

**LANGUAGE MATTERS IN A RURAL  
COMMERCIAL FARM COMMUNITY:  
EXPLORING LANGUAGE USE AND  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LANGUAGE-IN-  
EDUCATION POLICY**

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

at the

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

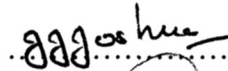
January 2007

Supervisor: Professor R Sookrajh

## DECLARATION

*I hereby declare that this thesis entitled **Language Matters in a Rural Commercial Farm Community: Exploring Language Use and Implementation of the Language-in-Education Policy** submitted by me for the Doctor of Education degree at the University of the Kwazulu-Natal is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty; and that all sources that I have consulted or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.*

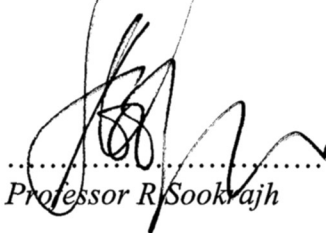
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.....

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*Date*

.....

*Professor R Sookrajh*

4/12/07.....

*Date*

*Supervisor*

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to

**Amiel Myron and Judith Janelle**

My Children

*May the generations that follow persevere in their quest for professional and academic  
excellence.*

*In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.*

*Prov.3: 6*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In a project of this nature, there are always many people who have contributed directly or indirectly to its successful completion. To all these people, many of whom are not mentioned here, I owe a debt of gratitude, and may God in His own special and unique way reward them.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ANC	African National Congress
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
DACST	Department of Art, Culture, Science and Technology
DEC	Department of Education and Culture
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EPC	Education Policy Consortium
GDDPLG	Gauteng Department of Development Planning and Local Government
HoA	House of Assembly
HoD	House of Delegates
HoR	House of Representatives
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ILO	United Nations International Labour organization
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
LANGTAG	Language Plan Task Group
LiEP	Language-in-Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
MCRE	Ministerial Committee on Rural Education
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MEd	Master of Education degree
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NFTE	National Framework for Teacher Education
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMTs	School Management Teams
SSA	Statistics South Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## ABSTRACT

The release of the Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) in July 1997 marked a fundamental and almost radical break from the state-driven language policy of the apartheid government, to one that recognizes cultural diversity as a national asset, the development and promotion of eleven official languages and gave individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (DoE, 1997: 2-3). The LiEP aimed at providing a framework to enable schools to formulate appropriate school language policies that align with the intentions of the new policy, namely, to maintain home language(s) while providing access to the effective acquisition of additional language(s) and to promote multilingualism.

This research explores language use and implementation of the LiEP in a rural commercial farm community. The study is guided by three research questions, namely:

- 1. What is the language use and preference of a selected rural commercial farm community?*
- 2. How do teachers on rural commercial farm schools respond to the LiEP and its implementation?*
- 3. What are the implications of the language preference and use of a selected rural commercial farm community and teachers' responses to the LiEP and its implementation for language practice at rural commercial farm schools?*

After reviewing literature on rurality and language policy implementation in South Africa, the study articulated a broader contextual framework which is titled *Rurality as a sense of place*. This perspective captures the uniqueness of the context and facilitates a deep understanding of how rurality as a sense of place influences language preference and use. A further theoretical framework, namely the combined models of Stern (1983) and Sookrajh (1999), facilitate an understanding of rural community language preference and the implications for practice in the school environment.

To achieve the aims of the study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data. A language preference and use survey questionnaire was conducted with respondents comprising parents, teachers and learners. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers and principals and school governing body chairpersons.

The findings were inter-related at the policy, community and school levels. The study identified patterns and problems of language use at different levels. At a community level, it focused on language profiles of parents teachers and learners; language use in private and public situations; attitudes towards public language policy and language choices in the language of teaching and learning as well as the use of mother-tongue and additional languages as subjects. At the school level, it focused on teacher and principals' beliefs and understandings of the LiEP and implementation challenges being faced.

The study found that while most respondents come from multilingual backgrounds, the use of African languages is confined to "home and hearth." English and to a diminished extent, Afrikaans is still widely used in public interactions. At school level, there has been no significant change to school language policy developments. The subtractive model of language teaching where mother-tongue is used in the early grades and an abrupt transfer to English as the language of learning and teaching from grade four onwards continues to exist in three of the four schools. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that English is not widely used in the rural community and learners have no exposure to quality English language interactions.

This study recommends a market-oriented approach to promoting African languages which effectively involves all stakeholders participating in concert to implement the multilingual policy. Since English remains the dominant language in South Africa and is viewed as the language of opportunity, the language of international communication, the language of economic power, and the language of science and technology, schools should promote education that uses learners' home languages for learning, while at the same time providing access to quality English language teaching and learning.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY: AT THE GATE OF BABEL<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1 Introduction

The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996)<sup>2</sup> aimed at promoting the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedoms. Arising from this were numerous policies that sought to action the goals of freedom of speech and opportunities to participate freely in society. The leadership of the ruling party, namely, the African National Congress (ANC)<sup>3</sup>, took on the task to develop national unity and to bring about political reconciliation. Political objectives in turn gave rise to educational priorities and the provisions of the language clauses of the Constitution led to the adoption of a national Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP henceforth)<sup>4</sup> on the 14 July 1997 (Braam, 2004: 8). This saw a fundamental and radical departure from the state-driven language policy of the apartheid government to a policy that recognised cultural diversity as a national asset; developed and promoted all eleven official languages and which gave individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) (DoE, 1997a: 2-3).<sup>5</sup> At the time of this study (2006), the implementation of this policy was in its ninth year.

The LiEP aimed at providing a framework to enable schools to formulate appropriate school language policies that align with the intentions of the new policy, namely, to

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<sup>1</sup> The choice of the chapter titles were derived from the ancient biblical reference to the Tower of Babel. "Babel" is composed of two words, "baa" meaning "gate" and "el," "god." When put together they mean the gate of god. A related word in Hebrew, "balal" means "confusion." In his article, The Tower of Babel and the confusion of languages, Dolphin (undated) (<http://www.lldolphin.org/babel.html>) states that the Big Bang of language diversity was to have happened at Babel where one language of the Eden community was broken up into 70 languages which confused the people. In the context of language diversity in South Africa, the Tower of Babel is actually considered to be the Power of Babel where multilingualism is valued and this thesis argues for its promotion.

<sup>2</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) was approved by the Constitutional Court on 4 December 1996 and took effect on 4 February 1997. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. No other law or government action can supersede the provisions of the Constitution. South Africa's Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world and enjoys high acclaim internationally. See <http://www.policy.org.za/govdocs/constitution/saconst20.html>

<sup>3</sup> The African National Congress (ANC) is a social-democratic political party, and has been South Africa's governing party supported by a tripartite alliance between itself, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) since the establishment of the majority rule in May 1994.

<sup>4</sup> LiEP is the first post-apartheid language policy for public schools which uses the Constitution as a point of departure. LiEP endorses multilingualism, the building of a non-racial nation, an additive approach to bilingualism in education, and gives individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching at school. The policy aims to promote and develop all eleven official languages and to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages.

<sup>5</sup> DoE refers to the national Department of Education.

maintain home language/s while providing access to the effective acquisition of additional language/s and to promote multilingualism.

This research was designed to use a survey as a main source of data collection to determine the language use and preference of a rural commercial farm community. In addition, interviews and questionnaires were developed to examine teacher beliefs and understandings relating to the implementation of the LiEP in rural commercial farm schools.

## 1.2 Rationale

I was drawn to this study for four main reasons: my personal experience and interest in issues concerning language; my professional responsibility; the lack of research into language policy implementation and development in the context of a rural community and policy implications for the choice of language/s as LoLT. These reasons are discussed below.

First, *my personal experience and interest* in issues concerning language came to the fore in 1994, when as a classroom practitioner and head of department in an ex-House of Delegates<sup>6</sup> school, I was suddenly faced with a group of Grade 3 learners whose home language was isiZulu<sup>7</sup> and for whom English was an additional language. The language of teaching and learning at the school was English. In the absence of official policies and guidance on how to manage this phenomenon and being the head of department, I was obliged to give guidance to teachers on how to mediate learning and teaching with the isiZulu-speaking learners in our charge. This prompted me to read extensively around language learning and teaching issues and culminated in an M.Ed. study (Joshua, 1995) which provided guidelines to teachers on assisting learners for

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6 The House of Delegates was a political party in the tricameral system which represented the Indian community in parliament and was responsible for all sectors of the Indian community which included education.

7 In respect of the proportional distribution of dominant home languages across all provinces, isiZulu (91.1%) is concentrated in KwaZulu- Natal. (See Van der Merwe & Van Niekerk, 1994: 10.)

whom English was an additional language.<sup>8</sup> The current study is a natural follow-up on language implementation in the presence of the progressive LiEP.

Second, *my professional responsibility as a policy-maker* requires of me to monitor and support the implementation of educational policies in public schools. In this context, I have found myself responding to the statement by President Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address in 2004: ***“the policies we required...are firmly in place. The task we will all face during the next decade ahead will be to ensure vigorous implementation of these policies...”***<sup>9</sup>

Third, in respect of the *context*, while there have been studies on rural education in general<sup>10</sup>, there are no known studies focusing specifically on *language policy implementation in rural commercial farm schools*. Therefore, this study will provide useful insights into language preference and policy implementation in a rural commercial farm community.

Fourth, with respect to *policy*, my reading of the literature on the language policy, especially the work of Perry (2003)<sup>11</sup>, inspired me to embark on this study as the issues he raises resonate with my concerns regarding the implementation of language policy in South Africa, namely, elite closure, linguicism, corporeal, language shift and economic efficiency. These concerns are discussed below.

The writings on language policy all acknowledge that language policy is a highly charged political issue, a source of tension and disagreement and an attempt by the state to exercise control (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; May 2001; Pennycook, 2002). Language policies at local, national and international level therefore frequently operate as a means of social exclusion. The validity of this assertion is supported by the intention of linguistic ***“elite closure”*** (Myers-Scotton, 1990). Linguistic elite closure,

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<sup>8</sup> The aim of this study was to formulate scientifically sound guidelines according to which class teachers could plan and implement language programmes for learners for whom English was an additional language. In order to formulate such guidelines, various language programmes were evaluated and on the basis of these findings guidelines were suggested. See Joshua (1995) for further information on the study.

<sup>9</sup> From the State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, 6 February 2004.

<sup>10</sup> See HSRC & EPC (2005) *Emerging Voices: A Report on Education in South African Rural communities* and Department of Education (2005) *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education* for information on education in rural communities.

<sup>11</sup> See Perry (2003) for more information on elite closure, linguicism, corporeal, language shift and economic efficiency.

developed by authors such as Alexandre (1972) and Prah (1995), describes a system whereby language policy is used to perpetuate the privileged status of an elite class by enshrining a minority language as official language of the state. Wherever proficiency in this minority official language serves as the favourable condition for success, the few who speak that language as a first language will naturally have an advantage over the many whom speak it as a second or third language (Perry, 2003: 7).

Another concern is *linguicism*. According to Perry (2003: 12), linguicism like elite closure includes a structural-economic aspect. However, unlike elite closure, linguicism applies to lower-level social inter-group and interpersonal interactions. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000: 30) describes linguicism as "... practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language."

The language policy also affects the local, the immediate, the personal and the *corporeal*. Language and language policies have known to provoke violence as evidenced by the Soweto uprising<sup>12</sup> where a language policy was found unacceptable to the masses and yet of such necessity to the authorities, that the two sides clashed in a sustained period of lethal violence (Herbstein, 1979; Heugh, 1987).

The notion of *language shift* frequently occurs by way of hegemony where speakers of "small", politically less powerful languages choose to learn an additional "big", powerful language to gain greater personal, economic or political advantage.

The relationship between language and economy is no mystery. Language policy can help to achieve greater *economic efficiency* or it can mire down economic development. In a globalised context, many different languages serve as media for trade and industry. Perry (2003: 16) is of the view that an organisation or business with a multilingual workforce will be more efficient and more profitable than its

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12 On 16 June 1976, more than 10 000 school children took to the streets of Soweto (a poor South African township close to Johannesburg) to protest educational apartheid. As they were making their way and singing peacefully for a planned rally at a stadium, a white policeman threw a teargas canister without warning, and thereafter the rest of the riot police squad fired their automatic weapons on the students, killing at least four people. This ignited what is known as the Soweto Uprising, the bloodiest episode of riots between protestors and police since the early sixties. By the end of 1977, the violence had resulted in more than a thousand people dying and many more injured. See Kistner, M. (undated) The Soweto Massacre. <http://www.ccds.charlotte.nc.us/History/Africa/04/kistner/kistner.htm>

monolingual competitors. Furthermore, on a national scale, a multilingual workforce would result in large gains for national economies.

As the above practices prevailed in the apartheid education system, they all provide strong justification for studying the implementation of language policy in a post-apartheid context. Furthermore, this study will add to the existing body of knowledge that outlines problems relating to policy implementation.

The foregoing has provided the rationale for the study, namely, my personal interest in issues around language; my professional responsibility; the lack of research into language policy implementation and development in the context of a rural commercial farm community and policy implications for the choice of language/s as LoLT. It is against this background that the research problem is discussed and the research aims and questions have been derived.

### **1.3 The research problem**

In contextualising the research problem, I argue that in the presence of progressive legislative and policy frameworks, discriminatory practices such as those outlined in the rationale above continue to persist, thereby posing major challenges to language preferences and practices in South Africa. In this section, the research problem and its context will be discussed, prefaced by an overview of linguistic human rights and language policy developments post-1994 that promote the value of human dignity and human rights and the issues that challenge their implementation.

#### **1.3.1 Linguistic human rights and language policy developments post-1994**

The legislative and policy frameworks that promote the linguistic rights of all South Africans are discussed below and set the scene for a critical discourse of the hurdles in their implementation.

### **1.3.1.1 Defining linguistic human rights**

Linguistic human rights are aimed at the promotion of linguistic justice and the removal or prevention of linguistic inequalities or injustices that may occur because of language (Philipson et al., 1994: 1). The benefits gained from the implementation of these rights include the right to individual and collective identity. As Philipson et al. (1994: 7) explain it, this is the right to be different, the right to identify with one's mother-tongue, to learn it and to have education through it and to use it. Linguistic rights also include the right of an individual to learn other languages including the official languages that are used in a particular area so that the individual can participate in the social, political and economic processes of a given geopolitical entity. These rights have also been defined to include "major languages of global communication" which can enable people to "access power and information sharing in the twenty first century" and to "bridge the gap between the rich and the poor countries" (Hurst & Lansdell, 1999: 3).

Linguistic rights also enable a person to access information and knowledge, particularly basic scientific and technical knowledge (Philipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1994: 344). In short, as formulated by UNESCO<sup>13</sup>, linguistic rights are important for an individual's "development", which has been defined as the process of "increasing and enhancing human capabilities, affording people access not only to material benefits ... but to such intangible benefits as knowledge and to play a full part in the life of the community" (Wolff, 2000b: 7). The progressive nature of the legislative and policy frameworks in the democratic South Africa have created space for the practice of linguistic human rights and these will be discussed below.

### **1.3.1.2 Legislation and policy within a democracy**

In this section the language provisions in the South African Constitution, the goals articulated by the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG), the provisions of National Education Policy Act (1996) (NEPA), the South African Schools Act (1996) (SASA), the LiEP (1997) and the National Curriculum Statement (Grades R-9) (2001) are discussed as enabling frameworks for the implementation of linguistic human rights in a South African context.

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<sup>13</sup> See UNESCO (1953)

The post-apartheid South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996)<sup>14</sup> which is the supreme law of the country embraces language as a basic human right and multilingualism as a national resource –moving away from its “language-as-a problem” orientation (Chick cited in Hornberger, 1998). In doing so, the Constitution has elevated the nine major African languages spoken in South Africa (isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Xitsonga and Tshivenda) to an official status alongside English and Afrikaans.

The Constitution makes provision for the promotion of multilingualism by stating that all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably (clause 6.4) and that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where education in that language is reasonably practicable (clause 29(2)). The Constitution is based on the Bill of Rights, which lays the foundation for the development of democratic values and as such forms the basis for the language legislation and a policy framework to be derived (Braam, 2004: 8).

Section 9 of the Bill of Rights, contained in Chapter Two of the Constitution, promotes the equality of all South African citizens. Neither the state nor any individual may “unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly” against anyone on the basis of “race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth”. Section 30 states that everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice provided they do not violate the rights of others. Section 31 recognises and advocates “Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community – (a) to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language.” Section 32 gives everyone the right to access information held by the state in the official language of choice (cited in Hornberger, 1998: 443-444).

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<sup>14</sup> See Constitution of the Republic South Africa (1996) Languages. Chapter 2 <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/constitution/saconst20html>

The official language policy, which is entrenched in the Constitution, clearly recognises and elevates the eleven designated languages in South Africa regarding their educational use and their use within home and public environments.

Designating a language “official” or declaring it a “language of record” gives it the kind of status that makes it more desirable as a subject and medium of instruction<sup>15</sup> than another language not so designated (NEPI, 1992b: 34). Despite the intention stated in the new language policy, no practical guidance is provided on how the eleven official languages are to be implemented as the medium of instruction and English, therefore, continues to maintain its status above the other ten official languages.

After the successful election of a democratic government, the Language Task Group (LANGTAG) was established in 1995 to advise government on a National Language Plan for South Africa. In essence, the plan had to counter the social engineering of the apartheid and colonial language policies and address the growing tendency towards unilingualism in a multilingual South Africa and lack of tolerance toward language diversity. The National Language Plan was to ensure that (DACST, 1996: 7):

- *All South Africans have access to all spheres of South African society by developing and maintaining a level of spoken and written language which is appropriate for a range of contexts in the official language(s) of their choice*
- *All South Africans have access to the learning of languages other than their mother-tongue*
- *The African Languages, which have been disadvantaged by the linguistic policies of the past, be developed and maintained*
- *Equitable and widespread language services be established.*

The above stated goals were to inform the Language-in-Education Policy and other education policies.

