not recognised. This obviously has an impact on the experiences of teachers teaching at primary school level. For example, in response to an interview question, teacher Tolerant stated that:

> *…there is no consistency between the policy and the job market because*
> *at employment level it is not Shangani, Shona or Ndebele but English.*
> *Even at high school Shangani is not taught.*

From Tolerant's point of view, the policy is not compatible with the job market and high school as it is not recognised at these levels. Teacher Tafadzwa had this to say:

> *There is no Shangani at secondary school. At tertiary level Shangani is*
> *not even required for enrolment, so they don't see the reason for*
> *Shangani at primary school (Teacher Tafadzwa).*

This, according to participants at the third focus group discussion at Ntolwane Primary School is a challenge because teachers use Shangani only up to Grade 3 level upon which teachers use English exclusively in preparation for the Grade 7 examinations. Teacher Tafadzwa stated that the use of Shangani to teach other subjects actually disadvantaged the learners when they get to the upper grades where English is the medium of instruction. To quote Tafadzwa verbatim:

> *I think while it is a good move, it disadvantages students.*

Asked how the use of Shangani disadvantages learners, the response was:

*We may use Shangani to teach them but the problem is that they will have problems when they get to the upper grades where English is used to teach. But I think teaching Shangani as a subject is a good idea because no language is more important than the other.*

Tafadzwa's response suggests that she supports the teaching of Shangani as a subject but has reservations on its use as the medium of instruction as she thinks its use at the lower grades disadvantages learners. This is so because the participating teachers in all the three schools confirmed that from Grade 4 upwards teachers use the English language to prepare learners for the Grade 7 examinations which come through the English medium. This is in contradiction with the 2006 Education Amendment Act which liberalises the use of indigenous languages up to Grade Seven level. This is how English has been made more superior to African indigenous languages that are spoken in Zimbabwe.

According to one participant in the focus group discussion at Bhizana Primary School, the continued dominance of English in the job market is an indication that government is not yet ready to upgrade its indigenous languages like what other countries like China and Japan have done. Takunda in the focus group discussion at Bhizana indicated that the fact that examinations still come through the English medium shows that the government's call for the use of indigenous minority languages like Shangani is not very genuine. What this means is that the way in which the Zimbabwean government is treating minority languages like Shangani contributes to the challenges that teachers face in trying to use it as MOI. Therefore, the speakers of minority languages like Shangani are made to believe and accept willingly that the English Language is the one suitable to be the MOI as it is the one used for examinations and a prerequisite for accessing employment. This confirms submissions of Gramsci's Hegemony theory (1971) that speakers of the marginalised are made to willingly accept their oppression. In the case of Shangani, the speakers of the Shangani language have been made to believe that their language cannot be used to access education beyond Grade 3 and is not even a requirement for accessing employment.

The linguistic hegemony of the English language was also evident in the three schools where some of the teachers use English and Shangani code-switching. Some scholars (for example Madiba and Mabiletja, 2008; Heugh, 2002 and Abidogun, 2012) have argued that code switching can be a meaningful strategy to teach in multilingual contexts. However, from my own analysis, teachers at the three schools use it not only as a strategy to cover up for their

incompetency in the Shangani language but also as a way of showing that teaching in Shangani is not worthy because of the English hegemony in the job market. They are confirming the hegemonic position of the English language whose seeds were sown during the colonial period when the imperialists made the African people believe that their languages were incapable and could not help them access white collar jobs (Awoniyi, 1982).

Having discussed the reasons why teachers experience the use of Shangani the way they do, it is meaningful to talk about a model which will see the local languages being upgraded to languages of instruction in schools for the benefit of the learners.

## 7.3 TOWARDS A MODEL FOR SUCCESSFUL MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

**Figure 9**



- Policy Implementation (use of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction up to Grade 7 level)

identification of minority languages in particular regions

- materials development

standardisation of the languages

in service training for teachers

identification of primary teachers' colleges in particular regions to train teachers in the languages

- Teaching one indigenous language alongside a language of wider communication from Grade 1-7
- Introduction of a National language/minority language spoken in the particular region at Grade 4

- Training of teachers to teach via indigenous languages that are in particular regions

The model above highlights critical issues that need to be addressed if a Mother Tongue Education policy is to succeed. The government should identify all the minority languages and then work towards their standardisation. Materials should then be developed so that the content comes in the mother tongue up to Grade Three level. This should be done to ensure that learners understand content in their mother tongue whilst they are learning English language as a subject. At Grade 4 level teachers can gradually introduce the English MOI depending on the learners' proficiency in it. Just like the 2006 Zimbabwean Education Amendment Act states, the use of the mother tongue can be tolerated up to Grade 7 level.

Teacher training colleges in particular regions should be tasked to train teachers in the languages that are found in their regions. If I am to take an example from findings of this study,

it would mean that the three colleges in Masvingo Province will have to train teachers in Shangani in addition to the Shona teachers that they have been training. This would be done to cater for areas in which Shangani is spoken. Likewise, colleges in Matabeleland Province would train teachers in languages like Nambya, Kalanga, Venda and Tonga because these are the languages spoken in the province. The colleges should also be given the task to conduct in-service training workshops to make teachers already in the system compatible with the language policy.