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<sup>15</sup> The medium of instruction (MoI) is currently referred to as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT).



The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996a)<sup>16</sup> authorises the national Minister of Education to determine national education policy in accordance with certain principles and in consultation with bodies established especially for the purpose of consultation. Two of the directive principles as related to language are:

- *The right of every learner to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable (clause 4 (v))*
- *The right of every person to use the language and participate in the cultural life of his or her choice within an education institution (clause 4 (viii)).*

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996b)<sup>17</sup> states that the governing body of a school should determine the language policy of a school and programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages subject to the National Education Policy Act, the Constitution and any applicable provincial law. No form of racial discrimination may be practised in implementing the determined policy. The policy marks a deliberate shift away from apartheid-era prescriptions regarding languages of learning and teaching, and languages as subjects. For the first time African languages may be used as the LoLT and the right to choose the language of teaching and learning rests with the parents – albeit only where it is practicable to use an African language as the LoLT. English and Afrikaans in the context of the language policy, therefore, no longer have the most favoured status. It is clearly the intention of the policy to promote education that uses learners' home languages for learning, while at the same time providing access to other languages taught as subjects.

The Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) for schools, the first post-apartheid language policy for public schools, was adopted in 1997 in terms of Section 3(4)(m) of the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996a) which authorises the national Minister of Education to determine language in education and in terms of section 6(1) of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996b) which authorises the national Minister of Education to determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools. The Language-in-

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16 National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) (NEPA) in Policy Handbook for Educators (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003. Edited by Chris Brunton and Associates).

17 The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) (SASA) in Policy Handbook for Educators (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003). Edited by Chris Brunton and Associates. SASA aims to redress past injustices in educational provision and provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners. SASA thus lays a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advances the democratic transformation of society, combats racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contributes to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protects and advances our diverse cultures and languages, upholds the rights of all learners, parents and educators and promotes their responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa.

Education Policy (DoE, 1997a) “should be seen as part of an ongoing process by which policy for education is being developed as part of a national plan” (DoE, 1997a: 1). One of its aims is to pursue a language policy supportive of conceptual growth amongst learners by establishing “additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education” (DoE, 1997a: 2). In brief, the LiEP endorses multilingualism, the building of a non-racial nation, an additive approach to language in education, and gives individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), formerly medium of instruction, at their school if it is practicable for the school to accommodate the choice of LoLT. The policy aims to promote the use of learners’ home language and at the same time to provide access to other languages.

The National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2001) follows an additive approach to the promotion of multilingualism and states explicitly that learners' home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible.

The foregoing presents a well-intentioned legal basis to promote the linguistic rights of all South Africans. However, the road to achieving such progressive ideals, particularly at school level, is fraught with major hurdles. Heugh (2000: 3) argues that the “discriminatory policy of the former apartheid government continues to be practised in schools” and examines how certain reasons are given by government to deflect attention from implementing a language policy that is based on mother-tongue education as advocated in the policy and legal frameworks discussed in section 1.3.1 above. October (2002: 42-78) affirms that the inactivity of government, evidenced in its failure to support and drive the formulation and implementation of a school language policy, is one of the reasons for high school-failure and drop-out rates, which in turn, hinders the potential of school-goers to contribute to the economic, social and political upliftment of our society. This is an educational dilemma that is worsened by the fact that many were “duped into believing that to be educated was to be able to speak English or Afrikaans” (Samuel, 1998: 576) and that their home languages are barriers to educational advancement (Samuel, 1995: 78; Pandor, 1995: 60) and hence social mobility and economic prosperity. In the next section, I elaborate on two key issues raised by Heugh and October, namely, the impact of the political climate on the

dominance of English in post-apartheid South Africa and the Language-in-Education Policy.

### 1.3.2 The power of English in the post-apartheid era

In spite of the government's multilingual policy, between 1994-1995 English was chosen by the government as the lingua franca and thus became the only language of government (Perry, 2003: 7-9). In effect, it remains a language of power. In *Planning Language, Planning Inequality*, Tollefson (1991: 2) notes that:

*Language is built into the economic and social structure of society so deeply that its fundamental importance seems only natural. For this reason, language policies are often seen as expressions of natural, common sense assumptions about language in society.*

However, Tollefson (1991) seeks to oppose this notion by using historical and contemporary examples to demonstrate that language policies are in fact mostly consciously designed strategies by government to promote the interests of specific classes and social groups. In responding to this, Alexander (2005: 2) notes that it is not true that language policies simply develop "naturally" as it were; but that they are developed and manipulated within definite limits to suit the interests of different groups of people. Alexander further asserts that whether or not governments acknowledge it, languages are always planned in that legislation prescribes, often in great detail, where one or more languages are to be used and this has significant consequences in critical domains such as education.

In pursuing this argument, Tollefson (1991: 10) notes that:

*The policy of requiring everyone to learn one language is widely seen as a common-sense solution to the communication problems of multilingual societies. The assumption that learning the dominant language will solve economic and social inequality is an example of an ideology.*

In South Africa, this ideology took root in the colonial period and was nurtured by the governments of the past century so that their position of power and privilege was maintained.<sup>18</sup>

In respect of the hegemony of English and its position of strength by virtue of its extensive use in areas such as government, media, education and official services, Kamwangamalu (2001) has noted that the high status of English is being maintained via the media where 50% of the programmes aired on SABC<sup>19</sup> are imported from the United States and United Kingdom. English is viewed as the language of opportunity, the language of international communications, the language of economic power and the language of science and technology (Epstein, 1999: 5). Vesely (2000: 9), in her study of the impact of English on isiXhosa, speaking learners adds that:

*The prominence of English worldwide has had a substantial impact on its status in South Africa. The processes of colonisation inherently placed a higher value on European languages, a status that modern globalisation continues to enhance. In every society, the value placed on the lingua franca is intimately connected.*

However, although English is undoubtedly the most esteemed and favoured language, only 9% of the population in South Africa use it as a home language (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The perceived high status of English has resulted in divisive language attitudes and has marginalised groups who speak languages other than English. According to Braam (2004: 8), this comprises one of the major challenges facing the implementation of multilingualism in schools.

### **1.3.3 The LiEP and other educational priorities**

The impact of post-apartheid policies on education practice has been widely documented. In reviewing the introduction of educational policies to schools in post-apartheid South Africa, Braam (2004: 8-9) notes that although many programmes in education received priority, such as the phasing in and reviewing of Curriculum

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<sup>18</sup> See Alexander (1989), Heugh (2000) and Perry (2003).

<sup>19</sup> South African Broadcasting Corporation is a national body responsible for the airing of radio and television of programmes.

2005<sup>20</sup>, the training of teachers in outcomes-based education (OBE)<sup>21</sup> approaches, and other policies relating to school governance. However, language policy developments, although crucial to teaching and learning at schools, did not receive the same kind of systematic intervention as the former areas. This effectively means that school language policies did not receive the necessary attention during the period of educational transformation. Furthermore, the key outcome of effecting positive educational change was not likely to be achieved because “curriculum reform needed to be accompanied by a language policy making provision for the curriculum content to be mediated meaningfully” (Braam, 2004: 8). Braam further points out that because the political leadership did not consider the language policy a priority, the education ministry and subsequent education departments at provincial and regional levels failed to formulate and initiate implementation strategies for promoting the concept of additive multilingualism at school level. School language policies thus undermined the LiEP framework “as political leadership remained silent about their significance at a critical stage in improving the quality of teaching and learning” (Braam, 2004: 8-9).

#### **1.3.4 Summary**

This section, in tracing the legislative and policy frameworks that espouse the ideal of multilingualism, has argued that discriminatory practices are still operational in schools and has conceded that inertia on the part of key role players to spearhead an aggressive plan of action to implement the government’s multilingual policy and the hegemony of English perpetuates old practices. It is within this context that this research was undertaken to investigate the language preferences of rural communities; the teachers’ understandings and beliefs of the LiEP and the implications for practice in four rural commercial farm schools located in a rural community.

#### **1.4 Research aims**

The overall aim of this thesis is:

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20 South Africa’s flagship curriculum that marked the change from content-based, Christian National Education to a curriculum advancing skills, knowledge and values in a democracy.

21 Outcomes-based education is an educational approach to teaching and learning that the South African system adopted in 1998. Learning Outcomes drive the process of teaching and learning.

To investigate language preference and use of a rural commercial farm community and teachers' beliefs and understandings of the LiEP to establish the implications of these for language practice in rural commercial farm schools.

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine teachers', parents' and learners' language use and preference in private situations; public situations; work situations; school situations; public language policy; and the extent of multilingualism. This will be done by conducting a focused language survey.
- To determine teachers' beliefs and understandings of the LiEP and their own school language policies. This will be done by semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.
- To determine the implications of the community's language preference and teachers' beliefs and understandings of the LiEP for the language practice in rural commercial farm schools.

## **1.5 The research question**

Despite the progressive rhetoric on language policy, as articulated in the Constitution and in LiEP, school communities are still facing the dilemma of language provisioning for speakers of different languages. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and management teams face the challenge of formulating an appropriate school language policy.<sup>22</sup> It is against this backdrop that the research questions for this study are asked, namely,

- What is the language preference and use of a selected rural commercial farm community?
- How do teachers on rural commercial farm schools respond to the LiEP and its implementation?

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<sup>22</sup> See Braam, D (2004)

- What are the implications of the language preference and use of a selected rural commercial farm community and teachers' responses to the LiEP and its implementation for language practice at rural commercial farm schools?

This research explores language preference and practice in a rural community and uses data derived from a language preference survey; questionnaires and interviews with teachers, learners, principals and parents. The research questions investigate the language preference of teachers, learners and parents and the implications of this on language practice in schools. Language preference results from particular attitudes to language and Fishman's (1989: 251) description in this regard is appropriate. He states that:

*Languages are not liked or disliked in a vacuum but rather liked or disliked as symbolic of peoples' perceptions of values, of ideologies of behaviour.*

Braam (2004: 6) argues that determining these preferences is integral to the overall policy realisation process. He is of the opinion that this entails first, raising language awareness at the school so that teachers, parents and learners engage reflectively about the role of language in education; second, making informed choices in terms of language provision and third, advocating the acceptance of all languages as vital learning resources.

## **1.6 Contextual framework for this study**

This study seeks to examine and explore a rural farm community's language preference and use; and teachers' beliefs and understandings of the LiEP and the implications of these for the schools' language policy and practice in rural commercial farm schools within the context of the official LiEP. It uses the construct of *rurality as a sense of place* articulated by Gallagher (1993), Gruenewald (2003) and Herzog and Pittman (2003) inter alia.<sup>23</sup> This framework is directed towards constructing an understanding of the relationship between educational policy and practice in rural farm schools. This framework is premised on the notion that rural schools face challenges

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<sup>23</sup> See Chapter Two of this dissertation for other writers in the field of rurality.

and possess strengths that are poorly understood, under-researched and different from their urban counterparts and in expecting educational reform to proceed rationally, the peculiarities and power of local context must be fully understood (Budge, 2004: 3). In extending the notion of context (lived spaces), Lefebvre (1991: 132) in discussing the as yet concealed relation between space and language, notes that every language is located in a space and every communication or interaction takes place within a particular space. This study will investigate language use and preference within a rural space. Arising from this contextual framework this study makes three assumptions, namely:

***Assumption One:** The language preference and use of the rural farm community tends towards African languages more than English and Afrikaans at Entabeni, Nottinghill and Kindersorg; while at Wesdorp language use and preference tends towards Afrikaans and English.*

***Assumption Two:** Teachers may not be able to align their own beliefs with the intentions of the LiEP (hegemony of English versus multilingualism).*

***Assumption Three:** The language preference of a rural commercial farm community does not resonate with the school language policies (pre-1994 language policies are still in existence).*

This study will explore these assumptions using data from the four sites against the requirements for the LiEP in South Africa, which are explained in Chapter Four of this thesis in response to the critical questions being asked.

## **1.7 Key concepts in the study**

In this section, the two terms “rural” and “farm schools” arise from the context, are included in the title of the study, and therefore require a discussion.



### 1.7.1 Defining “rural”

The definition of “rural” in South African literature varies from one author to another depending on the context of the particular period. This study identifies various definitions of the term to get a broad view of the concept. Moore (1984: 6) states that we do not need to investigate the tautologies of the dictionary to realise that the term “rural” has a wide variety of implicit and overlapping references. He asserts that the term relates to one or more of the following set of differences: “ecology or landscape; size and density of human population; patterns of economic activity especially where rural is equated with agriculture and characteristic patterns of human interaction” (Moore, 1984: 6). Definitions of “rural” tend to emphasise a particular feature of rurality: settlement of demographic patterns; spatial or environmental characteristics; political or economic factors; and socio-cultural or historical factors. In South Africa, colonialism and apartheid left an indelible print on all aspects of rural life through land dispossession, resettlement policies, and systemic exclusion from opportunities to improve personal and social well-being that made poverty the most endemic characteristic of rural areas (DoE, 2005: 8<sup>24</sup>; Wegerif, Russel & Grundling, 2005: 27-28).

The Gauteng Department of Development Planning and Local Government (GDDPLG) (1997: 4) indicates that most of the rural areas of Gauteng are characterised by small populations, lack of organisation, lack of access to resources, poorly developed infrastructure, and relatively long distances between the area and other areas, resulting in relative isolation and long travelling times.

Spatial definitions, the usual preserve of statisticians, often ignore differences embedded in specific milieus:

*Such definitions also focus on space, not people, and thereby overlook the obvious truism that it is people, not places that have problems, and that different people in the same area may have different problems. Even if the issue was space, rural cannot be seen as one single space, but rather as a multiplicity of social spaces that overlap the same geographical area,*

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<sup>24</sup> Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (DoE, 2005)

*with each social space having its own logic, its own institutions, as well as its network of actors (Odora Hoppers cited in DoE, 2005: 8).*

Odora Hoppers theorises “rurality” as a set of cultural and practical preferences, and then explores the place of education within those preferences. By doing this, she emphasises diversity among rural people, communities and economies and highlights the complexity and value of the rural sector.

For the purpose of this study, the definition of “rural” as used by Statistics South Africa (SSA) (2001) is preferred. This is a spatial definition which identifies Traditional Authority Areas<sup>25</sup> which are primarily “community owned” areas of South Africa and formal rural areas which are primarily commercial farms in erstwhile “white” areas of South Africa. An understanding of “farm schools” is presented in the next section.

## **1.7.2 Farm schools in South Africa**

A historical overview of education on rural commercial farms provides a vivid description of the location of this study and serves to heighten awareness of the how rurality and a sense of place challenge the implementation of policies.

### **1.7.2.1 A dual management system for schools on private land**

According to the Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (MCRE) (2005)<sup>26</sup>, since the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953<sup>27</sup>, which defined the status of public schools on private land, education delivery to schools on white owned farms has been bound in complex and contentious ways with agricultural production. Farm schools which were partly subsidised by the government and located

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25 Traditional Authorities are African tribal chiefs who own land in rural areas.

26 The Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (MCRE) convened in 2003 by the Education Minister, Professor Kader Asmal, was tasked to conduct an investigation into rural education in South Africa and produce a report containing practical recommendations to assist the Department of Education (DoE) to develop an integrated multi-faceted plan of action for improving the quality of rural schooling. The report of the MCRE was released by the DoE in May 2005.

27 Established a Black Education Department in the Department of Native Affairs which would compile a curriculum that suited the “nature and requirements of the black people”. The author of the legislation, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd (then Minister of Native affairs, later Prime Minister) stated that its aim was to prevent Africans receiving an education that would lead them to aspire to positions they wouldn’t be allowed to hold in society. Instead Africans were to serve their own people in the homelands or to work in labouring jobs under whites. Cited in Apartheid Legislation in South Africa. <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/blsalaws.htm>. See Christie, P (1986) The right to learn. Cape Town:Galvin and Sales (Pty) Ltd.

on commercial farms were classified “state-aided” schools because property owners subsidised schooling through the provision of buildings and some facilities and services although the Bantu Education Department<sup>28</sup> was directly responsible for these schools. Despite this, farmers controlled many aspects of school management and governance. As property owners, they had the power to open and close schools and decide which learners should be allowed to attend the school and what grade levels the school could offer<sup>29</sup>. They also had the final say on the selection of teachers. Children from neighbouring farms could attend with the permission of the farm owner on whose land the school was located. Where provision was sparse, children had to walk long distances to school. Under a contract with the government, the farm owner received a 50% subsidy for building the school and maintaining services at the school. Despite increases to subsidies to property owners, by 1994 farm schools still remained in a parlous state.

By 1994, provision of education to farms was somewhat uneven with some schools having improved facilities, provided by farmers and other property owners such as the churches and private companies, but others, and unfortunately, these were in the majority, remained poorly subsidised by the state and badly serviced by both property owners and the state.

### **1.7.3 Social and economic relations characterising farm schools**

The plight of the labourers and their circumstances in commercial agriculture generally had a severe impact on their children.<sup>30</sup> While schools remain on private land, their development tends to be subordinate to the interests of the owner of the land. The Human Rights Watch<sup>31</sup> study evidenced that farm schools are unable to fulfil their democratic mandate.

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28 Which was renamed Department of Education and Training

29 Most schools only offered up to Grade 4 and over the years that has changed to offer up to Grade 7 in some schools. Access to secondary schools remains limited.

30 See Human Rights Watch (2004): *Forgotten schools: Right to basic education for children on farms in South Africa*, May 2004, 16(7) 1-7. Cited in [http://hrw.org/reports/2004/southafrica0504/2.htm#\\_Toc72560121](http://hrw.org/reports/2004/southafrica0504/2.htm#_Toc72560121)

31 See Zafar, S. (2004). *Farm Schools: Poison or Remedy? A Review of a Human Rights Watch Report. Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa*, 11(3).

The MCRE (DoE, 2005: 49) records that farm schools were established to prevent migration to the cities and to stabilise labour and social relations on farms. Farmers could expect workers to remain on the farm if there was a school for their children. In the absence of laws preventing child labour in South Africa, employers could employ all children, even those attending school. The release of the Education Laws Amendment Act of 1988 prevented children from being withdrawn from school to work.<sup>32</sup> However, child labour was not regulated and children on farms were subjected to work that could compromise their health and general well-being.<sup>33</sup>

Not only are farm schools amongst the poorest in the country with respect to physical infrastructure, the provision of facilities and services and teaching resources, but their retention rates are also significantly lower than all other schools in the country.

### **1.7.3.1 Farm schools as public schools**

The passing of the South African Schools Act in 1996<sup>34</sup> proclaimed farm schools together with all public schools on private land as public schools, which meant that they would be governed and financed in the same way as their public school counterparts.

Legislation on the organisation, governance and funding of schools provided for the transfer of assets or transfer of management of schools from property owners to the state. SASA (1996) endorsed the state's responsibility for schools on private land, stating that a public school should be allowed to operate on private land only in terms of an agreement between the Minister of Education and Culture (MEC) of a particular province and the property owner. This agreement should provide for the provision of education and the performance of the normal functions of a public school together with

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<sup>32</sup> See Act 31 of 1988 (amendment to the Education and Training Act, Act 90 of 1979).

<sup>33</sup> See Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (DoE, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) (SASA) in Policy Handbook for Educators (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003. Edited by Chris Brunton and Associates). SASA aims to redress past injustices in educational provision and provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lays a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advances the democratic transformation of society, combats racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contributes to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protects and advances our diverse cultures and languages, upholds the rights of all learners, parents and educators and promotes their responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa.

the protection of the owner's rights. The Act further stated that the agreement would be enforced against successive owners if farms were sold (DoE, 2005: 50).

### **1.7.3.2 Pedagogical conditions**

In terms of pedagogical conditions in farm schools, one of the most challenging is that of multi-grade classes.<sup>35</sup> Many farm schools are one- or two-teacher schools having multi-grade classes. As a result, some teachers have to teach two or more grades at a time, while others teach as many as six grades in one class. School managers need to be made aware of the management skills needed to administer small schools and teachers should be provided with training and/or support to manage multi-grade classes.

Another difficulty arises because of the distances learners have to travel. Reports indicate that there are many over-age learners in a grade because the learners remain at home until they are strong enough to travel long distances. The majority of farm schools are in a poor or very poor condition, and lack proper sanitation and access to water (DoE, 2005: 53).

### **1.7.4 Summary**

In providing an historical overview of farm schools in South Africa, this section has created an awareness of the plight of learners and teachers from the period of dual management of the farm schools to the point when farm schools became public schools. It drew attention to the poor management of the schools, which affected the pedagogical outputs. Even in this new dispensation, farm schools still experience neglect.

For the purpose of this study, the definition of "rural" as used by Statistics South Africa (SSA) (2001) is preferred. This is a spatial definition that identifies Traditional

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35 A multi-grade class refers to a class comprising learners of two or more grades in one classroom. This is a common occurrence in schools where the number of learners per grade is such that it is economically not viable to employ a teacher per grade and therefore small groups of learners of different grades are combined to make up a multi-grade class which is taught by one teacher.

Authority Areas<sup>36</sup>, which are primarily “community owned” areas of South Africa, and formal rural areas, which are primarily commercial farms in erstwhile “white” areas of South Africa.

In the next section, the chapter breakdown is offered.

## 1.8 Chapter breakdown

This thesis will comprise five chapters. The titles of each chapter use the theme of Babel which is explained at the beginning of each chapter.

The introduction in Chapter One provides the contextual setting for the study as well as the aims and key concepts in the study. The conceptual and contextual framework and literature review are developed in Chapter Two.

*Chapter Two is divided into two sections, namely, Section A*, in which literature on the issues surrounding the language policy implementation in South Africa is reviewed. The issues dealing with multilingualism and the importance of mother-tongue instruction in South Africa are reviewed with a view to understanding community language preference and its relationship to school language policy and practice.

*Section B* offers a contextual framework that I call *Rurality as a sense of place* ; and the theoretical framework which uses a combination of Stern’s (1983) and Sookrajh’s (1999) typologies. In choosing rurality as a construct, I argue that the term “rural” is a key concept in the title of this dissertation and that the data collection for this study which took place in four schools on commercial farms in a rural community, warrants a construct that captures the uniqueness of the context and facilitates a deep understanding of how rurality as a sense of place influences language preference and use. The argument for the use of Stern’s typology is that the learner is located within a home environment where some form of language learning happens. Hence the home environment (and in the instance of this study, a rural community) provides the immediate environment of the language learning situation. Sookrajh (1999) places the learner in the centre of the learning situation and thus argues

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<sup>36</sup> Traditional Authorities are African tribal chiefs who own land in rural areas.

that it is the learner who brings to school certain linguistic abilities and values around which language teaching should occur. I have adapted the models of Sookrajh and Stern to include national and provincial environments that influence language teaching and the learning situation.

In the context of this study, the community's language preference and its relationship to practice in the school environment will be investigated. In addition, literature on the issues surrounding the language policy implementation in South Africa is reviewed. The issues dealing with multilingualism and the importance of mother-tongue instruction in South Africa are reviewed with a view to understanding community language preference and its relationship to school language policy and practice.

The methodology used in this study is explained in Chapter Three. The research design is framed within a critical tradition and uses critical theory as a theoretical framework that responds to human liberation and social justice issues, which in this study relates specifically to language issues. The research itself thus entails a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, in order to explore different aspects of the overall project. The first objective was seen as most suited to the quantitative approach associated with content analysis; the second objective, namely, the exploration of language practice in the school and the teachers' response to the LiEP, was most suited to a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. It seeks to create an awareness of language preference and practice in a rural farm community and creates a platform for further research in this area.

Chapter Four presents the data collected and an analysis and evaluation of the findings. It does this in three sections with the "language preference and use questionnaire" discussed first. The data was collected from three groups of respondents, namely, parents, learners and teachers and analysed according to a modified version of Spolsky's (1974) categories: linguistic, socio-cultural, political, economic and educational. In the second section, the findings related to the questionnaires and interviews with teachers in respect of their understandings and beliefs with regard to the LiEP are discussed and analysed according to Ruiz's (1984) model of language

which uses three theoretical positions, namely, language-as-a problem, language-as-a right and language-as-a resource. The third section captures the findings of the organisational issues with regard to existing and future school language policies gleaned from interviews conducted with principals and school governing body chairpersons.

Chapter Five discusses the emerging insights from the study, namely methodology; rurality as a context; a multilingual community; the power of English in public interactions; policy implementation; languages of teaching and learning and mother-tongue instruction. It recommends a market-orientated approach for promoting African languages and access to quality English language teaching.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

One limitation has been identified. This study was conducted in four rural commercial farm schools within a district in the Province of Gauteng. The findings are therefore unique to this district. Similar studies conducted in other districts within the province or across other provinces may yield different results.

### **1.10 Conclusion**

The language policy in the apartheid era led to unequal treatment of languages in South Africa. English and Afrikaans dominated all sectors in society which led to the marginalisation of African languages. In July 1997, the Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) was introduced. While the intention of this policy was to promote all eleven official languages and give individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching, the practical implementation has been fraught with challenges and still leaves the African languages out in the cold when it comes to the choice of the language of learning and teaching. With this in mind, this chapter has served as an introduction to the research programme. The problem to be investigated has been stated, aims



clarified, the setting and the context described, key concepts defined and the research procedures outlined.

In the next chapter, the history of language policy development in South Africa is traced; literature on recent studies on language issues is surveyed indicating the problems in language policy implementation in South Africa. This follows an argument for the contextual and theoretical framework, indicating that language interactions take place in particular spaces and need to be understood in context.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: OBSTACLES TO A RURAL BABEL<sup>37</sup>

#### 2.1 Introduction

Language policy implementation in South Africa is a contested terrain where a multilingual policy that seeks to promote the language rights of all, stands in opposition to previously entrenched Anglocentric practices (Plüddemann et al., 2004b: 8). The main reasons given for why the implementation of the language policy has not occurred, focus to a great extent on issues such as the unassailable position of English and the stigma attached to mother-tongue education in the apartheid regime.<sup>38</sup> This chapter is written in two sections, namely, Section A and Section B, and will review the language policy development in South Africa; the recent studies on language policy implementation and the contextual and the theoretical frameworks for the study.

In Section A, I review the literature on the issues surrounding *language policy implementation* in South Africa. I begin with an historical overview of language policy development here, and then proceed to discuss recent studies in language policy implementation. This will set the stage for understanding the challenges facing schools in implementing the LiEP and in so doing provide a basis for understanding community language preference and its implications for school language policy and practice.

In Section B, I describe and discuss the contextual and theoretical frameworks that enabled me to examine and explain a rural community's language preference and its relationship to the language practice of teachers in rural schools within the context of the official LiEP. I draw on the construct of rurality as a sense of place as articulated

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<sup>37</sup> "Obstacles to a rural Babel" implies that there are challenges to implementing the LiEP and multilingualism in the schooling system.

<sup>38</sup> See Alexander (2000); Desai (1999); McClean (1999); Webb (1999).

by Budge (2004) to develop the contextual framework that I call ***Rurality as a sense of place***. In choosing rurality as a construct, I argue for the term “rural” as a key concept in the title of the dissertation. That the data collection for this study took place in four schools on commercial farms in a rural community warrants a construct that captures the uniqueness of the context and facilitates a deep understanding of how rurality as a sense of place influences language preference and use. The argument for the use of Stern’s (1983) typology as a further theoretical framework is that the learner is located within a home environment where some form of language learning occurs. Hence, the home environment (in this study, a rural community) provides the immediate environment of the language learning situation. An analysis of this situation raises a question of relevance for this study: how does the language learnt at home match the language used at school; and how is the school, which is located in a community, influenced by the languages taught and learnt? Hence, Sookrajh (1999) in turn adapted Stern’s model to locate the learner at the heart of the language teaching and learning situation, arguing that it is the learner who brings to school certain linguistic abilities and values around which language teaching should occur. In combining Stern’s (1983) and Sookrajh’s (1999) models, I have attempted to expand on the environments indicated by Sookrajh to reflect Stern’s range of environments, while still keeping the learner at the core of the model. I argue that the provincial and national environments impact on language teaching and learning, and therefore warrant inclusion in the model that is used.

In this study, the community’s language preference and its implications for practice in the school environment will be investigated.

## **Section A: Literature Review**

### **Unpacking issues around language policy implementation in South Africa**

In this section, I review the literature on issues surrounding the ***language policy implementation*** in South Africa. I begin with an historical overview of language policy development in the apartheid era as presented by Sookrajh (1999: 74-80), which assists in understanding the different challenges of the past and its impact on the

present era. This section provides a background for the analysis of key findings from recent studies on language policy implementation in South Africa which highlight the obstacles to the implementation of the LiEP.

What emerges is that although linguistic rights in post-apartheid South Africa have been eloquently articulated in the Constitution (1996), the implementation of LiEP has been problematic. This has led to an imbalance of status between the former colonial language (English) and the African languages. This imbalance is evident in the increased use of English in educational systems, in media practice and in government. This state of affairs is attributed largely to a lack of programmes for policy implementation and the attitude that English is the language of power and access.

## **2.2 Language policy implementation in South Africa**

### **2.2.1 An historical and political overview of language policy development in South Africa**

Since the early nineteenth century, language has played a key role in educational and political debates in South Africa. The language policy for schools of the twentieth century was fragmented in that it was dispersed across a number of government structures and racialised in that the policy was characterised by racial and ethnic divisions after the National Party came to power in 1948.

#### **2.2.1.1 Language in education in the apartheid era**

During the apartheid era language in education policies for South Africa were developed by the white minority who were in authority at the time. Although the policies affected the black majority directly, no person of colour had a say in their formulation. The identity of the political system and society had thus prevented access and opportunity to the vast majority. According to Alexander (2005: 2), language policies were developed and manipulated within definite limits to suit the interests of different groups of people. Thus, issues of language and educational policy were

dictated to by politics and ideology. In 1948 when the National Party came into power, the issue of language in education was associated with the expressions of apartheid. The introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 which advocated mother-tongue instruction and the establishment of the dominance of Afrikaans as the chosen medium of instruction at higher levels is indicative of the social engineering of the apartheid regime. It reflected a hidden curriculum, that of divide-and-rule tactics (Alexander, 2002: 15).

### **2.2.1.2 The language medium and mother-tongue issue in black education**

Prior to 1994, black learners offered three languages namely English, Afrikaans and an African language at secondary school level. Afrikaans was considered by the majority of learners as the language of the oppressor (that is, the ruling party). The 1976 Soweto uprising which began with black learners protesting the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at secondary school level resulted in school language policies and the medium of instruction becoming highly contentious issues. The language policy which promoted mother-tongue instruction and separate education systems was evidenced as furthering the interests of the ruling party, namely, the National Party (Reagan, 1984: 157). In some ways the Soweto uprising marked the beginning of the end of the apartheid experiment of social engineering (Alexander, 2003: 15).

From the perspective of identity politics, apartheid was the most explicit strategy of social engineering. Mother-tongue was legitimised in terms of UNESCO (1953: 11) as the optimal language-medium policy for effective and meaningful education:

*It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is mother-tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Socially, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium.*

The above recommendation by UNESCO (1953: 11) was taken seriously in many African countries in their efforts to devise sound and effective educational programmes for their people. On the surface, South Africa's language policy was in line with the latest international educational research, but in reality it was a cynical

manoeuvre to promote retribalisation or ethnicisation of the African people, as proponents of the mother-tongue principle did not see any conflict between the interests of the community and the individual or between the interests of the state and its citizens. Critics of mother-tongue instruction in the South African context viewed mother-tongue instruction as an imposition which was destined to perpetuate the division of class thus widening the divide between white and black and stifling black participation locally and within the wider world (Troup, 1976: 34-35).

Reflecting on the dominant language ideology in education which gave every child the right to be educated in his or her mother-tongue, Reagan (1984: 158-159) proposes three reasons, namely, the development of Afrikaner nationalism and educational thought which focuses on the positive social, psychological, and the cognitive effects of bilingualism. While the intended outcome of the language policy was for all students in South Africa to gain fluency in the country's two official languages (English and Afrikaans), this outcome was to be reached essentially through separate educational experiences (Hartshorne, 1992: 188-207). As a hidden outcome, linguistic separation in schools in South Africa was thus used as a way of protecting cultural and linguistic diversity and was justified on religious, psychological-educational and national-cultural grounds for the maintenance of Afrikaner identity and to ensure the need for preservation of the intrinsic qualities of African culture.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 provides a vivid example of how the practiced outcome of language policy increasingly came to be identified with many of the manifestations of apartheid, especially in the educational sphere where students perceived the subtractive model of mother-tongue education and use of Afrikaans in higher levels as a way of restricting educational opportunities open to blacks outside the country (Reagan & Ntshoe, 1987: 3).

Furthermore, the government officially enforced ethnic subdivisions where "whites" were grouped according to English or Afrikaans; blacks were separated into ten tribal or national groups and a similar separation was found for Indians and Coloureds in South Africa. The implications of these official racial subdivisions for educational policy and for pedagogical practice were enormous (Sookrajh, 1999: 77).

### **2.2.1.3 Bilingual policy debate**

Section 2.2.1.2 showed how the government, on pedagogical and psychological grounds, had defended the commitment to mother-tongue instruction which is followed almost universally, by a gradual shift in language medium to English. Sookrajh (1999: 78) points to opposing theoretical assumptions that have dominated the South African language in education debate regarding the effectiveness of bilingual education in promoting historically disadvantaged students' academic achievement. She is of the view that these assumptions are essentially hypotheses regarding the causes of disadvantaged learners' academic failure and each is associated with a particular form of educational intervention designed to reverse this failure. In support of transitional bilingual education where some initial instruction is given in students' first language, it is argued that students cannot learn in a language they do not understand; thus, a home-school language switch will almost inevitably result in academic setback unless initial teaching occurs through the home language while students are acquiring an additional language. Students' academic difficulties are often attributed to a "linguistic mismatch" between home and school. The fact that such a patently inadequate policy had dominated the language in education policy debate in South Africa, illustrates the power of politics over logic in school language choices during apartheid.

In Brown's (1988/9: 35) analysis of the two dominant languages and "bilingual" policy in education in South Africa, two concepts of "rule" and "hegemony" can be applied. The term "rule" referred to in political terms, indicates a coercive and legal power of the state over groups that resist either actively or passively. Official language policy, as in the enforcement of Afrikaans in education, is an example of rule. "Hegemony" is evidence of the apparently spontaneous consent within civil society of a dominant cultural form such as a language among the dominated classes. An example is the popularity of English among African people in South Africa. The imposition of English and Afrikaans as the dominant languages in South Africa has been described as extremely complex. Further to this, a high incidence of "colonial bilingualism" and in some parts of the country "trilingualism" among the African majority has led to an undervaluing of the African languages (Brown, 1988/9: 39). The various forms of

bilingualism and demographic separation of the different groups of people have been controlled and expanded by the state through education for a long time.