I should be quick to emphasize the point that a teacher who is supposed to teach in Shangani should be a native Shangani speaker or those who have developed competency in the language. This means that on teacher recruitments at teachers' colleges, preference should be given to native speakers of the particular languages they are supposed to train in. This would enhance the pupils' mastery of concepts. For example, learners who are taught by English first language teachers become very fluent in English.

In a research carried out by Luk (2001) on the *Native English Teacher Scheme* in Hong Kong, it was established that the students at the two secondary schools that she studied indicated that they viewed the English speaking teachers as a valued commodity. This was mainly because their linguistic capital enhanced the students' mastery of the language. This also needs to apply in the case of Shangani. That means a Shona speaking teacher should teach in Shona, where there are children who speak Shona, because if we are to talk of mother tongue instruction, every learner should be afforded an opportunity to learn in the mother tongue. In doing this, Shangani speaking pupils would be accorded their right to learn through their mother tongue. This is because from a human rights perspective, it is the right of minority language speakers, just like their majority language counterparts, to learn through a language they understand better (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1994). That means teacher recruitments should be done carefully.

Of critical importance on this model is that learners at the elementary level should be taught two languages only, that is, their mother tongue and a language of wider communication. This is very critical because according to the findings of this research, learners at the three schools are learning three languages from Grade One. These are: English, Shona and Shangani. From the Shangani participating teachers' point of view this confused these young learners. For example, Teacher Nyasha actually showed emotion as he complained why it was the minority language speakers only who were forced to learn three languages yet the speakers of national

languages (Shona and Ndebele) only learnt two languages, that is English and Shona/Ndebele. Therefore, this model is addressing that problem, where the introduction of another indigenous language should only be done at Grade Four level after the learners have achieved facility in their own languages. Therefore, what this model is proposing is that, even speakers of national languages should learn at least one other indigenous language that is spoken in their own region. This would ensure that all languages are treated equally and all citizens would accept that they live in a multilingual country.

## 7.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the reasons for Shangani teachers to experience the use of Shangani as the MOI the way they do in the three Zimbabwean schools. Four themes have been identified as the major reasons for teachers' actions. For example, it has been noted from the discussion in this chapter that the teachers at the three schools experience the use of Shangani as the MOI the way they do largely because the education stakeholders from the central to the local level have negative attitudes towards the use of minority languages like Shangani in education. The negative attitude by MOPSE on the use of Shangani as MOI has manifested itself by lack of political will to recognise Shangani as a language with the potential to be used as the MOI. The negative attitudes by some parents was said to be caused by the fact that Shangani is irrelevant in the job market and it is not even offered at high school. This is the reason for teachers to use English and Shangani code-switching. The Linguistic Imperialism and Linguistic Hegemony theories were useful lenses that helped me to illuminate the reasons for teachers to experience the use of Shangani the way they do. The next and final chapter focuses on conclusions and implication of this study.

# CHAPTER 8

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

The thesis was a report of the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in three primary schools in Chiredzi District of Zimbabwe. This report made a thorough examination of what teachers go through in their daily teaching transactions of Shangani speaking children. The thesis interrogated the teachers' experiences in teaching in a predominantly Shangani community, 'using' Shangani as the MOI and teaching the Shangani subject in the face of linguistic imperialism and the continued hegemony of the English language.

My intention in this chapter is to make a reflection of the research process as well as the findings of this study. I will first of all highlight how the thesis answered the research questions as stated in chapter one. I will then discuss the significance and contribution of this study to the existing body of knowledge. I will then conclude by giving the implications of the findings to mother tongue policy implementation and suggestions for further research.

## 8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research hinged on the major research question: What are the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction from three selected Chiredzi District Schools? I will give a summary of findings and show how the findings answered this research question. In the process of summarising findings for this major question, the other two questions will also be summarised. The other two questions are: 2. How are teachers affected by the experiences of teaching through the Shangani medium in three selected Chiredzi District Schools? 3. Why do teachers experience the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in Chiredzi District Schools the way they do?

### 8.2.1 Challenges facing Shona speaking teachers in the implementation of Shangani as medium of instruction

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of teachers teaching at the three schools are Shona speaking and they are facing a myriad of challenges as they teach Shangani speaking pupils at the elementary level. The study found that all the Shona participating teachers lacked

proficiency in the Shangani language. This made it difficult for them to meaningfully communicate with their learners through the Shangani language. This factor made some Shona teachers say that given a choice they would opt to teach in a Shona speaking school because they found it difficult to communicate with Shangani learners at the elementary level.

To make their situation even more difficult, when they tried to communicate with the learners through the Shangani Language, they are laughed at by the pupils and this resulted in humiliation. In all the three schools, I established that most of the Shona participating teachers were reluctant to use the Shangani Language to deliver lessons with a few code-switching to Shangani. Even those who code-switched to Shangani did so with a lot of caution due to fear of making mistakes. Thus, the research revealed that Shona teachers no longer have the confidence to speak the Shangani language resulting in them showing low confidence levels when delivering lessons in Shangani. This showed that these teachers had serious challenges in trying to use the Shangani language as the medium of instruction.