In addition to the fostering of mother-tongue education, the “enforced colonial trilingualism” in African education was another factor that had to be considered in the language policy (Brown 1988/9: 42-43). The two official languages at the time (English and Afrikaans), together with the vernacular, were imposed on black learners with equal time being given to the official languages regardless of region. This resulted in a rigorous ethnolinguistic development coupled with the advance of Afrikaans in African education. The National Party was clearly concerned with the consolidation of political power and the insistence of the vernacular led to bilingual education being associated with English and Afrikaans only, and African mother tongue, with Bantu Education.

### **2.2.2 Summary**

The response in the past to language diversity in South Africa has been characterised by a policy of state bilingualism that largely ignored the needs of the speakers of African and other languages in favour of English and Afrikaans only. Language planning in education occurred in a context of educational separation on ethnolinguistic lines to the point of dividing the education system into English and Afrikaans mediums respectively. Language use in Bantu Education focussed on mother-tongue instruction in the early years, with English and Afrikaans being introduced later.

This section, in providing a selected background to language developments in the period of apartheid has set the scene for an interrogation of the current language policy implementation within a democracy and linguistic rights frame. Research indicating issues that have emerged in language policy implementation within the democracy are reviewed in the next section.



## **2.3 Research initiatives in the field of language**

Research on issues of language offers valuable insights into language policy implementation and language related issues in South Africa. This section discusses key findings of various studies conducted mainly in South Africa. The main findings are organised around four main themes, namely, the perceived superior status of English; language shift and languages of teaching and learning; school language policy development and implementation; and the educational implications of multilingualism.

### **2.3.1 The perceived superior status of English**

In a study entitled *Multilingual Environments for Survival: The Impact of English on Xhosa-Speaking Students*, Vesely (2000) sought to investigate the attitudes of Grade 10 learners to English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans.

Vesely's (2000: 26) findings in summary point to the obvious and hidden impacts of English on Grade 10 isiXhosa-speaking students living in the townships of Cape Town. Students, who see access to a larger world in the English language, desire its power and seek to learn it, even at the cost of their own language. They desire the opportunities that English brings, such as access to the job market, higher education and the media. Because isiXhosa is not generally useful or accessible in the public environment, most students develop negative attitudes towards it. This attitude is further advanced by the fact that English is spoken in parliament and publicly by African language speaking politicians. Afrikaans has retained its association of being the language of the oppressor and is rejected by isiXhosa-speaking students. English has continued to be considered prestigious in local communities. As students seek to learn English, their language patterns change and divisions are formed because the English language skills of some students and community members are better than others.

### 2.3.2 Language shift and languages of teaching and learning

The study entitled *Problems and Possibilities in Multilingual Classrooms in the Western Cape* by Plüddemann et al. (2000) aimed at getting an overview of the problems facing teachers in classrooms post-1994 where there has been a sudden influx of African-language speaking learners into schools which had previously been closed to them. Plüddemann et al. (2000: 26-29) note that this influx of African learners into what were previously considered white establishment schools, was not accompanied by a redeployment of appropriately qualified African language speaking teachers, especially to those schools where isiXhosa-speaking learners became the majority or a sizable minority of the school population. The researchers observed that teachers in the English and Afrikaans medium (ex-Department of Education and Culture) schools expressed frustration at a situation in which they could not communicate effectively with the majority of their learners. Interactions between teachers and learners were limited and did not necessarily promote meaningful learning as these teachers understand only a few words or phrases in isiXhosa and the learners knew just enough English or Afrikaans to follow simple instructions and answer questions in one or two word sentences.

An obvious symptom of the communication breakdown between teacher and learners in these classes was the occurrence of discipline problems. These problems stemmed from the teacher's reduced control over learners at a time when they literally did not and could not speak the same language (Plüddemann et al., 2000: 26-29).

Although teachers were very aware of the language-related origins of many of the teaching, learning and behavioural problems in classrooms, they did at times demonstrate a lack of language awareness with regard to isiXhosa in particular. In a context in which parents' desire for their children to learn English was overwhelming, schools and teachers were under extreme pressure to comply. Some schools were aware of the need to provide access to English while seeking to promote the educational use of children's home language, namely, isiXhosa. However, insufficient

isiXhosa speaking staff did little to develop awareness of multilingualism and contradictions and inconsistencies occurred.

The study on *Dual-medium and parallel-medium schooling in the Western Cape: From default to design* conducted by Plüddemann, Braam, October and Wababa (2004a), revealed that both dual and parallel medium education are practised in formerly Afrikaans-medium schools placed under pressure to teach in the medium of English. English is gaining ground over Afrikaans and isiXhosa at an increasing pace in schools. Several factors explain this, the most glaring being a language shift from Afrikaans to English in several communities in the Western Cape. The shift has been observed in language attitudes and language use, and is the direct result of the increasing dominance of English in public life. One effect of the drive for English is that an increasing number of schools are offering an English medium education in response to parental pressure. However, in the more affluent and stable communities this language shift is not so apparent (2004a: 34).

The subtractive model of education which goes against the values of the national Language-in-Education Policy (DoE, 1997a) is practised and none of the schools involved in the study seemed to be aware of it, yet initiatives to promote English as a means of upward social mobility are still evident at these schools. This has resulted in an ongoing marginalisation of the other two official languages (Afrikaans and isiXhosa) in the province (Plüddemann et al., 2004a: 34).

The application of dual-medium education has revealed an irregular pattern that is largely determined by the historical and socio-economic context of the respective schools. As suggested by literature, schools that are under-resourced apply dual-medium teaching in a manner that reinforces the belief that English proficiency is the gateway to a successful life.

Language mismatch between the school and the broader community is evident in shifts in LoLT. English is used progressively as the LoLT despite the fact that Afrikaans is still used widely for local purposes in the community. Similarly, English has long

replaced isiXhosa as the official medium in isiXhosa school communities. Clearly, the lower status languages are being sidelined or even excluded from the curriculum. Language mismatch in this sense has negative pedagogic and social implications (Plüddemann et al., 2004a: 37).

This situation is further complicated by the fact that teachers have not been formally trained to teach bilingually, whether in the Afrikaans/English combination typical of ex-CED and ex-HoR schools or in the isiXhosa/English combination that characterises ex-DET schooling. Researchers involved in the study are of the view that the quality of learning and teaching in several of the schools is compromised on account of teachers' relative lack of training in the LoLT and/or in the home language of learners, amongst other factors. In other words, teachers are in many cases not effective, despite their formal (subject) qualifications (Plüddemann et al., 2004a: 38).

Given the status of Afrikaans in the democracy and its resultant marginalisation in schools as indicated in the foregoing discussion, Giliomee's (2003) exposition of the rise and possible demise of Afrikaans is important to the discussion on language shift. In concluding his study, Giliomee (2003: 26) notes that Afrikaans, in many ways, is a victim of its own successes. Afrikaans was developed as the symbol of an Afrikaner identity to establish a national literature and a national school of history. It was also used to mobilise Afrikaner support for the effort to establish Afrikaner enterprises.

In 1948 when the National Party rose to power there were no Afrikaner companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). Today one-third of the JSE is presently controlled by Afrikaners. Afrikaans mother-tongue education was responsible for the restoration of the large numbers of Afrikaners who were considered poor whites. Through Afrikaans mother-tongue education, poverty was almost eradicated in the Afrikaner communities. At its peak, Afrikaans rose to become the very symbol of the successes of Afrikaner nationalism in the twentieth century. The dismantling of apartheid in 1994 undermined the unity the Afrikaner community had developed on the language issue. Its influence in securing jobs and seeking career opportunities diminished. Afrikaans, previously a dominant concern of the state and higher education; is now only one of several priorities under the sustained pressure of

government to promote a racial transformation of society with English as the vehicle. Giliomee's closing line is indicative of what other researchers in the field are saying about home language maintenance, namely, that commitment to the continued use of a language by a language community is essential for its survival.

In her study titled *Language and learning science in South Africa*, Probyn (2006) examined the perceptions, practices and problems of teachers teaching science through the medium of English in the Eastern Cape. The findings (Probyn, 2006: 406-408) that emerged point to the already known fact that the language of learning and teaching frequently creates a barrier to learning where it is not the learners' home language. Teachers reported that learners had very little exposure to English outside the classroom and could therefore not engage meaningfully with the curriculum. Despite this, teachers indicated a strong preference for English as the LoLT, evidencing the powerful position of English relative to an African language such as isiXhosa. Lack of training in teaching in a second language was evident and teaching resources were limited. Probyn (2006: 408) recommends that teachers are helped with the linguistic and material constraints. They need to develop questioning skills to be able to ask more challenging questions that promote higher order thinking skills and to use the chalkboard as a useful resource. In addition they need to learn about the role of language in learning and how to develop learners' proficiency in the language of teaching and learning.

### **2.3.3 School language policy development and implementation**

Despite the introduction of the LiEP, hardly any public schools have formulated appropriate language policies that are aligned with the principles and values articulated in this policy. Default policies, or policies by virtue of practice, have become the norm at most public schools.

Research on *Community perceptions on school language policy formulation* by Braam (2004) shows that there is a strong drive towards English in order to move away from the perceived low socio-economic status and the reported ethnic prejudices and

stereotypes associated with the prevailing variety of Afrikaans. Through its current language policy and practice, a school unknowingly contributes significantly to the perpetuation of this class differentiation that has language as its primary sign in the community. From an institutional perspective, a school plays a decisive role in sustaining the social, economic and political deprivation of its community which in turn reflects what is prevalent in society at large. Along with the language perceptions that it reproduces in its current practice, a significant factor in determining the educational throughput and success of the learners is formed by a school. Schools are cultural sites of cultural reproduction ( Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Clearly, this current practice has grave educational implications for children, as they internalise negative messages about their own language, identity and cultural practices, and ultimately about themselves (Braam, 2004: 36).

Plüddemann et al. (2000) in their study *Problems and Possibilities in Multilingual Classrooms in the Western Cape* report that apartheid-era mindsets and practices continue to prevail in the area of school language policy. The low status of isiXhosa as reported in their study is clearly evident in the timetable allocation for language subjects. Only one of five ex-DEC schools and two of four ex-HoR schools currently offer isiXhosa. On the other hand, all the schools allocate a large amount of time to English and Afrikaans. They note that although all schools have a language policy of sorts, even if by default, not one of the schools had consciously aligned their language plans, policies and practices with the LiEP. Neither was one of the schools able to state that they had arrived at a new integrated policy for language/s of learning and teaching, languages as subjects, language/s of administration, assessment and staffing. Several of the teachers interviewed indicated that the school had not yet received a copy of the LiEP or that teachers were left to decide on their own language plan within the general guideline of maintaining mother-tongue education in the Foundation Phase while introducing English orally in Grade 1 and in writing in Grade 3 (Plüddemann et al., 2000: 58).

The study, *Dual-medium and parallel medium schooling in the Western Cape: From default to design*, conducted by Plüddemann, Braam, October and Wababa (2004a) shows that the diverse language policies and practices of schools point to an

educational system that still lacks some co-ordination and direction. Schools remain largely unaware of or unreceptive to the LiEP and its advocacy of additive bilingualism. Language practices at school level are largely determined by contextual factors such as resourcing, demographic shift, parental preferences and the language competence of teachers. While many of these practices are educationally sound, especially in well-resourced schools that boast highly-qualified teachers, the lack of articulation between the curriculum and the LiEP is apparent, as teachers who received training for the curriculum are unaware about the latter. In some schools, teachers continue to believe that official language policy is desecrated by the use of the home language (isiXhosa) for teaching and learning purposes; hence its secretive and exclusively oral use. A severe form of home language deprivation is experienced by isiXhosa-speaking learners in ex-HoR and ex-CED schools which do not offer isiXhosa as a subject, let alone as a LoLT and hence drop-out and failure rates are high.

#### **2.3.4 Educational implications of multilingualism**

The discussions in Sections 2.3.1-2.3.3 above have pointed to the perceived high status of English with the resultant marginalisation of Afrikaans and the African languages; and the absence of school language policies that align with the intentions of the LiEP. In this section, the findings from two studies that show the multilingual nature of communities and the educational implications for multilingual policies will be discussed.

A study conducted by Broeder, Extra and Maartens (2002: 69) titled *Multilingualism in South Africa with a focus on KwaZulu-Natal and Metropolitan Durban* highlighted interesting patterns of language variation. Learners bring a multitude of languages to the classroom from their bi-/multilingual home environments. Unfortunately educational planners have not made provision for this in the education system. A firm recommendation arises from the study that the language resources that children bring into the classroom be explored for utilisation more effectively in the educational development of the child. The desire to be instructed in the first home language and simultaneously the desire to learn other languages also came to the fore and should be

noted by all involved in educational circles in South Africa. The position of Afrikaans as a minority language in the home should be compared with the position of other home languages in the same environment. The knowledge gained from the study and other surveys is indispensable to strategic educational planning and implementation in this area. However, issues of language shift and the marginalisation of languages were also evidenced in the study.

Wolff (2000a), in his study on *Pre-School Child Multilingualism and its Educational Implications in the African Context*, makes certain paedolinguistic observations which have far-reaching implications for language planning and education in Africa.

Wolff (2000a) argues that a) if multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception in Africa; b) if, even before entering any kind of formal education, multilingual African children are known to have mastered adequately and creatively their command of two, three or more languages, and c) if this linguistic competence testifies to more elaborate and complex patterns of the broader communicative competence of these children as opposed to monolingual children, then anyone who bears some responsibility in planning and deciding on the linguistic aspects of educational policies would be well advised to view multilingualism as an important resource to be utilised as widely as possible since this draws on the children's prior experience, their established abilities, and relates directly to their linguistic, social, and cultural environments.

Wolff (2000a) refers to the usefulness for any child to acquire a second language, since the advantages are not only in the intellectual development of the child, but also in an increased potential to enhance the child's mother-tongue competence. It is, therefore, surprising that early multilingualism or even multilingualism in general, is not generally accepted as a blessing in "western" cultures which, unfortunately in this regard, have a tremendous negative influence on educational debates in Africa. Wolff (2000a) points to the long history in certain western societies of people actually "looking down" on those who are bilingual. Only a certain few "classical" languages (e.g. Greek and Latin) or modern languages of "high" culture (e.g. English, French, Italian and German) are given prestige. Little credit is given for speaking Swahili and,



until recently, not much more credit was given for speaking Russian, Japanese, Arabic or Chinese. Bilingualism is actually sometimes regarded as a “problem” in that many bilingual individuals tend to occupy rather low positions in society and knowledge of another language becomes associated with “inferiority”. “Bilingualism” is seen as a personal and social problem, not something that has strong positive connotations.

In the African context, the negative attitude towards multilingualism, particularly when involving African languages, often rests at least implicitly or subconsciously on the idea of the superiority of colonial languages and cultures and the general inferiority of the languages and cultures of the colonised populations.

Wolff (2000a) is of the firm view that individual multilingualism, and especially that of early childhood, is an asset of increased intellectual and social competence. Who would want to sacrifice such resourcefulness on the altar of traditional concepts of monolingual education in a language which is often, if not always, not part of the child’s linguistic repertoire? Wolff notes that outdated concepts, nevertheless, are still strong among policymakers all over Africa whom he refers to as the modern African elites who had undergone “alienation brainwashing” during their formal education in colonial, missionary or military institutions, and therefore suffer from “monomania”.

However, if the constitutional stipulations for plurilingualism, as in the case of South Africa, are taken seriously and would imply multilingual institutional profiles on both national and provincial levels, the enhancement and fostering of individual multilingualism involving the mother-tongue becomes a primary goal for all educational planning and implementation activities (Wolff, 2000a: 16-23).

### **2.3.5 Summary**

This section highlighted the perceived high status of English with the resultant marginalisation of Afrikaans and the African languages, and the absence of school language policies that align with the intentions of the LiEP. It also drew attention to

multilingualism as a resource and the elaborate and complex patterns of the broader communicative competence of multilingual children as opposed to monolingual children. The next section will deal with the various explanations put forward for the non-implementation of the language policy in South Africa.

## **2.4 The linguistic rights of South African learners: Barriers to implementation**

It is nine years since the introduction of the LiEP and it appears that not much progress has been made in implementing it, especially with respect to the issue of mother-tongue education. Literature is replete with evidence of the non-implementation of South Africa's multilingual policy and the tension that exists between the espoused policy and actual practice.<sup>39</sup>

Various explanations as to why tensions are evident between language policy and its implementation in multilingual societies have been suggested. Broadly, these explanations serve to rationalise the retention of language policies and practices that are in opposition to multilingualism. According to Mwaniki (2004) these explanations can be categorised into political, economic and sociolinguistic, and will be used as a framework to discuss research around the problems given for the non-implementation of policy.

### **2.4.1 Political explanations**

(i) *Lack of political will and support* on the part of the South African government has been cited as one of the reasons for the non-implementation of the multilingual policy (Alexander, 1999; Du Plessis, 1999; Kamwangamalu, 2001). The lack of a firm stand in favour of African languages was already evident during 1990, when the sub-structure of the ANC's Department of Arts and Culture released a document entitled "African National Congress Policy Considerations" (Heugh 2002: 458) which stated the following:

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39 See Heugh (1995, 2002), Webb (1996, 2002); McClean (1999), Kaschula (1999), De Klerk (2000), Kamwangamalu (2001), Reagan (2002), and Makoni (2003)

*The ANC supports the deliberate fostering of multilingualism in schools, adult education programmes, in the workplace and in all sectors of public life.... Though language experts argue that initial education is best conducted through the “mother-tongue’.... Large sections of black urban communities have already pressured primary schools into beginning with English as the medium of instruction from day one.... Any language policy must reflect the voice of the people and this voice is more important than any model which emerges.*

The ambiguities present in the document mentioned above reflect precisely those in the current broader context of South African society with regard to the weight given the role of English vis-à-vis African languages.

(ii) Another political explanation for non-implementation of South Africa’s language policy relates to *elite closure*. Linguistic elite closure, developed by authors such as Alexandre (1972) and Prah (1995), describes a system where language policy perpetuates the privileged status of an elite class by way of enshrining a minority language as official language of the state. Wherever proficiency in this minority official language serves as the favourable condition for success, the few who speak that language as a first language will naturally have an advantage over the many who speak it as a second or third language.

Perry (2003: 10) states that the slide toward an English language based elite closure has already revealed itself in threatening ways. Debates in parliament occur mostly in English. Most government documentation appears in English only (PanSALB-MarkData, 2000). The agents of the judiciary seem to favour using English as the sole language of record (Yakpo, 2000: 13). Parliamentarians and other leaders of state speak so much English – even to the Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga and Venda-speaking masses which make up 46% of all South Africans (67% of those in rural areas), many of whom have indicated that they do not understand to a satisfactory extent what their elected representatives are saying (PanSALB-MarkData, 2000: 142-4). To cite another astounding indicator, some isiXhosa-speaking school children in the Cape have voiced their innocent opinion that Nelson Mandela speaks no isiXhosa – *only English* – since he is so rarely heard to speak anything else (Vesely, 2000: 19). The perceived high

status of English is perpetuated via the mass media, for example, 50% of the programmes aired on SABC are imported from the United States and America (Kamwangamalu, 2001).

Perry (2003: 10) is of the firm opinion that these indications support the notion of linguistic elite closure since it threatens nothing less than to undermine participatory democracy in South Africa. Perry further explains that this linguistic elite closure only builds upon the apartheid-era policy of Bantu Education, perhaps to an extent that justifies charges of a “neo-apartheid” language policy maintained by the post-1994 government. In referring to the consequences of the Bantu Education system, where black South Africans learned through the medium of their mother-tongue to their fourth year of schooling, at which point they were supposed to make the abrupt transition to the parallel media of English and Afrikaans; Perry (2003: 10) states that matriculants of the post-1976 era in most cases failed to develop the most profound fluency in either their home language (because of their early exit from this medium of learning), or in English or Afrikaans (because their first language skills were lacking).<sup>40</sup> Nor did they manage to comprehend the content of the English and Afrikaans medium instruction as well as they might have, had they learned it through the mother tongue (Heugh, 2000). As a result, black matriculants turned out exactly as the English- and Afrikaans-speaking elite classes might have liked, that is, unable to compete in the marketplace with the linguistic elite class, yet capable of understanding the commands of their bosses.

(iii) Another political explanation for non-implementation of South Africa’s language policy relates to *power relations*. In considering the power relations of school language policy in a broader context, writers such as Tollefson (1991), Baker (1995), Cummins (2001), Alexander (2001a) and Meerkotter (2003) have described language policy in education as a means to control, dominate and exploit people in society by creating barriers that prevent speakers of low status languages from entering tertiary level education and securing employment that provides reasonable remuneration. Instead, schools act as gatekeepers to filter through learners that are proficient in

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<sup>40</sup> See Hartshorne (1995).

English and who perform well academically as a result, while others stand a lesser chance of upward social mobility and are more prone to leaving school earlier either to become part of a cheap labour group or to join the unemployed. Unemployment and low wages, in turn, are linked to crime, gangsterism, disease, substance abuse and undisciplined behaviour. Research on *Community perceptions on school language policy formulation* by Braam (2004) shows exactly this: that there is a strong drive towards English in order to move away from the perceived low socio-economic status and the reported ethnic prejudices and stereotypes associated with the prevailing variety of Afrikaans. Through its current language policy and practice, the school thus unknowingly contributes significantly to the perpetuation of this class differentiation that has language as its primary sign in the community. From an institutional perspective, this school plays a decisive role in sustaining the social, economic and political deprivation of its community; a reflection of what is prevalent in society at large. Along with the language perceptions that it reproduces in its current practice, a significant factor in determining the educational throughput and success of the learners is formed. Clearly, this current practice has grave educational implications for children, as they internalise negative messages about their language, identity, cultural practices and ultimately, about themselves (Braam, 2004: 36).

#### **2.4.2 Economic explanations**

Economic explanations have also been advanced to explain the non-implementation of South Africa's language policy as enshrined in the Constitution (Heugh, 1995 and 2002; Kaschula, 1999; Kamwangamalu 2001). Socio-political theorists now argue that the free-market economy has often been in conflict with this process, thus thwarting the implementation of policy. Analyses of aid packages to the Third World show conclusively that recipients must meet specific criteria set out by the World Bank (King, 1993). Mazrui (1997), in an analysis of the role of the World Bank and its role in language in education practice in Africa, argues that despite the bank's public support for local languages in education, its continued advice to governments is to cut educational expenditure on local languages in favour of an international language. Hence the Western economy is also very often accompanied by linguistic racism (linguicism) which places high status on English, for example, and low status on other

languages. Tollefson (1991), Philipson (1992) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), among many other critics, have pointed to the larger structural forces within the Anglocentric and Western world, particularly those emanating from the USA and Britain, as those forces that promote English as an instrument for maintaining an under-educated class for cheap labour. When referring to the South African language policy implementation dilemma, Heugh (2002: 449) observes that “in the era of globalisation, there are larger structural forces at play, which influence international and domestic economic and development policies. These forces are generally antithetical to multilingualism.” This might well explain why, despite the long history of recommendations for the use of African languages in education<sup>41</sup>, a practice giving prominence to international languages has become entrenched.

Advancing the economic explanation further, Kamwangamalu (2001) identifies two economic variables that contribute to non-implementation of South Africa’s language policy, namely, financial constraints and market forces. In this regard, Kamwangamalu (2001: 416-417) submits that “financial constraints” have made it difficult for PanSALB to execute its constitutional mandate to promote multilingualism.

As far as market forces are concerned, there is no sustained demand for multilingual skills in the African languages for academic, economic, administrative and employment purposes. This lack of demand has ensured that English remains central to virtually all the higher domains of language use. The demand for multilingual skills in the African languages would contribute towards raising the status of these languages and changing the way in which the languages are perceived by the various communities. In her study “*Multilingual Environments for survival*” (2000), Vesely has shown that black South African learners have ambivalent attitudes towards their own languages: they value the languages highly only as symbols of ethnolinguistic identity and as vehicles for transmission of indigenous cultures and traditions, but view English as a language of power and for personal upward mobility. This perspective is aptly captured by a respondent in Vesely’s (2000: 8-9) study:

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41 Many of the influences on the South African education system reflect not only forces peculiar to the country but ones that have had, and continue to have, their effect on the rest of the continent. The history of the relationship between language in education, in Africa, during the twentieth century, is one of repeated commissions of enquiry that result in recommendations based on the centrality of indigenous languages as initial languages of literacy and languages of learning. See UNESCO’s report on the Use of the Vernacular Languages in Education (1953).

*I think English is more important than other South African languages, because languages like Xhosa, Sesotho, and isiNdebele are more difficult and English had been chosen as the world's official language. In any items we buy it is written in it no matter where it comes from. Xhosa is just the language that is spoken by few people and few other races can speak it. ...in history [subject] the English speaking were conquering all continents.....so English had spread worldwide.*

Similarly, Horowitz (1985: 220), writing from his research experience with the ethnic politics of language policy, observes that “language is the quintessential entitlement issue.” Ethnic groups realise that the institutionalisation (often, though not always, by means of officialisation) of a given language will privilege those who speak it as a first language and disadvantage those who do not. The privileged will find themselves at pole position in the race for jobs as teachers, clerks and for other bureaucratic positions, while the linguistically disadvantaged will find that they require extra effort just to keep up, if such structures do not shut them out of elite occupations altogether. Language thus holds importance for group by virtue of the role of language in material acquisition. Gellner (1994), a scholar of nationalism, underlines how language represents what others call cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993). As cultural capital, the language of the state proves indispensable to those who wish to succeed within the margins of state-sanctioned power.

Mwaniki (2004) is of the view that the economic explanation to the non-implementation of South Africa's language policy only manages to provide partial answers to the implementation dilemma and is not sustainable under close scrutiny, especially when contrasted, in particular, against South Africa's fiscal and macro-economic facts and public strategic planning principles in general.

### **2.4.3 Sociolinguistic explanations**

Sociolinguistic explanations have also been advanced to explain the non-implementation of South Africa's language policy. Sociolinguistic explanations relate to language attitudes (McClean, 1999; De Klerk 2000), and language development (Webb, 2002; Reagan, 2002; Makoni, 2003). The reluctance towards implementing the

LiEP is often ascribed to the belief that most parents want English as the LoLT. There has been a positive attachment to English in South Africa by people who were previously disenfranchised and in particular, from within the liberation movements from at least the early years of the twentieth century (Alexander 1989: 28-29). For obvious reasons, English has played a significant role and will continue to do so, not least in the area of international communication, higher levels of education and the economy. A belief that African language speaking parents are making an explicit choice in favour of English has been gaining ground over the last eight years, particularly as political changes have made it possible for increasing numbers of African language speaking people to enter higher levels of the economy, mainstream political activity as well as educational environs from which they were previously excluded. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report of 1992 is cited by Ridge (1996: 26-27) as his source of evidence for the above assumption:

*[W]hen offered a choice, significant numbers of black parents have opted for English as the language of instruction for their children, even from the first year of primary school (NEPI, 1992: 13f). Edusource Data News (August 1993) reported that it was already so in 43% of schools...*

Furthermore, the myth that many South African children do not have a mother tongue and therefore do not need mother-tongue education, suggests that bilingual or multilingual children do not have sufficient proficiency in any language other than a messy amalgam of languages. This myth, according to Heugh (2000: 27) belongs within a deficit theory of language and learning. Deficit theories in education are based on the assumption that there is some deficiency, often cognitive, within the learner. In refuting this myth, Heugh (2000: 27) notes that when one spends time watching how deftly bilingual and multilingual children switch from one language to another for different purposes, one can marvel at the degree of their multiple proficiencies. Whilst it is important to factor multilingual proficiencies into the linguistic repertoire of the classroom, there is no logical argument which could support the notion that multilingualism precludes mother-tongue education.

Wolff (2000a: 18) asserts that if multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception in Africa, and if, even before entering any kind of formal education, multilingual



African children are known to have mastered adequately and creatively their command of two, three or more languages, and if this linguistic competence testifies to more elaborate and complex patterns of the broader communicative competence of these children as opposed to monolingual children, then

*“anyone who bears some responsibility in planning and deciding on the linguistic aspects of educational policies would be well advised to view multilingualism as an important resource to be utilised as widely as possible since this draws on the children’s prior experience, their established abilities, and relates directly to their linguistic, social and, cultural environments.”*

Wolff makes reference to numerous findings on the cognitive and linguistic advantages of bilingualism, which he traces as far back as the writing of Quintilian over 1 800 years ago, and the ability of young children to distinguish accurately between two or more language systems (Wolff 2000a: 18-22). He cites the research study of Ianco-Worrall and Agnihotri that supports the findings that multilingual children have more and better language proficiencies than do monolingual children. Multilingual children also know how to distinguish between different languages. When they do not, and they mix languages, they are doing so for their own reasons/purposes, often to prevent adults or figures in authority from knowing what they are saying and not necessarily because they cannot draw a distinction between them.

In concluding his study on *Pre-school Child Multilingualism and its Educational Implications in the African Context*, Wolff (2000a) notes that there could be no successful and comprehensive national development of multilingualism in Africa without due recognition of the big three ‘Ms’:

- multilingualism (and multiculturalism)
- modernisation of the mother tongues; and
- mother-tongue education.

Wolff (2000a: 23) is of the firm view that an educational policy deprives children of their mother-tongue during education will consequently yield “an unnecessarily high rate of emotional and socio-cultural cripples who are retarded in their cognitive

development and deficient in terms of psychological stability”. Faced with heavy institutional multilingualism, with English as the preferred target language to which they have only restricted access and largely in the form of inadequate role models, joblessness and juvenile delinquency are just two of the likely social consequences. The consequences of a practice that denies children mother-tongue education are, therefore, immense (Wolff, 2000a: 23).

Mwaniki (2004) is of the opinion that the sociolinguistic explanations are also not adequate in explaining the implementation dilemma facing language policy implementation in South Africa. These explanations fail to account for the tasks and processes that should constitute language policy implementation in South Africa. The altering of language attitudes that are antithetical to multilingual policy implementation should constitute one of the core functions of language policy and planning agencies in South Africa. The same applies to language development. The fact that the previously marginalised languages are not as developed as English and Afrikaans should not be seen as reason enough to explain the failure to implement a multilingual policy South Africa. Rather, language policy and planning agencies in South Africa should embrace language development as one of their key functions in order to give effect to the aspirations of the Constitution with regard to language(s). However, as far as the sociolinguistic explanations to the dilemma facing the implementation of a language policy in South Africa are concerned, there is a far greater challenge than language attitudes and language development. The challenge is posed by sociolinguistic research that discourses on the impossibility of implementing a multilingual policy and plan for South Africa. Makoni (2003) is representative of this kind of sociolinguistic research.

Makoni (2003: 138-140) observes that:

*...languages created in historically dubious circumstances by missionaries and their African apprentices are accorded the status of uncontested judicial facts and become permanent sociolinguistic fixtures of the way African landscape is imagined. The image is that of a landscape composed of many language boxes and linguistic “things,” separate and distinct. This image runs counter to the lived and living experiences of most ordinary users of African speech forms as we have seen in the study with the*

*preschool learners conducted by Wolff. Thus, the problem of the implementability of the South African national language policy (its “inelegance, contradiction and messiness”) is a direct consequence of the very nature of the languages it seeks to promote. The policy itself is, in effect, based on an inaccurate analysis of the prevailing sociolinguistic condition. Notions about language and ethnicity in the South African Constitution are founded on “boxed” notions of language and ethnicity ultimately traceable to eighteenth-century German Romanticist ideas which treated territory, constructions of race, and conceptualisations of language as identical and indivisible.*

Mwaniki (2004) states that the above argument by Makoni (2003) cannot be wholly dismissed because it adds to the wealth of sociolinguistic debate on the implementation of South Africa’s language policy and plan and is representative of a serious handicap to a creative and critical search of a formula and/or approach that can assist the government in implementing the language policy as enshrined in the Constitution.

In seeking to regularise the issue of the non-implementation of the language policy, Reagan (1995: 327) cautions against the adoption of a technicist approach which is antithetical to the theoretical, ideological and discourse foundations of the South African Constitution in which the mentioned language provisions are embedded. Mwaniki (2004) is of the view that there is a need to formulate proposals for a modified paradigm in language planning theory and, consequently, language planning practice.

#### **2.4.4 Summary**

This section, in reviewing the political, economic and sociolinguistic obstacles in implementing the language policy, has set the stage for understanding and interrogating some of the issues facing rural communities in implementing the language policy.

## **Section B: Contextual and theoretical framework**

### **Rurality as a sense of place**

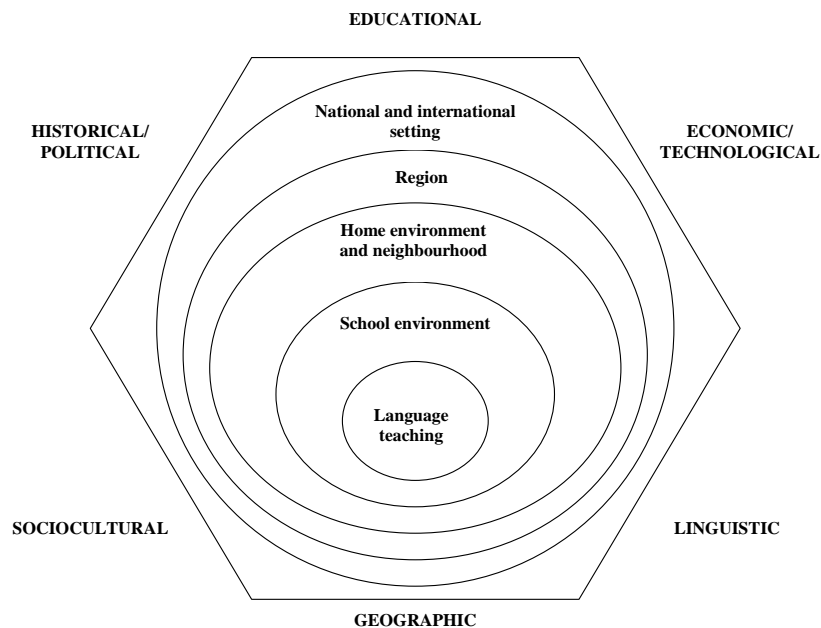
The previous section traced the history of language policy development in South Africa, the current issues relating to the hegemony of English, the absence of language policies that align with the LiEP and the various explanations for the non-implementation of the language policy. In highlighting the marginalisation of Afrikaans and the African languages, this study argues for the importance of language as a powerful symbol of ethnicity and that ethnicity rooted in a community, creates a space for understanding the learner (and in this study, the rural child) in terms of Stern's (1983) typology where the learner is located in the home and community that is linguistically rich and diverse. This study questions the relationship between the social milieu and language learning. This is particularly relevant in the context of a multilingual schooling setting (Stern, 1983: 271).

### **2.5 The social milieu and language learning**

Mackey and Spolsky (in Stern, 1983: 271-272; Spolsky, 1974) each developed a typology for bilingual education. While Mackey placed language teaching at the centre of his model, Spolsky centred his model on education. In adapting Mackey's (in Stern, 1983: 271) typology, which shows the possible variations that can arise when the language of the school is related to the home, area or nation, Stern was able to create a description of the interaction between different social agencies related to the language teaching situation. Where Mackey listed nine categories, Stern streamlined the categories to resemble four social agencies that have an impact on language teaching, namely, home, school, region and nation. Spolsky's (1974) typology of language learning suggests six different factors in society that have an effect on language learning, namely, linguistic, sociological, political, economic, religio-cultural and psychological. Stern retained and adapted Spolsky's six factors to reflect the different social contexts that impact on language teaching.