The research also established that the lack of proficiency in the Shangani Language by Shona speaking teachers has forced them to learn the Shangani language from the same pupils they teach. The teachers said that they are forced by the situation to learn the language because the pupils they teach cannot speak any other language besides Shangani. So one of the strategies that they have employed to try and learn the language is that of learning the language from the learners themselves. Thus, I concluded that the Shona speaking teachers are at the mercy of their learners because instead of them teaching the learners through the Shangani medium, it is the learners who are now teaching the teachers how to communicate.

To a larger extent, the participants indicated that lack of proficiency by the Shona teachers is impeding the implementation of the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction. The results therefore show that Shona speaking teachers are experiencing some difficulties in a situation in which they are expected to teach through a language that they can neither speak nor read. This therefore tells that Shona teachers should teach in the medium of Shona, in Shona schools, while Shangani teachers should teach Shangani speaking learners in Shangani, in Shangani speaking schools. However, this is all the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to ensure that teacher recruitment is looked at in such a way that it advantages the learner.

**8.2.2 Shortage of teaching resources and lack of a standardised Shangani orthography**

Another issue that emerged from this study is that teachers are trying to implement the use of Shangani as the MOI in a background of a serious shortage of resources. It emerged that, the textbooks for all the curriculum areas are in English. As a result, teachers have to engage in a time-consuming exercise of translating content from English to Shangani and then back to English again because pupils' exercises and tests are in English. These findings confirmed the hegemony of English in most post-colonial states.

In addition to the above, the teachers are expected to teach the Shangani subject which has textbooks and teachers' guides but unfortunately, the language in the textbooks is not Zimbabwean Shangani Language but South African Tsonga. This is because research findings revealed that the Zimbabwean Shangani Language does not have a standardised orthography as yet. The teachers said they do not have a Shangani dictionary. Both the Shangani and Shona speaking teachers indicated that it was a mammoth task to read and understand the language in the textbooks as some Tsonga terms in the textbooks are different from those that are used in the Zimbabwean teachers. For Shona speaking teachers it is actually a nightmare to be asked to teach the Shangani subject because most of them are still learning the language and to make matters worse, what they learn through self-tutoring or from their pupils is different from what they find in the textbooks.

The challenges above show that Shona speaking teachers (who make up the majority in the three schools) are enduring teaching using the Shangani Language instead of enjoying the known benefits of MTE. The resulting effect of these challenges is that for most Shona speaking teachers, the use of Shangani as the MOI is largely a word of mouth, which obviously has a negative effect on the Shangani speaking pupils who desperately need instruction in their mother tongue for better mastery of concepts. The findings revealed that the main reason why these teachers are experiencing these difficulties on the use of Shangani as the MOI is that the policy makers in general and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) in particular have not shown the zeal to implement the policy.

**8.2.3 The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's lack of commitment to the language policy**

The lack of commitment towards the use of the Shangani 'minority' language was raised at all the three schools and the participants felt that this has had a negative effect on the experiences.

It emerged from the findings that MOPSE had not taken the initiative to train teachers on how to implement the use of Shangani as MOI. This made the teachers feel that MOPSE was paying lip-service towards the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in schools because it never made an attempt to staff-develop teachers on how to implement the policy. As a result of that, there was no particular way in which the policy was implemented by teachers even at the same school.

Some teachers largely used English and only code-switched to Shangani when they wanted to clarify concepts, others used Shangani throughout the lesson and then later on translated everything to English before giving learners a written exercise, yet others claimed that they could not speak a single Shangani word so they either chose to use English throughout when delivering lessons or even code-switch to Shona (the teacher's L1). However, this caused serious communication problems in the classrooms as the teachers used two unfamiliar languages to deliver lessons (Shona and English).

The research findings pointed to the fact that, MOPSE lacked commitment towards the implementation of the policy because it never made serious follow-ups to check on whether or not the teachers were using the Shangani language as the medium of instruction. Some teachers were even aware that the policy was not mandatory after all, so they felt that they should not be blamed if they did not use the Shangani language in teaching because the owners of the policy themselves had shown lack of seriousness in its implementation. This means that if MOPSE did not make a follow-up on the implementation of the policy, it may be possible that they are not even aware of the challenges that the teachers are facing in teaching Shangani speaking pupils.

However, the fact that MOPSE is not making a follow-up on the policy does not imply that the Shangani speaking pupils no longer need instruction in their mother tongue. The findings revealed that when these pupils enter school at Grade one, they know just one language, that is, Shangani. The teachers indicated that, despite the fact that MOPSE is not forcing them to use the Shangani language, the situation does. They are forced to learn and use the language that the pupils speak, at least to make communication possible. Thus, some have engaged in self-tutoring and others, like I mentioned earlier, have decided to learn the language from their pupils. This shows that these teachers are in a serious dilemma of teaching in a predominantly Shangani community, yet the government seems not to be aware of their plight.

Research findings also revealed that MOPSE has shown no commitment towards the

implementation of the policy because they have not changed their deployment system to ensure that as many Shangani speaking teachers as possible are posted to predominantly Shangani communities. However, findings revealed that the teachers' L1 is not part of the criteria used by MOPSE in teacher posting. This has caused some teachers at the three schools to opt for a transfer as they feel that they are not doing justice to these learners by teaching them in languages that they have not gained proficiency in, that is, English and Shona. In fact, the participating teachers indicated that the policy on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction is not yet functional as the policymakers are yet to show their commitment towards the implementation of the policy which they could do by addressing the issues above.

## 8.2.4 Higher Education's lack of commitment to the language policy

Lack of commitment by the ministry responsible for human capacity development in Zimbabwe was also raised by the participating teachers as the cause for the problems they are facing in using Shangani as the medium of instruction and teaching it as a subject. It emerged from the findings that so far, no teacher training college in Zimbabwe is training teachers who can teach through the Shangani medium. The graduates from the university which is training teachers in the so called minority languages are not deployed in the Shangani speaking schools and most of them seek greener pastures in and outside Zimbabwe. This makes the situation in the Shangani speaking schools remain dire as they do not even have resource teachers to assist those that are not yet proficient in the Shangani language when need arises.

The participating teachers showed concern on why the three teachers' colleges in the province have not yet started training teachers who can teach Shangani and even inviting those already in the service for in-service training programmes. The findings showed that, the fact that there is no link between the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and that of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development may be indicative that the policymakers are just paying lip-service that they have upgraded the Shangani language and other minority languages in Zimbabwe to official language status. This is because they are not instructing the two ministries to work together in training teachers (new and those already in the service) on how to implement the policy. This has led to serious problems to teachers teaching at the three schools as some of them have to hop from one class to the other seeking assistance from colleagues on what to say when they fail to explain some concepts in Shangani.

The findings above is an indicator that the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at the three schools is still a challenge, ten years after the promulgation of the 2006 Education

Amendment Act which seems to support and recognise minority languages as possible mediums of instruction. The teachers are facing these challenges because there is no collaboration between MOPSE and teacher training institutions and according to the participants, this shows that government was not serious after all when it pronounced in the 2013 Constitution that they have upgraded all the minority languages to become official languages. This is because, they cannot be regarded official if they do not have standardised orthographies and if no training institution is training teachers in those languages. This, however, is the pathetic scenario in which the teachers at the three schools are operating.

### 8.2.5 The advantages of being proficient in Shangani

It emerged from the findings that the few Shangani speaking teachers teaching at the elementary level in the three schools are enjoying the benefits of mother tongue education. It emerged from the findings that when they use the Shangani language, there is effective communication between the teachers and the learners. I discovered it myself during lesson observations that learners participated highly when their teachers confidently used the Shangani language during lesson delivery.

From the teachers' point of view, the use of Shangani as the MOI would see their pass rates improve because lessons were delivered in a language familiar to the learner. It then meant that learners taught by Shangani speaking teachers had what I have termed 'academic mileage' in this thesis as compared to their counterparts who struggled to meaningfully communicate with their learners due to lack of proficiency in the learners' L1, Shangani.

Therefore, the few classes that are taught by Shangani speaking teachers are likely to perform better in later grades as they had a good foundation at the elementary level as compared to their counterparts taught by the Shona speaking teachers who lack proficiency in the Shangani language. This therefore means that the MOPSE's lack of commitment on the implementation of the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI has had a ripple effect on both the teachers and learners as both are failing to meaningfully communicate in the learning and teaching transactions. For Shangani speaking teachers, it is a worthwhile endeavour to teach these young elementary level learners as they deliver concepts in a language familiar to the learner.

However, research findings revealed that the Shangani speaking teachers have their fair share of challenges. It emerged that some school administrators have a negative attitude towards the Shangani language to an extent that they can discourage teachers from using the Shangani

Language as the MOI. It therefore means that instead of upholding the policy, these supposed custodians of the policy are actually going against it. Apparently, the school administrators who are discouraging teachers from using Shangani are Shona speaking. This confirmed that these administrators are still looking down upon minority languages and their speakers to an extent that they disregard government policy that these languages could be used as mediums of instruction.

These findings confirmed Phillipson's Linguistic Imperialism Theory and Gramsci's Linguistic Hegemony Theory that English language is still dominating indigenous languages in post-colonial states and globally because these administrators discouraged teachers from using the local languages, subtly implying that they should use the English language or even Shona the national language. This shows that the colonial legacy still prevails in the Zimbabwean Language situation but of course, this is to the disadvantage of these poor Shangani language speakers who have little or no access to the English Language by virtue of their poor and rural backgrounds.

The negative attitudes by the school administrators and some teachers was therefore seen by both the Shangani and Shona speaking as derailing the implementation of an otherwise noble policy.