By combining his adapted versions of the models of Spolsky and Mackey, Stern (1983) was able to generate a typology for the analysis of contextual factors in the teaching of language (See Figure 2.1). As with Mackey’s model of contextual analysis to language teaching and learning, Stern (1983: 274) foregrounds language teaching as the central feature of his model.

**Figure 2.1: Stern’s (1983: 274) contextual model of language teaching and learning**

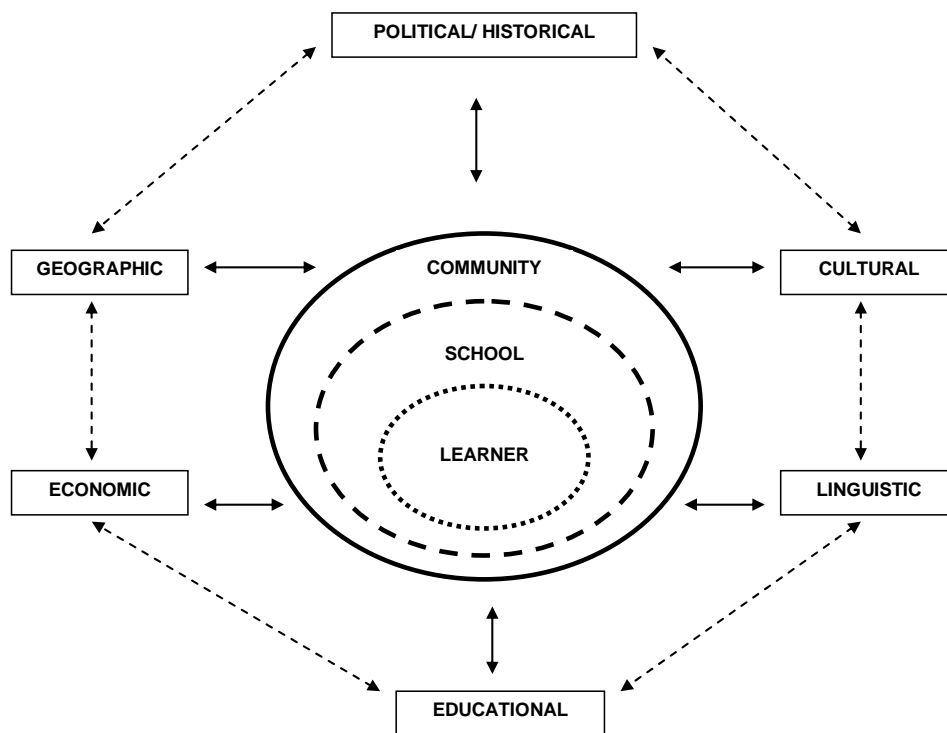


In Stern’s (1983) model of language development, the learner is located within a school environment which falls within a home environment, in this instance, a rural setting, where some form of language learning takes place. In the context of this study, the question raised is: How does the language learnt at home fit into the school and community environment? It can be argued that the school is located within a community that influences languages taught and learnt and that the influence of the community on language choice is likely to be powerful. The rural community in this study finds itself in the wider environment of the district and province which may or may not support the languages of the home, school or community. Beyond the district and province, is the state with its eleven official language/s influencing language attitudes and language policy. All this has a direct or indirect effect on the language learner.

Socio-cultural differences evidence themselves in different attitudes to language in general, to particular languages, to bilingualism and to additional language learning. Certain languages are held in either high or low esteem in the South African social setting because of the economic, political or cultural value associated with them. Stern and Cummins (1981: 209-212) are of the notion that children come to language learning with positive or negative attitudes derived from the society in which they live, and those attitudes in turn influence their motivation to learn a second or other languages.

The choice of languages as LoLT and subjects and the emphasis on particular languages within a school are as a result of factors determined from beyond the immediate environment. However, it makes a difference whether a second language is used in the immediate environment or close to the environment where the language is learnt. In instances where a second language is spoken in the environment in which it is learnt, both teachers and learners will have regular opportunities to use the language (Sookrajh, 1999: 91). In the context of this study, where English is taught either as the LoLT or second language, learners have virtually no access to it in the rural community.

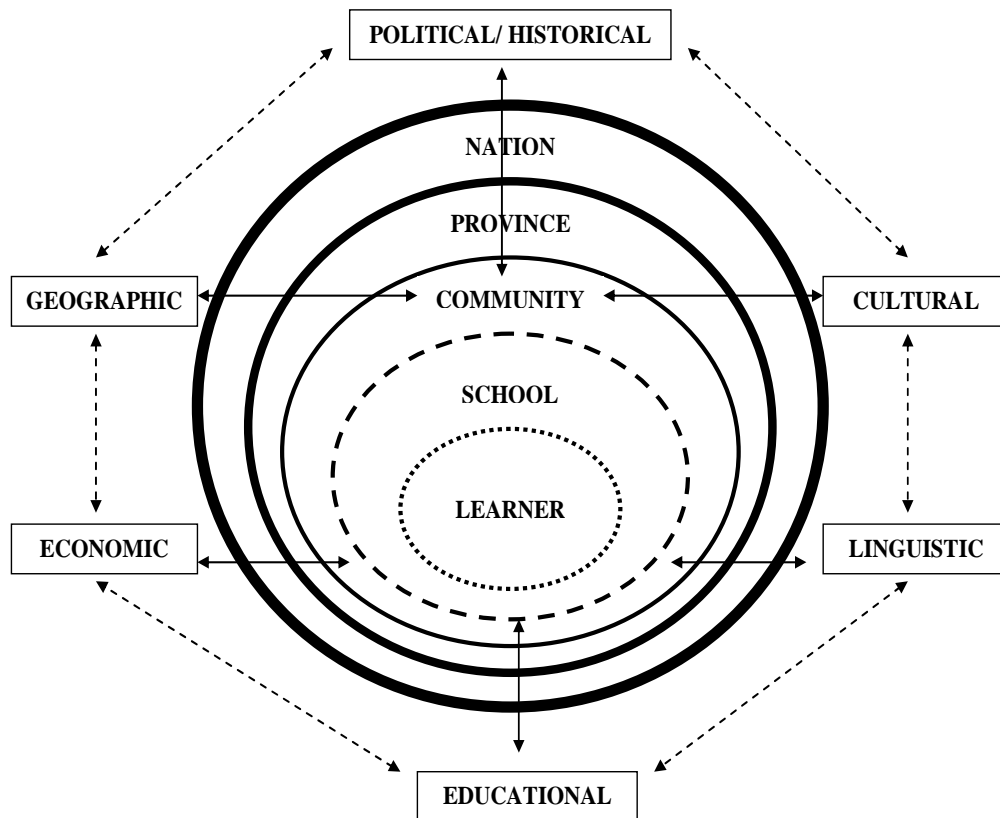
**Figure 2.2: Sookrajh's social interaction model (Sookrajh, 1999: 89)**



Sookrajh (1999), in turn, adapted Stern's model to locate the learner at the heart of the language teaching and learning situation (see Figure 2.2). She argues that it is the learner who brings to school certain linguistic abilities and values around which language teaching should occur. Sookrajh (1999: 90), in replacing language teaching with the learner at the centre of the model, identifies the learner as the central focus and pivotal agent/ influence in the language teaching and learning situation. In her adaptation of Stern's model, Sookrajh indicates only the two environments with which the learner has direct contact in her model: the school and the community environment.

In this study, I have expanded on the environments indicated by Sookrajh to reflect Stern's range of environments, while still keeping the learner at the core of the model. In the context of this study, the provincial and national environments impact directly or indirectly on language teaching and learning, depending on the extent to which teachers interpret the official language policy and implement it (see Figure 2.3). Hence, the inclusion of the province and the nation as environments within which language learning and teaching function.

**Figure 2.3: Language interaction model**



The combined models of Stern (1983) and Sookrajh (1999) will form part of the theoretical framework for understanding rural community language preference and the implications for practice in the school environment.

## 2.6 Rurality as a sense of place

The study of rurality as a sense of place as a construct allows one to deepen one’s understanding of individuals, their identity and what is meaningful to their existence within a particular context. But, what is rurality and sense of place? Drawing from literature in education (particularly rural education), rural sociology, rural economic development, history, literature, and critical theory, this study was guided by the following contextual and conceptual frameworks. In the section on “towards a definition on rurality,” the writings of Rios (1988), Stern (1994), Seal and Harmon (1995), Lane and Dorfman (1997), Kannapel and De Young (1999), Sherwood (2001), Herzog and Pittman (2003) and Lewis (2003) are used to explore the definitions of



rurality and examine the nature of rural schools and reform within them. In the section on “towards a definition of place,” I draw mainly on the work of Howley, Harmon and Leopald (1996), Haas and Nachtigal (1998), Gruenewald (2003) and Furman and Gruenewald (2004). These writers examine critically the power of place in education. Through an analysis of the context the conceptual framework emerges. This section then proceeds to highlight rurality as a sense of place and education; school and community relations and concludes by arguing for the use of a combined version of Stern’s and Sookrajh’s models of language.

### **2.6.1 Rurality as a context in this study**

The contextual framework is premised on the notion that rural schools face challenges and possess strengths that are poorly understood, under-researched and different from their urban counterparts and in expecting educational reform to proceed rationally, the peculiarities and power of local context must be fully understood (Budge 2004: 3). A graphic description of the challenges facing South African rural communities as recorded in the report on rural education (HSRC & EPC 2005: 2)<sup>42</sup> serves to heighten awareness of the realities facing the rural poor.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the same report (2005: 139-141) provides three compelling arguments that explain why rural education in general has been a low priority area and offers a sound motivation in favour of rural education. This provides a rationale for selecting rurality as a context for this study which will be highlighted in the ensuing discussion.

#### **2.6.1.1 Arguments for rural education being a low priority**

The three arguments for rural education being a low priority are: 1) urban areas are more organised and outspoken than rural ones and have succeeded substantially in dominating attention; 2). The general structure employed in government and policy documents is insensitive to specific conditions and needs of the rural poor; and 3)

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42 Emerging Voices: A Report on Education in South African Rural communities (2005) was commissioned by the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

43 “Being there is different. Being there is not romantic. To be there is to be engaged in a struggle to live and to hope. Money and jobs are scarce, the land itself harsh and demanding, and the schools which straddle the old rural routines and the glittering prospect of a different life heralded by political and economic change in the far-away cities, are often ill-equipped, under-resourced and poorly staffed.” (HSRC & EPC, 2005:2)

education cannot compensate for poverty and inequality and social inequalities need to be addressed before education will change (HSRC & EPC, 2005: 139).

### **2.6.1.2 Arguments in favour of rural education**

In arguing for rural education, the HSRC and EPC (2005: 140-141) assert first, that the Constitution of South Africa (1996) states that the nation is founded on principles of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom. It holds that “everyone has the right to a basic education which the state through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible.” Hence rural children, like their urban counterparts, have the right to quality education. I further argue that quality education is only possible if the linguistic rights of learners are respected. Second, a large proportion of the population of South Africa lives in rural areas which are struggling to emerge from the history of marginalisation and social and political oppression. Third, the history of the people in white farming areas in South Africa is one of exclusion of power and decision-making at many levels. On white farms, black workers and their families have been and still are amongst the poorest and most isolated workers in the country. These remain weak foundations on which to build robust political participation. Education cannot solve these problems, but it may give rural communities the means to articulate their problems and act on the many issues that confront them.

Fourth, contemporary South Africa has been founded on principles of human rights and social justice. Social justice, however, is not achieved by handing benefits to a passively grateful population, but is rather realised by an alert and critical citizenry. Education is central to the achievement of equality along a broad range of frontiers. Inequalities of race, age, disability and sexual orientation are accentuated both between urban and rural areas. Social justice requires that people be enabled to confront the injustices visited by inequality and poverty on the vast majority of people living in South Africa’s rural areas.

Last, development and democracy in rural South Africa are integral to one another. Both require the highest levels of education amongst all citizens. Inequalities between

rural and urban areas remain marked. It is not simply a question of providing more schools or guaranteeing people's rights. It is also about providing the enabling conditions to exercise the freedoms that come with enhanced capabilities.

The foregoing discussion has motivated the importance of education in rural communities and by upfronting the strengths and challenges facing rural communities, has by implication highlighted the importance of on-going research in rural communities. The researcher is of the view that in choosing rurality as a construct, this study will add depth to our understanding of the phenomenon of rurality in general and language preference and use more specifically.

### **2.6.2 Towards the definition of rurality as a sense of place**

Place or the environment plays a key role in shaping individuals holistically. Scientists from a variety of disciplines have confirmed that our behaviour, emotions, dispositions, and thoughts are, indeed shaped not just by our genes and neurochemistry, history and relationships, but also by our surroundings (Gallagher, 1993). Any meaningful educational study cannot be complete without consideration of the importance of place. There is something very powerful about the sense of place in rural communities that helps them transcend the challenges of poor infrastructure and few resources (Nadel & Sagawa, 2002). A powerful cultural frame of reference that may influence rural school communities is a salient attachment to place, in other words a sense of place. As a theoretical construct, sense of place can be described as a fluid "human experience of geographical contexts" (Gruenewald, 2003: 626). It is a "marriage between the geography of mind and geographical places" (Heaney, cited in Gruenewald, 2003: 626). "Place roots individuals in the social and cultural soils from which they have sprung together, holding them there in a grip of shared identity, a localised version of selfhood...Selfhood and placehood are completely intertwined" (Basso, cited in Gruenewald, 2003: 626). Understanding one's sense of place can deepen one's understanding of self. The analysed sense of place is a window to the Lebenswelt, a vehicle to self-knowledge (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991).

In extending the discussion of a sense of place in relation to policy implementation, Porter's (2001: 265) view that regardless of where policies are written, "reform is radically local", is particularly important. Of significance here is the noteworthy conclusion drawn by Argyris & Schön (1974, cited in Webb, Shumway & Shute, 1996) that theories of professional practice determine all deliberate behaviour. One's perspective shapes thoughts and influences behaviour. Educators (teachers and administrators) "lead and teach according to their theories of action" (Webb et al., 1996: 11). Rurality as a "sense of place," may influence rural communities' beliefs about the purpose(s) of schooling, the choices of language in their interactions, their conceptualisation of achievement, and their theories of action, including the ways in which they "localise" constitutional and educational mandates to create a basis for action.<sup>44</sup>

#### **2.6.2.1 Towards a definition of rurality**

Because rural schools and communities are diverse, rural education researchers acknowledge it is difficult to establish a universal set of characteristics to describe or define rural schools and communities (Lewis, 2003; Herzog & Pittman, 2003; Sherwood, 2001).<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the difficulty in defining rurality in most poor communities is, in itself, one of several common features frequently documented in the literature. These characteristics include:

- lack of universal definition
- school and community interdependence
- oppression as lived experience
- a history of conflict regarding purposes of schooling
- an "out migration" of young, intellectually able citizens, and
- a salient attachment to place.

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<sup>44</sup> The first national South African school curriculum was first introduced in 1997 to provide a common curriculum and to remove bias, discrimination and social injustice. It is central to building a new sense of citizenship and possibility. At its core is a commitment to human rights, equity and social justice. In order to achieve this it promotes learner-centredness, active learning, problem solving, critical thinking, an understanding of the world, and the skills of evaluation and analysis. However, some have argued that the curriculum is inappropriate as it does not cater for rural schools with limited resources (HSRC and EPC: 2005).

<sup>45</sup> A definition of "rural" in South Africa is difficult because of the movement of people between rural and urban areas. Their meaning and uses also vary considerably depending on who employs them and for what purposes (HSRC and EPC: 2005).

“People know when they are rural, but such perception does not satisfy demographers, policymakers, or educational researchers” (Rios, 1988: 1). While attempts have been made to quantitatively and qualitatively define “rural”, there does not appear to be a single agreed upon definition of what constitutes a “rural” community or “rural” education. For the purpose of this study, the definition of “rural” as used by Statistics South Africa (SSA) (2001) census will be used. This is a spatial definition which identifies Traditional Authority Areas (primarily “community owned” areas of South Africa) and formal rural areas (primarily commercial farms in erstwhile “white” areas of South Africa). This definition is particularly appropriate as the study focuses on four schools on commercial farms in a rural community.

While privilege and class play a role in some rural schools and communities, most rural schools and rural communities have an interdependent relationship. In rural communities, the school serves as the cultural and social centre of the community (Stern, 1994; Seal & Harmon, 1995; Lane & Dorfman, 1997; Kannapel & De Young, 1999; Collins, Flaxman & Schartman, 2001; Herzog & Pittman, 2003). Rural schools therefore, reflect their communities’ social stratification and are strongly influenced by the local economy (Seal & Harmon, 1995).<sup>46</sup>

### **2.6.2.2 Towards a definition of a sense of place**

Many inhabitants of rural areas have a salient attachment to place (Gruenewald, 2003). Budge (2004: 5) notes that this is not to say that rural people exclusively experience a sense of place, but this concept appears to be found more in literature on rural schools and communities than urban and suburban places. For some, a sense of place is experienced as belongingness stemming from a generational connection with family and community. For others, it is manifested in civic involvement for the purpose of a creating a better place to inhabit. Some speak of a spiritual connection with place. Others experience place as interdependence with the land. For all who experience a sense of place, it becomes a part of their identity.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> This study is located on commercial farms in South Africa where the community is influenced by the local economy, that is, farming of fresh produce.

<sup>47</sup> See data from the study of rural education in South Africa. The idea of belongingness is thus reflected: “we want education to be the same as in urban areas. We need to teach our children how to cultivate and look after livestock. We don’t need to buy everything: our children should develop what we already have. They must stop going to look for factory jobs – must stay and develop their own communities” (HSRC & EPC: 2005:3).