### 8.2.6 Parents' attitudes towards the use of Shangani as the Medium of Instruction

Parents' attitudes contributed to the teachers' experiences in using Shangani as the medium of instruction. It emerged from the findings that the parents of children learning at the three schools had mixed attitudes towards the use of Shangani as MOI. Some parents supported the idea of using Shangani as the MOI whilst others were against it. This led to mixed experiences on the part of the teachers. For those parents who had positive attitudes towards the use of Shangani in education, it became a challenge to Shona speaking teachers who used the Shangani Language minimally owing to their lack of proficiency in the language. The parents openly told teachers that that they should use Shangani and not Shona in teaching their children. This affected these teachers negatively as they felt that the parents were being unfair in forcing them to use the language yet MOPSE had not trained them.

The positive attitudes by parents gave the Shangani speaking teachers the energy to continue using the Shangani language as the MOI. They could safely use the Shangani language as the MOI because they knew they had the backing of the user community. However, research

findings revealed that some parents were against the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction because they did not see the reason why their children should learn the Shangani subject and through the Shangani language when there is no Shangani at high school.

The other reason cited was that parents knew that Shangani and other indigenous languages were irrelevant in the job market so they opted for the English medium which would guarantee employment for their children. What this means is that, the fact that the Zimbabwean government has not empowered the indigenous languages to become requirements for higher education and employment is forcing some parents to discourage teachers from following policy, but rather to use the English language which would guarantee better jobs for their children. The teachers are now therefore in a dilemma: Policy wants them to use Shangani as MOI yet the user community is rejecting it. It is willingly accepting the dominance of English over their own language because the government has not attached any incentives towards these indigenous African languages. Therefore, this is largely affecting the implementation of the policy on the use of Shangani as the MOI.

Overall, the thesis paints a very gloomy picture of the experiences of the teachers at the three schools under study. The pupils they teach are Shangani and cannot speak the English language when they enter school due to their lack of exposure to it owing to their poor backgrounds. The system demands that they learn through the language they speak at home up until such a time they have achieved competence in the second language; yet most of their teachers are not proficient in the Shangani language. As a result both the learners and teachers at the three schools are suffering due to this situation because teachers are grappling with delivering concepts in a language that they are learning from the pupils and the pupils are struggling with the mastery of concepts that are coming in unfamiliar languages, English and Shona.

## 8.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge in several ways. The major contribution of this study is that it has illuminated into the experiences of teachers in using a minority language, Shangani, as the MOI as a way of establishing the general picture of language policy pronouncements and implementation in the Zimbabwean context. It has unearthed that policy pronouncements in Zimbabwe can expect teachers to do the impossible, that is, expecting teachers to teach a language that they cannot speak. Knowing this might then help policy makers review their policies in a way that would improve both the experiences of

teachers and learners in the learning enterprise. The more we know the experiences of teachers in implementing a mother tongue education policy, the better placed we are to come up with intervention strategies to mitigate the challenges faced.

The study is also significant in that the interpretivist paradigm employed made it possible for me as the researcher to understand how the participants interpreted reality. As such, it illuminated how the hegemony of English subtly interfered with language policy making and implementation in Zimbabwe. The study therefore contributes insights on how the minority languages continue to suffer oppression from the majority indigenous languages and the English Language. This can then make the policy-makers review their policy decisions so as to level the playing field in recognition of the fact that the minority language speakers also need instruction in their own mother tongues.

Another area of significance that this study addressed is that it established that the minority language speakers continue to suffer in silence because very few of them have been able to manoeuvre their way in academic circles. As such, they continue to look down on themselves and their language instead of airing out their views through research. I, as a researcher, established that the Shangani speaking teachers in the three schools took my research as a way of venting out the anger that they had bottled for many years without getting the platform to air out their views. They feely shared their experiences on how their language was marginalised and how they were looked down upon by their Shona speaking administrators and colleagues. They did this with the full knowledge that I, as the researcher was also Shona speaking. Therefore, this means that research is a powerful tool in addressing challenges that minority language speakers are facing in schools.

The study also illuminates how power dynamics in institutions of learning contribute to success or failure of MTE policies. The school administrators were found to be undermining policy implementation by discouraging teachers from using the Shangani Language as the MOI due to their own attitudes towards the minority language speakers. This then means that policy makers would be aware of such situations and find ways of addressing those challenges. In the same vein, the research has unearthed that it is not always the government to blame if language policies are not implemented but that there are other elements in the hierarchy of education who can go against policy. Serious tracking of where the policy fails therefore becomes indispensable.

## 8.4. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The use of the Theory of Linguistic Imperialism and the Linguistic Hegemony Theory was very useful in illuminating the realities of language policy implementation in a minority language context. These theories helped to explain why minority languages continue to suffer many years after independence from colonial masters. The study therefore managed to establish why the government of Zimbabwe seems to be reluctant in making mandatory pronouncements on the use of indigenous languages and this largely helped in understanding the experiences of teachers in using the minority language as the medium of instruction.

The fact that Shangani is a minority language, and that there are very few studies that have looked into the experiences of teachers in using it as the medium of instruction can make the study face criticism especially from those that do not see the need of educating minority children using the minority languages. The criticism is likely to be even greater if policy makers realise that I, as the researcher, am not even Shangani speaking. However, I consider this to be the greatest strength of this study, as it reflects an unbiased report of the experiences of teachers teaching Shangani speaking pupils.

The other strength of this study is that, in addition to unearthing the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the MOI, it also allowed participants to suggest the solutions to their challenges. This is very significant in policy implementation in that, it shows that in policy implementation, the views of those at the grassroots may provide useful insights on how the challenges they face can be minimised instead of suggesting solutions that may be irrelevant to them. This means that, the policy-makers can improve the implementation of the policy through consultations with the shop-floor managers who have first-hand experiences on what needs to be done to ensure the successful implementation of the policy.

The major limitation of this study is that it looked at the experiences of teachers in using Shangani as the MOI from Grade one up to Grade three leaving out the Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes which are now part of the school system in Zimbabwe. This means that I, as the researcher, just adopted what the policy says about languages that from Grade one onwards, locally spoken languages may be used as mediums of instruction, without considering the ECD classes which were introduced in schools after the promulgation of the policy. However, the thesis indirectly addressed the ECD classes by mentioning that when children initially enter school, they will be aware of the Shangani language only. Entry in the school

system can either be at ECD level or at Grade 1 depending on the circumstances of the child. The underlining factor that strengthens this study is that the majority of children who learn at the three schools lack exposure in the English and Shona languages so they deserve to be taught in their Shangani language.

## 8.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR MTE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

I have given the implications of this study on MTE policy implementation as I discussed the findings of this study. What I am giving now are the major highlights:

- The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development should immediately start training teachers in the minority languages. Since there is at least a teachers' college in each province, there is need to start by instructing one teachers' college to start enrolling teachers who can teach Shangani and other minority languages immediately so that  the plight of the minority children to learn through a language they understand can be addressed.

- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) should make a stock take of all the minority language teachers deployed all over the country and request them to volunteer teaching in schools where their languages are spoken. These could become resource teachers in the schools which can alleviate the challenges that Shona speaking teachers are currently facing on the use of Shangani.

- There should be collaboration between the education system and the communities in the development of the Shangani orthography. This can make the process of standardisation easy as the community members have the rich cultural heritage which can contribute meaningfully in the standardisation process.

- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development need to collaborate in the in-servicing of teachers teaching in minority language communities so that they are made aware of the requirements in using these languages in education.

- Specialist teachers should be posted at all the schools where Shangani is taught as a subject for them to teach the subject instead of asking teachers to teach a subject whose language they cannot speak or read.

- All the minority languages should now be offered at secondary school so that speakers of minority languages can have the option of writing their own languages at Ordinary Level rather than revert to the national languages when they get to secondary school. This could also improve the confidence of minority language speakers in their own languages if the government makes these languages examinable subjects at Ordinary Level.

- Government should start showing seriousness on the use of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction by reviewing the policy statements to make them mandatory. Soon after that, government should engage in serious awareness campaigns to educate all the stakeholders on the need to use the African indigenous languages in education. In a way, this could help minimise school heads' attitudes towards the Shangani language and all the other indigenous languages.

- Researchers who speak the national languages should corroborate efforts by the few minority language speakers in academia to strengthen their arguments for the recognition of their languages. Few as they are, it may be difficult for them to be heard in their quest to make their languages recognised mediums of instruction but with the support from the larger society this can be achievable.

- There is an urgent need to avail resources that support the use of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction in Zimbabwean schools. In the same vein, there is need for MOPSE to remove the compulsion of examining students through the English Language especially at the elementary level because the continual use of the English language will impede on the implementation of the MTE policy.

- To address the problem of negative attitudes towards the use of indigenous languages in education, the government should make it compulsory that if one is to access employment, he/she should, in addition to English and Mathematics, have passed at least an indigenous language on their 'O' Level certificate. This can make all stakeholders gradually accept the potential that lies in the indigenous African languages.

I should hasten to indicate that MTE policy implementation has always posed challenges. However, this should not be used as an alibi for not considering the rights of minority language children to learn through their mother tongues. In addition to these suggestions, the government should make consultations with the relevant stakeholders and work out practicable solutions to the challenges unearthed by this thesis. Consultations with countries

with success stories in MTE policy implementation could also be meaningful.

## 8.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Several issues that emanated from this thesis could be useful in opening new avenues for research. The study was an in-depth analysis of the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction at only three schools in Chiredzi District, yet it could be more fascinating to look into the experiences of teachers teaching in more schools in the district. Future research could look into this.

The Shangani language is not the only minority language spoken in Zimbabwe. Future research could also look into the experiences of teachers teaching in other minority languages. They could be facing similar or different challenges hence the need to establish their experiences as well. If research is done in many minority languages, that may compel policy-makers to quickly make adjustments to their policies for the good of the minority language children.

Further research could also look into the feasibility of making non-proficient teachers teach a minority language subject. The strategies used by teachers and their effectiveness in teaching the language could be interesting areas of research.