The study of place has recently come to the fore across a variety of disciplines, including architecture, ecology, geography, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, literary theory, psychology and cultural studies (Gruenewald, 2003). An understanding of place is vital to understanding “the nature of our relationships with each other and the world” (Gruenewald, 2003: 622).

Gruenewald (2003: 622) states that as an educational construct, there is “no single, axiomatic theory of place that might inform educational studies”. Place-conscious individuals are likely to demonstrate a sense of place in multiple ways. Budge (2004: 5) refers to six habits of place that are not mutually exclusive. The six habits are not exhaustive of the ways in which place can be experienced, but rather represent that which might have the greatest influence on educators’ beliefs about the purposes and practices of policies and theories of action related to student learning. The six habits or practised ways of living include: i) Connectedness; ii) Development of Identity and Culture; iii) Interdependence with the Land; iv) Spirituality; v) Ideology and Politics; and vi) Activism and Civic Engagement.

In her book, *The Power of Place*, Gallagher (1993: 101) argues that we can experience “place as person” and that this begins very early in life. Drawing from research in biological sciences, she describes the bond created between mother and infant as “...being not merely social or emotional, but environmental as well” (1993: 115). Place can also be experienced as connectedness to family and community. Experiencing place as connection to community is about valuing and cultivating local communities and aspiring to cultivate local roots (Howley, Harmon, & Leopald, 1996). However, in unhealthy communities, a sense of place has not been a far distant from knowing one’s place (Theobald, 1997). Relationships of power exhibited in, for example, racism, gender bias, sexual orientation and religious discrimination, require a critical sense of place from which one is empowered to both appreciate and critique the influence of place. Such connections with each other in relation to place also shape our personal identity and define our cultures.

“Places make us” and people are “place makers” (Gruenewald, 2003: 625-626). “As centres of experience, places...hold our culture and even our identity...We live our lives in places and our relationship to them colours who we are” (Gruenewald, 2003: 625). Just as we have the ability to be place makers, we also have the capacity (and perhaps the propensity) to be place breakers. Human capacity to manipulate and destroy ecosystems and cultures may make it necessary for “place making” to become the “ultimate human vocation” (Gruenewald, 2003: 636). This kind of “place making” may be dependent on experiencing place as interdependence with the land.

The caption “landscape shapes mindscape” (Haas & Nachtigal, 1998: 4) captures the essence of how place influences thinking and being. In rural places, hunting, fishing and gathering are more than hobbies and are ways in which to feed one’s family and supplement one’s income. Subsistence is a system that not only gives people food, but it also develops self-esteem and spirituality (Gallagher, 1993). This sense of pride and self-esteem is captured in the report on rural education as: “in the old days we used to reap the maize fields and sell bags of maize from this land. Let us make our own things, not compete with townships” (HSRC & EPC, 2005: 6).

Place-conscious spirituality rejects the notion that man’s destiny is to conquer or exploit the natural environment for our livelihoods. Barry (1983, quoted in Haas & Nachtigal, 1998: 119) argues: “It is the divine mandate to use the world justly and charitably” and that it is our “moral predicament” to act as stewards of our world. In many rural areas, the relationship between human and more-than-human life is paradoxical. The natural environment is important for both lifestyle and livelihood and such issues present the opportunity to experience a sense of place as ideology and politics. In tracing the history of the plight of children on commercial farms in South Africa<sup>48</sup>, one finds that education has been bound in complex and often contentious ways with agricultural production. While farm schools were established to prevent migration to cities, child labour was not regulated and often compromised the health and well-being of the children. In the period 1988 to 1996, there was decline in the number of farming units and in the population of farm workers. Job losses resulted in

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48 See Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (DoE, 2005: 48)

women being compelled to take on temporary work wherever they could find it, which affected their children's access to regular schooling (DoE, 2005: 49).

Using cultural studies as a frame of reference, specifically spatialised critical social theory, Gruenewald (2003: 629-631) fuses the meaning of place with that of cultural space. He introduces two perspectives relevant to experiencing place as ideology and politics, namely, relationships of power and geographies of struggle and resistance. Inhabitants of rural places, for example, may experience a sense of place in this way, as they struggle with the influence of the global economy in their lives. Some theorists speculate that a global economy has resulted in uneven development characterised as “dramatically disparate economic, social, and political conditions experienced in different geographical areas that are interdependent parts of the same economic system...” (Gruenewald, 2003: 629). Many rural places have experienced worsening conditions economically, socially, and politically. Furthermore, from the perspective of critical social theory, oppressed groups of people may experience place as “spaces of resistance, agency, and affiliation” (Gruenewald, 2003: 631), and from these material spaces they may develop worldviews different from the dominant culture. Experience of place as politics and ideology can challenge our democratic ideals while providing us with the opportunity to experience place through activism and civic engagement.

Activism and civic engagement may be related to all, or many, of the other ways in which place can be experienced. It is probable that a sense of place promotes the development of social capital. While citizens of urban communities may benefit from increased co-operation with the relevant stakeholders, policymakers and scholars suggest that rural inhabitants need to re-evaluate their thinking regarding individualism (versus cooperation) and that they may need to consider becoming involved economically and civically involved in non-traditional ways of living and work if they are to survive and thrive (Freshwater, 2001).



### **2.6.3      Rurality as a sense of place and education**

In the past decade, issues related to social justice have come to the fore in public education, and have increasingly become a prominent topic in literature related to educational leadership (Furman & Gruenewald, 2004). One aspect of the discourse related to social justice is a focus on academic underachievement as a forecaster of future disadvantage and a target for reforming educational systems. The historic debate over purposes of rural schooling is fundamental to how achievement and “achievement gaps” might be viewed in rural contexts. The literature on rural education is replete with references to the importance of place-based or place-conscious pedagogies and the power they hold for rural learners and rural communities (Collins, Flaxman, & Schartman, 2001; Haas & Nachtigal, 1998; Harmon & Branhan, 1999; Howley et al., 1996; Kannapel & De Young, 1999; Ley et al., 1996; Theobald & Nachtigal, 1999). The recent report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (MCRE) (DoE, 2005: 53) cited the greatest challenge to teaching on farm schools is that of multi-grade classes. Teachers urgently require capacity development to cope with multi-grade classes. Seminars and workshops designed to provide models for school improvement on commercial farm schools in rural communities should be organised as part of a structured and on-going professional development programme for farm school teachers.

A review of the literature reveals that a complex and dynamic combination of factors has contributed to the achievement gap over time (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002; Huggins & Celio, 2003). Represented in four broad categories, these factors can be understood as explanations related to: i) student and family; ii) school; iii) community; and iv) broad social forces. Explanations for achievement gaps or underachievement in rural settings relate to the same four categories.

Prejudices against rural people are strong, stereotyping is socially sanctioned (Herzog & Pittman, 2002) and rural citizens have internalised messages of inferiority from the

dominant culture (Haas & Nachtigal, 1998). The HSRC and EPC report (2005: 7) captures the rural poor's longing for social justice:

*I would like our school to be equal in condition to those in urban areas. The schools there are beautiful and the learners don't get cold because the classes are well built.*

Rural students have greater internal conflict regarding their post-high school choices and have evidenced an aspiration for "a sense of place" (Howley et al., 1996). Seeking to avoid the inevitability of having to leave family and community to attend college or pursue a career, some rural students may aspire to stay in the community and thus view formal education as having little relevance to their hopes and dreams:

*I want our schools in the rural areas to come to the old method. A child must learn what is going to develop him or her, just like the whites. Whites plough oranges with the hope of getting the jam at a later stage. We were sewing and doing home craft at school but nowadays we don't see those things happening. It is not going to help to speak English without having something that is going to help us. Agriculture is important for us because it is where we live. (HSRC & EPC, 2005: 98-99)*

One study found that those rural learners who do plan to attend college possessed "substantial fears" about their academic ability (Ley, et al., 1996). The social capital of a family promotes academic achievement regardless of the type of community students live in (Isreal et al., 2001), and the disproportionate number of families with limited education and incomes below the poverty line living in rural environments, impact both on human capital and social capital in rural contexts.

School-related explanations such as inequitable funding systems, issues related to teacher quality, inequitable opportunities for learning, cultural discontinuity and poor pedagogy in rural areas, are similar to those in urban contexts. These factors are likely to contribute to underachievement. The socioeconomic status of families and family expectations may cause some rural learners to experience cultural discontinuity between their homes and the school. Rural places are part of the broader society, and the broad social forces that influence underachievement in urban contexts also impact on rural places (Budge, 2004: 7).

#### **2.6.4 School and community relations**

The rural school and its community are “inextricably bound” (Stern, 1994: 21). Just as family social capital contributes to student achievement, so does community social capital (Isreal et al., 2001). Many rural communities have limited social capital and, given the interdependent nature of rural schools and their communities, the level of community social capital is vital to any consideration of underachievement in rural students.

Collaborative planning between the national, provincial and district offices, and other stakeholders in the private sector is vital to improving learner achievement. While this kind of planning and partnering will support schools, families and learners, strong school management and leadership that is sensitive to the rural context and its unique circumstances, is necessary for such efforts to succeed.

In spite of the significance of understanding contexts in educational life, no evidence exists to suggest that substantial numbers of teachers or school managers understand or even give much attention to the principles of sound professional practice (Webb et al., 1996: 13). “As a result of their professional training and socialisation, teachers and school administrators tend to reflect and represent a special set of professional and universalistic values which introduces a non-local influence into the community” (Boyd, 1982: 1124). In other words, they do not understand fully the context in which they teach.

A further complication arises in the South African context, as the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 1997b) expects teachers to fulfil different roles from those they performed under the apartheid regime. Teachers, in addition to being assessors and learning area/ subject specialists who mediate learning and interpret and design learning programmes and materials, are expected to be leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and counsellors. Within each of these roles they are expected to demonstrate well-defined practical, foundational and reflexive competencies. The additional roles that

teachers are expected to perform, alongside the expectation that they will implement a curriculum in such a manner that it will empower children and transform the classroom, are unrealistic. They place a burden on all teachers, and more especially on teachers in rural schools. Little in their own educational experience and teacher training has prepared teachers for these roles and expectations. Due to the discouraging situation in rural schooling, there is little wonder that such a large gap exists between expectation and reality in rural schools (HSRC & EPC, 2005: 108-109).

### **2.6.5 Rurality as a sense of place and language**

In keeping with the argument for rurality as a sense of place as a contextual and theoretical framework for this study, this section will argue for the importance of language as a powerful symbol of ethnicity.

Within any group, the first, most important unique and special kind of symbol is that of language. Nash (1989: 13) writes: “Language is a marker akin to dress ... But language as a group marker has more social and psychological weight than dress does. Successful mastery of language implies learning it from birth, in the context of kinship or primary group.”

Fishman (1989) notes that, unlike all other cultural symbols, language can also be said to stand in part-whole relationship to reality by virtue of the fact that language serves as the interface through which people experience their entire reality. Phrased more succinctly, language is part of reality, but it is also the means for experiencing reality. Thus, if language links people with reality — and if particular languages promote a particular perception of reality — then language bears immense importance for a given cultural (that is, ethnic) group. Fishman (1989: 32) has the following to say about the issue: “All language stands in this very [metonymic] relation to the rest of reality. The link between language and ethnicity is thus one of sanctity by-association”. Ross (1979: 9) concurs, equating the reality interface function of language as a kind of “shorthand”. According to Ross, “Language is probably the most powerful single symbol of ethnicity because it serves as shorthand for all that makes a group special

and unique”. Language also has an affective potential. Fishman (1989: 27) states that language is often regarded as having been “acquired with mother’s milk” as is one’s “mother-tongue,” a cultural symbol that a member of a cultural group first encounters.

The foregoing discussion emphasises language as a powerful marker of a community, and therefore presents a strong motivation for the use of a combined model of Stern’s (1983) and Sookrajh’s (1999) models of language development (cf. Section 2.5) in which the learner is located within a home environment, in this instance a rural setting, where some form of language learning takes place. Learners’ language development and attitudes to languages are influenced by various factors in the communities. In the context of this study, the question raised is: How does the language learnt at home fit into the language preference and use of the school and community environment? It can be argued that the school is located within a community that influences languages taught and learnt and that the influence of the community on language choice is likely to be powerful. The rural community in this study finds itself in a wider environment of the district and province which may or may not support the languages of the home, school or community. Beyond the district and province, lies the state with its eleven official language/s which influence language attitudes and language policy. All this impacts directly or indirectly on the learner and the language teaching situation.

## **2.7 Summary**

This section has argued that central to the discourse on teaching and learning in rural areas, is the issue of language preference and use. I argue that all teaching and learning is mediated through language and the choice of language reflects the beliefs and values of the community which are determined from beyond the immediate environment of the school. Hence rurality as a sense of place in this study is an important construct for investigating issues of education in general and language preference and use in particular. Expanding on Sookrajh’s (1999) adaptation of Stern’s (1983) model of language learning is appropriate, as the adaptation made by Sookrajh locates the learner, who brings to school certain linguistic abilities and values, at the heart of the teaching and learning situation. The implementation of the language policy in

question, namely, the LiEP (1997), must be placed in a provincial and a national environment as it comprises an instruction from education authorities to schools. This study raises the question of how the languages learnt at home fit into the languages learnt at school and used in the community.

In developing the theoretical framework, *rurality as a sense of place*, it was argued that rural schools and their communities have an interdependent relationship. The geographical location, as well as the culture of rural places, may have a powerful influence on how teachers negotiate teaching and learning and shape their theory of action including the ways in which they “localise” mandates of provincial and national authorities in education to address problems related to achievement and underachievement.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter was structured in two sections, the first of which traced the history of language policy development in South Africa. Here it was noted that the past response to the language diversity in South Africa has been a policy of state bilingualism that largely ignored the needs of the speakers of African and other languages in favour of English and Afrikaans. Language planning in education occurred in a context of educational segregation on ethnolinguistic lines to the point of dividing white educational systems into two mediums of instruction: English and Afrikaans. This discussion sets the scene to understand the dynamics involved in making the shift to language planning in a democracy.

The review of studies in language policy implementation in South Africa pointed to the perceived high status of English with the resultant marginalisation of Afrikaans and the African languages and the absence of school language policies that align with the intentions of the LiEP. It also drew attention to multilingualism as a resource and the elaborate and complex patterns of the broader communicative competence of multilingual children as opposed to monolingual children. The presentation of the political, economic and sociolinguistic obstacles in implementing the language policy

has set the stage for understanding and interrogating some of the challenges facing rural communities in implementing the language policy.

The second section of this chapter presented an argument for the context. I posit the view that the geographical location, as well as the culture of rural places, have a powerful influence on teaching and learning and therefore shape the actions of teachers including the ways in which they “localise” mandates to address the problem.

Furthermore, I hold the view that while the constitutional mandate recognises that all learners have a right to quality education, rural education has been a low priority area for government action and therefore warrants ongoing research. This study will add to the existing knowledge base of rurality and its challenges, more specifically from a perspective on language policy implementation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: THE ROAD TO BABEL<sup>49</sup>

*.... research is not wholly objective activity carried out by detached scientists. It is... a social activity affected by the researcher's own motivations and values. It also takes place within a broader social context, within which politics and power relations influence what research is undertaken, how it is carried out and whether and how it is reported and acted upon*  
(Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1996: 15).

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe my role as a researcher and inquirer seeking to understand the language preferences, experiences, understandings and practices of parents, teachers and learners in relation to constitutional contexts in respect of the language policy in South Africa. I use critical theory to drive the methodology as it responds to human liberation and social justice issues (Prasad, 2005). I begin by setting out the research aims and context of the study after which I discuss the research paradigm, motivating for the decision to adopt a mixed method approach for the study. This includes the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data that would cast new light on the dialectical relationship between language preference and practice, and specifically to respond to three research questions that provided the frame of reference for this study.

#### 3.2 Research aim

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate teacher, parent and learner preferences and use of language, and to establish the implications of these for language practice in schools on rural commercial farms. The reason behind this aim is the belief that practice is enhanced by the investigation into a community's language preference, especially when the investigation involves the community members (namely, learners,

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<sup>49</sup> In the context of this dissertation, "The Road to Babel" represents the researcher's journey into the rural commercial farm community to collect the relevant data for this study.



parents and teachers) as participants. The research questions arising out of this aim are summarised below:

**Critical question 1:**

What is the language preference and use of a selected rural commercial farm community?

**Critical question 2:**

How do teachers on rural commercial farm schools respond to the LiEP and its implementation?

**Critical question 3:**

What are the implications of the language preference and use of a selected rural commercial farm community and teachers' responses to the LiEP and its implementation for language practice at rural commercial farm schools?

### **3.3 Research context**

The research context in this study is presented by describing the general research setting which is Gauteng Province, the district and the four primary schools used in this study. I will focus on the language distribution as it has significance for this study.

#### **3.3.1 The Gauteng Province**

Gauteng is one of the nine provinces<sup>50</sup> that came into being because of the amalgamation process of the previous administrative system of government that characterised the Public Service prior to 1994 in South Africa. The name Gauteng comes from the Sesotho phrase meaning *Place of Gold*, referring to the thriving gold industry in the province following the discovery of gold in Johannesburg in 1886.

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50. Prior to 1994, South Africa comprised four provinces, namely, Cape, Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal. In 1994 after South Africa became a democracy, the country was divided into nine provinces, namely, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and North West.