## 8.7 CONCLUSION

This section is the last conclusion of the thesis. I would highlight what was discussed in each chapter. Chapter one gave the background to the study, where I discussed the rationale and motivation of the research. Chapter 2 addressed the review of literature, where I discussed relevant local, international and global literature. Chapter three discussed the methodology of the study. In chapter 4 I discussed the theoretical framework of the research. Chapters 5 and 6 were data presentation sections, and Chapter 7 is a thesis chapter, with in-depth analysis. Lastly, Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter.

The thesis has endeavoured to unearth the experiences of teachers on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in three selected Chiredzi District schools in Zimbabwe. The way in which the interpretive paradigm was combined with the case study research design facilitated in unearthing how those at the shop floor are experiencing the use of Shangani as the MOI. Largely, the thesis unearthed the lamentations of those at the shop floor in their quest to impart educational knowledge through a language that is accessible to the learners. Their lamentations are reflective of the nature of the language situation in Zimbabwe and possibly other African

states.

The chosen theories, that is, Phillipson's Linguistic Imperialism Theory as well as Gramsci's Hegemony Theory were useful lenses through which the situation at the three school, where in the process of suppressing minority language speakers, teachers face challenges due to their incompetence in the language. It is my hope that the plight of these minority language children and their teachers would be addressed soon, at least to give the learners a strong foundation in education for them to excel and then get a chance to speak for themselves.

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Zimbabwe Education Act, 1987.

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## Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

12 February 2015

Mrs Admire Mhindu (214581948)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Mhindu,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1603/014D
Project title: Teachers' experiences on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in three selected Chiredzi District Schools in Zimbabwe

**Full Approval – Expedited Approval**

With regards to your response received on 16 December 2014 to our letter of 05 December 2014. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and FULL APPROVAL for the protocol has been granted.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.................................................................................
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr ZP Nkosi
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Ms Bong' Bhengu / Tyzor Khumalo

**Appendix 2: Approval Letter From The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education**

ZIMBABWE

**Reference:** C/426/3 Masvingo
Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
Harare
**ZIMBABWE**

2 December 2014

Mhindu Admire
University of Kwazulu-Natal
Education, College of Humanities
Edgewood Campus
**SOUTH AFRICA**

**RE:  PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE:
CHIREDZI DISTRICT: JEKERO; MWENJE AND MACHOKA PRIMARY
SCHOOLS**

Reference is made to your application to carry out a research in the above mentioned schools in Masvingo Province on the research title:

**"THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS USING SHANGANI AS THE MEDIUM OF
INSTRUCTION AT THREE SELECTED SCHOOL IN CHIREDZI DISTRICT IN
ZIMBABWE"**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Masvingo, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research.

You are required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education by December 2015.

L. Mkwala
**Acting Director**: Policy Planning, Research and Development
For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**
cc:    PED – Masvingo Province

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PLANNING

02 DEC 2004

P.O. BOX CY 121 CAUSEWAY
ZIMBABWE

**Appendix 3: MOPSE Informed Consent Letter**



Education, College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Edgewood Campus,

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
Harare
Zimbabwe
Dear Sir/Madam

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH**

I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa.

I would like to request your permission to conduct my research in your schools entitled "**The Experiences of Teachers using Shangani as the medium of instruction at three selected schools in Chiredzi District in Zimbabwe".**

Your positive response to this request will be highly appreciated

Yours Faithfully

 Mhindu Admire

Email: admhindu@gmail.com

Cell No. 0773549442

Supervisor Details:     Zinhle Primrose Nkosi. Email: Nkosiz@ukzn.ac.za   (Tel):+27 (0)31 260 3691

**Appendix 4: Letter of Informed Consent for School Heads**



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Education, College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Edgewood Campus,

Dear School Head

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH**

My name is Admire Mhindu. I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa.

I would like to request your permission to conduct my research in your school entitled "**The Experiences of Teachers using Shangani as the medium of instruction at three selected schools in Chiredzi District in Zimbabwe".**

The aim of the study is to explore how teachers are experiencing using the Shangani language as medium of instruction. To gather the information, I will first observe Grade 7 teachers delivering lessons. From the observations, I will be conducting a one on one interview session with selected teachers. The interview is scheduled for twenty minutes per teacher. I will then ask the three teachers to participate in a focus group session which will be scheduled for 1 hour.

Please note that:

- A fictitious name will be used instead of a real school name.
- Participants' confidentiality is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- Any information given by participants cannot be used against them, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- They have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. They will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at exploring the teachers' experiences of using Shangani as the medium of instruction.

- Their involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved. Your positive response to this request will be highly appreciated

    Yours Sincerely

    Mhindu A.

I can be contacted at:

Email: admhindu@gmail.com

Cell: +263 (0) 773549442

My supervisor is Dr. Zinhle Primrose Nkosi who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of

the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details:Nkosiz@ukzn.ac.za

(Tel):+27(0)31 260 3691

You may also contact the Research Office through:

    P. Mohun

    HSSREC Research Office,

    Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

**I…………………………………………………………………… (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.**

**I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.**

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT  ............................. DATE.........................................**

**APPENDIX 5: Letter of informed consent for participants**



Education, College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Edgewood Campus,

Dear Participant

**INFORMED CONSENT LETTER**

My name is Admire Mhindu, I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa. I am conducting a study entitled "**The Experiences of teachers using Shangani as the language of instruction at three selected schools in Chiredzi District in Zimbabwe".**

The aim of the study is to explore how teachers are experiencing using the Shangani language as medium of instruction. To gather the information, I will first observe teachers teaching in Shangani. From the observations, I will be conducting a twenty minute one on one interview session with selected teachers. After this, all the teachers would be requested to participate in a focus group session which will be scheduled for 1 hour.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.

- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at exploring the teachers' experiences of using Shangani as the medium of instruction.
- Your involvement is solely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

|  | Willing | Not willing |
|---|---|---|
| Voice Recorder |  |  |
| Video Recorder |  |  |

I can be contacted at:

Email: admhindu@gmail.com

Cell: +263-(0) 773 459 442

My supervisor is Dr. Zinhle Primrose Nkosi who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details:Nkosiz@ukzn.ac.za

(Tel) :+27(0)31 260 3691

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..................................................................... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT**                                    **DATE**

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**APPENDIX 6: Letter of informed consent for parents**



Education, College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Edgewood Campus,

Dear Parent

**INFORMED CONSENT LETTER**

My name is Admire Mhindu, I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa. I intend to carry out a research entitled 'The Experiences of teachers using Shangani as the medium of instruction at three selected schools in Chiredzi District in Zimbabwe.'

I would like permission to observe teachers of your children teaching. The aim of the study is to explore how teachers experience using Shangani as the medium of instruction and how they are affected by those experiences. To gather the information, I will observe teachers teaching through the Shangani medium. I will video record the proceedings in the lesson and your child may also be captured in the process.

Please note that:

- Your child's confidentiality is guaranteed as his/her inputs will not be attributed to him/her in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- Your child has a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research.  She/he will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at exploring the teachers' experiences of using Shangani as the medium of instruction.
- Your child's involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

- If your child is willing to be in the lesson during observation please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

|  | Yes | NO |
|---|---|---|
| Video Recorder |  |  |

I can be contacted at:

Email: admhindu@gmail.com

Cell: +263 (0) 773 549 442

My supervisor is Dr. Zinhle Primrose Nkosi  who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood  Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: msibi@ukzn.ac.za

(Tel) 0312603686 (Cell)072 422 7261

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

**I……………………………………………………………………… (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.**

**I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.**

**SIGNATURE OF PARENT                                        DATE**

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# APPENDIX 7: Research Instruments

## Appendix 7.1: Interview Schedule for Teachers

**Teachers' experiences on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in three selected Chiredzi District Schools in Zimbabwe.**

1. What are your feelings about the call for the use of Shangani as the language of instruction at your school?...................................................................................................................................
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2. What is your home language?  If it is not Shangani, how eloquent are you in the Shangani language?...................................................................................................................................
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3. What are your perceptions on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction?...............................................................................................................................
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4. How do you feel when delivering your lesson in Shangani in your Grade 1/2/3 class?
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5. (a) Do you have adequate support on the use of Shangani as the language of learning and teaching?...................................................................................................................................
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   (b)Elaborate…………………………………………………………………………………………………
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6. (a) Have you got resources to teach your lessons in Shangani?

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(b)Explain……………………………………………………………………………………………

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7. (a) Does this affect your perception towards the call for the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction?

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(b)Explain……………………………………………………………………………………………

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8. How do your students react when you use Shangani as the Language of instruction?

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9. What is your comment on their reaction?

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10. Explain what you think are the parents' perceptions on the Language Policy that promotes the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction?

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11. What are learners' attitudes towards the use of Shangani as medium of instruction?................................................................................................................................................................................

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12. Do their attitudes affect you?

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How?...............................................................................................................................................................

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13. What do you suggest is the best way to ensure the implementation of the policy?

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14. In your opinion, what factors influence the implementation of the language policy?

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15. Do you think there is any relationship between your experiences and the factors that influence the implementation of the policy?

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Elaborate your answer.

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## APPENDIX 7.2: Focus Group Interview Schedule for Teachers

**Teachers' experiences on the use of Shangani as the medium of instruction in three selected Chiredzi District Schools in Zimbabwe.**

1. What are your views on government allowing you to use Shangani as medium of instruction?.......................................................................................................................................
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2. Are you finding it easy or difficult to teach through the Shangani medium?.......................................................................................................................................
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   Elaborate………………………………………………………………………………………
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3. What are the factors that influence the use Shangani as the medium of instruction and how does this affect you?.......................................................................................................................................
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4. In your opinion, what factors influence the implementation of the language policy?.......................................................................................................................................
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# APPENDIX 7.3: Observation Schedule

**Grade:**

**Date and Time:**

**Teacher:**

**Focus of observation**

**Resources:**

**Classroom Plan:**

**Lesson Structure:**

**Classroom Interaction- Language used as medium of instruction**

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**General Comments**……………………………………………………………………………………………………..
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**Availability of resources**

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**Level of learner participation during lesson delivery**

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**General comments**

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