**Figure 3.1: Map of South Africa indicating Gauteng Province where the research was conducted**



Gauteng comprises a combination of rural and urban areas with a variety of settlement types,

namely, the urban environment, suburban environment, peri-urban environment and the rural environment. The Gauteng province comprises a population of 8 837 178 out of a total South African population of 44 819 778. According to Statistics South Africa (2001: 6), 7 348 423 persons (97.2%) of Gauteng's population are urban dwellers and 246 380 persons (2.8%) live in rural areas.<sup>51</sup>

In Gauteng 14.4% of the residents speak Afrikaans at home, 12.5% speak English, 1.9% speak isiNdebele, 7.6% speak IsiXhosa, 21.5% speak isiZulu, 10.7% speak Sepedi, 13.1% speak Sesotho, 8.4% speak Setswana, 1.4% speak SiSwati, 1.7% speak Tshivenda, and 5.7% speak Xitsonga. 1.0% of the population speaks a non-official language at home.<sup>52</sup>

The Gauteng province has three metropolitan municipalities, namely the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality; The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality and the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality; three district councils, namely the Sedibeng District Municipality, Metsweding District Municipality and the West Rand District Municipality; and nine local councils/municipalities. The latter comprise of Emfuleni, Midvaal, Lesedi, Nokeng tsa Taemane, Kungwini, Mogale City, Randfontein, Westonaria and Merafong City. This research is located in the Kungwini municipal area.

<sup>51</sup> See Statistics South Africa (2001). Census Statistics South Africa. Pretoria: Government Printer.

<sup>52</sup> See [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:South\\_Africa\\_provinces\\_showing\\_Gauteng\\_Province](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:South_Africa_provinces_showing_Gauteng_Province).

### 3.3.2 Kungwini Municipality<sup>53</sup>

The research for the purposes of this dissertation confined itself to four schools on commercial farms in the Kungwini municipality. Kungwini is an isiNdebele word meaning “mist”. Because the area is misty, the name was relevant for the local community. The language distribution of Kungwini is recorded on the table below:

**Table 3.1: Language distribution of Kungwini**

Language	Population	%
isiNdebele	32 146	20.11%
Afrikaans	30 757	19.24%
Sepedi	29 596	18.51%
isiZulu	26 526	16.59%
Sesotho	9 502	5.94%
Setswana	7 428	4.65%
Xitsonga	7 178	4.49%
English	5 372	3.36%
SiSwati	4 963	3.10%
isiXhosa	3 620	2.26%

### 3.3.3 Profile of the schools

The purpose of this section is to highlight the language profile of the school population as well the socio-economic and infrastructural conditions that have a bearing on decisions concerning language planning, teaching and learning. The information relating to the profile of the schools was gleaned from a contextual questionnaire filled in by principals (see Appendix F). All four schools selected are on commercial farms in the rural area of Kungwini Municipality in Gauteng Province. The schools were chosen according to the following criteria:

- public (state) schools
- diversity across the ex-departments, i.e. three of the four schools were ex-DET schools and one was an ex-HOA school.<sup>54</sup>
- willingness of schools to participate in the research

<sup>53</sup> See <http://www.routes.co.za/municipalities/gp/metsweding.html>

<sup>54</sup> In the apartheid era, there were nineteen separate education departments of education in South Africa. The Department of Education and Training (DET), which was previously named Bantu Education Department, catered for the African population and was one of the nineteen education departments.

*School A (Entabeni)* is an ex-Department of Education and Training (DET) school historically reserved for “Africans”. It has served the community for the past forty years. The school was previously located in a mealie field about a kilometre from the present school. It was built from pre-cast walling and corrugated iron and did not have a fence or ablution facilities. Owing to repeated vandalism, the school was moved to its current location. Being on a commercial farm, the school serves mainly the children of farm labourers and those from a nearby informal settlement. The children from the informal settlement were all originally from farms which have since closed.

The school has two hundred and nine learners and the average class size is twenty-six learners per class. Of the 209 learners, 70 (33.5%) speak isiZulu as a home language; 62 (30%) isiNdebele; 15 (7%) SiSwati; 40 (19%) Xitsonga; 5 (2%) isiXhosa; 7 (3%) Sesotho; 8 (3.8%) Sepedi and 1 (.05%) Setswana. The school has 10 teachers, of which 5 (50%) speak isiZulu as a home language, 2 (20%) Setswana and the remaining 3 speak English (10%), Sepedi (10%) and isiXhosa (10%) respectively. None of the teachers live in the area. According to the staff establishment norms, the school is entitled to 6 teachers which would have resulted in multi-grade classes<sup>55</sup>, but the school overcame this situation by recruiting volunteers who receive an honorarium from the School Governing Body (SGB)<sup>56</sup> for their services.

The classes are organised as one unit per Grade from Grades R to 7 and offer isiZulu as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT)<sup>57</sup> in Grades 1 to 3 and English in Grades 4 to 7; isiZulu as a subject in the latter grades. However, all the Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM)<sup>58</sup> are in English. According to the principal this is so because the textbooks in isiZulu are not of good quality. This raises the question of

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55 A multi-grade class refers to a class comprising learners of two or more grades in one classroom. This is a common occurrence in schools where the number of learners per grade is such that it is not economically viable to employ a teacher per grade and therefore small groups of learners are combined to make up a multi-grade class which is taught by one teacher.

56 With the passing of the South African Schools Act (SASA) in 1996, all schools were required to elect SGBs comprising parents (in the majority) and educators to manage and govern schools.

57 LoLT is an acronym for the Language of Teaching and Learning through which the curriculum is delivered. It was previously referred to as Medium of Instruction (MoI). See the South African Schools Act (1996).

58 LTSM is an acronym for Learning and Teaching Support Materials that include mainly written texts, electronic materials and audiovisual materials that are used by teachers and learners to mediate learning.

the quality of teaching and learning in isiZulu at the school in the Foundation Phase.<sup>59</sup> According to the Department of Education's rating system, schools are categorised according to quintiles; quintile 1 being the poorest of the poor and quintile 6 being well-resourced schools in affluent areas. School A (Entabeni) is classified as a quintile 1 school. The entire building is constructed of metal which is extremely hot in the summer. It has a small office block with a secretary's office, principal's office, a stock room where consumables are kept, a resource room with a TV, VCR and computer, and shelves with many books. The classrooms are spread around the property. There is a room for each grade.

The poverty of many learners is evident in the existence of a feeding scheme, a vegetable garden, the produce from which is distributed to parents of learners and a school transport system which is totally subsidised by the Department of Education. All learners are bussed to and from school every day.<sup>60</sup> However, the school enjoys a good relationship with the owners of the neighbouring farms who provide them with some financial and material support and other forms of help in times of emergency.

**School B (Nottinghill)** is an ex-DET school historically reserved for "Africans". Education on the farm started as early as 1923, but no written records are available to prove this. In 1971 a mud and brick structure with a thatched roof was built on the farm by the farm manager. In 1990, the school was upgraded to its present structure of five classrooms built of bricks. In 1998 the school received electricity which was donated by Eskom.<sup>61</sup> In 1998 the borehole system was upgraded. The enrolment figures have increased from 101 in 2001 to 243 in 2005. The reason for this increase in enrolment is the acquisition of scholar transport (two buses) that enables learners from informal settlements outside the farm to attend school at Nottinghill. The school has served the community for the past eighty-three years and its location on a rural commercial farm means that it serves mainly the children of farm labourers and those

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<sup>59</sup> The Foundation Phase (Grades R – 3) is the first of three phases of schooling in the General Education and Training Band. The next two phases are the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 – 6) and the Senior Phase (Grades 7 – 9) respectively.

<sup>60</sup> The feeding scheme is fully subsidised by the Department of Health and learners are provided one nutritious meal per day. The transport system is fully subsidised by the Department of Education that selects a service provider through the departmental tender process to transport learners to and from agreed upon points on the farms to school. The same systems operate at Schools B and C.

<sup>61</sup> Eskom is a vertically integrated operation that generates, transmits and distributes electricity. It generates 95% of the electricity used in South Africa. The ownership of Eskom rests in the South African government. See <http://www.eskom.co.za>

from a nearby informal settlement. The school has two hundred and forty three learners and the average class size is twenty-five learners per class. Of the 243 learners, 50% are isiNdebele home language speakers; 38% isiZulu; 10% Tsonga and 2% isiXhosa. The school has 6 teachers, of which 2 (33.3%) speak isiZulu as a home language, 1 (16.7%) Setswana, 1 (16.7%), Sepedi, 1 (16.7%), isiNdebele and Tshivenda (16.7%). The school operates on a multi-grade system<sup>62</sup> where Grades 1 and 2, 4 and 5, and 6 and 7 are combined respectively. Learners are offered isiZulu as LoLT in Grades 1 to 3 and English in Grades 4 to 7 with isiZulu as a subject in the latter grades. The LTSM for Grades 1 to 3 is in isiZulu with the addition of English for Literacy. Grades 4 to 7 use English materials for all learning areas except for isiZulu which is taught as a subject in Grades 4 to 7. The poverty of many learners is evident in the existence of a feeding scheme and a school transport system which is totally subsidised by the Department of Education. All learners are bussed to and from school every day.

**School C (Kindersorg)** is an ex-DET school historically reserved for “Africans”. The number of years that this school has been in existence is not known as there is no documented evidence as to when this school was started. The records available date from 1978, but one of the SGB members has vouched for the school’s existence prior to 1978 as she attended this school in 1975 as a learner. The school serves the children of farm labourers. It has fifty learners, 40% of whom speak Sepedi as a home language; 50% isiNdebele and 10% isiZulu. The school has a staff of three comprising the principal, 1 teacher and a secretary, of which 2 (66.7%) speak Sepedi and 1 (33.3%) Setswana as a home language. The school operates on a multi-grade system where Grades 1, 2 and 3, and Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 are combined respectively. This effectively means that the principal is a full-time teacher. When schools are requested by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to send two representatives to a meeting, the school has to be managed by the school secretary. Learners are offered isiZulu as LoLT in Grades 1 to 3 and English in Grades 4 to 7 with isiZulu as a subject in the latter grades. The LTSM for Grades 1 to 3 is in isiZulu for life Skills; English and isiZulu for Literacy and English for Numeracy. When asked why this is the case

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<sup>62</sup> A multi-grade class refers to a class comprising learners of two or more grades in one classroom. This is a common occurrence in schools where the number of learners per grade is such that it is not economically viable to employ a teacher per grade and therefore small groups of learners are combined to make up a multi-grade class which is taught by one teacher.

the principal responded that the language for Numeracy in isiZulu is too difficult. Grades 4 to 7 use English materials for all learning areas except for isiZulu which is taught as a subject in Grades 4-7.

From my personal observations and through discussion with the principal, I gleaned that the low socio-economic status of the learners, together with the poor infrastructure, resources and access to the school in rainy weather, remain a constant threat to the culture of learning at the school. A feeding scheme and a school transport system that is totally subsidised by the Department of Education are in operation. All learners are bussed to and from school every day.

At the beginning of the data collection process for this research, the GDE commenced negotiations to merge this school with school B and this process is gaining momentum.<sup>63</sup>

*School D (Wesdorp)* is an ex-HOA school historically reserved for “whites”. The school has been in existence for 102 years and boasts a well-documented history.<sup>64</sup> Although it is situated on farmland, it draws learners from both working class and middle class homes from nearby suburbs. Of a roll of two hundred and eighty learners, eight are “black” and speak an African home language; the rest are “white” who speak Afrikaans as the home language. The school is therefore almost homogenous linguistically. All members of staff are Afrikaans first language speakers and only one speaks isiZulu as another language. The support for the eight “black” learners using an African home language is extremely limited.

The school is organised according to grades and has one class per grade from Grades R to 7, with the exception of Grades 1 and 6 that have two classes each. The school is rich in resources which include a computer laboratory. Learners are offered Afrikaans

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<sup>63</sup> Due to the poor conditions and size of School C which is not economically viable, the GDE is pursuing its plan to merge School C with School B. The GDE intends supplying School B with an additional mobile classroom to accommodate learners from School C. Both the School Governing Bodies have met and merged and it is intended that the new combined school will commence in January 2007.

<sup>64</sup> The school log book has been kept since the inception of the school, detailing the day-to-day occurrences which include visits from departmental officials, important events and issues of staffing and enrolment of learners.

as LoLT from Grades 1 to 7 and English is taught as a subject. LTSM is available in Afrikaans and English. According to the school secretary, 60% of the learners are bussed to and from school and 40% are transported by parents.

### **3.3.4 Summary**

This section has provided a demographic account of the research context, drawing particular attention to the language profile of the province, the municipality and the four schools. In addition, it provided a full description of the schools, information about which was gleaned from a contextual questionnaire; an analysis of documents; discussion with principals and staff; and my personal observations as the researcher.

## **3.4 Research approach**

### **3.4.1 Research paradigms and approaches**

At the outset, it is important for me to set out the paradigm that framed this study. The question that comes to the fore is: What is a paradigm? A paradigm is defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994: 107-116) as a “set of beliefs with ultimates or first principles”. This implies that researchers need to get ideas about the nature of reality, to identify the relationship between variables and to specify appropriate methods for conducting particular research. In simple terms, a paradigm is a set of propositions that explains how the world is perceived, and it contains a worldview, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world, telling researchers and social scientists in general what is important, what is legitimate and what is reasonable (Patton, 1990; Sarantakos, 2002).<sup>65</sup>

Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe beliefs as “basic in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith; there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness.” Their categorisation of four research paradigms is also useful: positivist; postpositivist;

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<sup>65</sup> Chapter Three: Research Methodology, University of Wollongong. Cited in [www.library.udw.au/adt-mwu/uploads/approved/adt](http://www.library.udw.au/adt-mwu/uploads/approved/adt)



critical theory and constructivism. The basic principles of paradigms are ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology is a theory of being, and is concerned with what exists and the form and nature of the world. Epistemology is a theory of knowing, or how we obtain knowledge of external reality. It is concerned with origin, nature and limits of human knowledge, and how things can be made known to the researcher. Methodology concerns how the reality of an issue is investigated. These principles are usually interconnected, since the researcher who adopts a position on one of the principles is constrained on the position that may be taken on the others.

In discussing the research paradigms, Guba and Lincoln (1994: 107-116) claim that positivist and postpositivist positions are in conflict with critical theory because “either there is a ‘real’ reality or there is not” and “inquiry is either value free or it is not.” Heap (1992) also argues that objectivist, natural science-related and interpretative, social science-related techniques cannot be mixed, as they arise from different assumptions. However, Vulliamy (1990) claims that there is a gamut of researchers, from those who argue that one can mix methods, to those who argue that methods are related to paradigms and thus cannot be mixed. Those who argue that methods can be mixed, such as Miles and Huberman (1994), stress the importance of the purpose of the research in determining the methods used. Lather (1992) mentions that one should not place too much weight on these divisions, but should treat them lightly. However, Leibowitz’s (2001) position that methods can be mixed and that the paradigm will impact on the manner in which the data is interpreted and on the knowledge claims asserted for the various methods, holds good for this study.

This research design is framed within a critical tradition and uses critical theory as a theoretical framework which responds to human liberation and social justice issues (Prasad, 2005). Guba and Lincoln (1994: 112-115) depict the aim of critical enquiry as the critique and transformation of aspects of society, with the key aspect being that change is facilitated as individuals develop greater insight into existing state of affairs and are stimulated to act on it.

Comstock (cited in Prasad, 2005: 149) argues that critical theory is a response to the experiences, desires and needs of oppressed people – and that working in a critical theory tradition requires following a five step process that guides the design, implementation and analysis of the research project. The first step is *interpretative* and calls for an understanding the life worlds of the participants. The second step calls for an understanding of the relevant *socio-cultural structures* and processes that may mediate or constrain subjective understandings. The third step combines input from the first two steps into a single analysis that juxtaposes social actors' subjective interpretations with existing socio-cultural structures. This is the moment of *ideology-critique* where the researcher actively looks for inconsistencies, contradictions, distortions and asymmetries. The fourth step is the *awareness* or participative step where the researcher shares the interpretations in an effort to empower participants in developing alternative practices and social arrangements. The last step is that of *praxis* where the researcher helps participants to develop a critical programme to change their own immediate condition with a view to ensuring social justice.

In the context of this study only the first three steps discussed above are deemed appropriate, as this study is exploratory and seeks to understand, critique and create awareness of issues of language preference, language rights and hegemony in a rural setting. This study will therefore, establish the status of languages used in the community with the view to raise language awareness among teachers and enhance language planning at schools through the use of a combined quantitative and qualitative research methodology.

The methodological decisions for this study were derived mainly from literature. It is not agreed in the literature whether quantitative and qualitative approaches are paradigms or methods. Guba & Lincoln (1994) maintain that qualitative and quantitative approaches are in fact methods rather than paradigms, but Vulliamy (1990) argues that qualitative research is an approach incorporating a variety of perspectives and techniques. The pitting of quantitative against qualitative research is seen as a counterproductive argument by Miles & Huberman (1994). They are amongst the many (Hillocks, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Drew & Demack, 1998) who maintain that quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined in a study,

where the methods supplement or triangulate each other. Kelle (2001: 6) is of the view that if qualitative and quantitative methods are combined in a way to answer a specific research question, in principle, one of the following three outcomes may arise:

- qualitative and quantitative results may *converge*, such that the results lead to the same conclusions,
- qualitative and quantitative results may relate to different objects or phenomena, but may be *complementary* to each other and thus can be used to *supplement* each other,
- qualitative and quantitative results may be *divergent* or *contradictory*.

In the case of this study, which seeks to investigate the community's language preference and its implications for school language policy and practice, the second outcome listed above, namely, that *qualitative and quantitative results may relate to different objects or phenomena, but may be complementary to each other and thus can be used to supplement each other*, applies. For example, the language preference survey was used to collect data relating to the community's language preference in public and private situations and the data for this was quantifiable, while the semi-structured interviews related to language policy and practice in the schools and used the qualitative method of inquiry. These are two different phenomena which are used to complement each other.

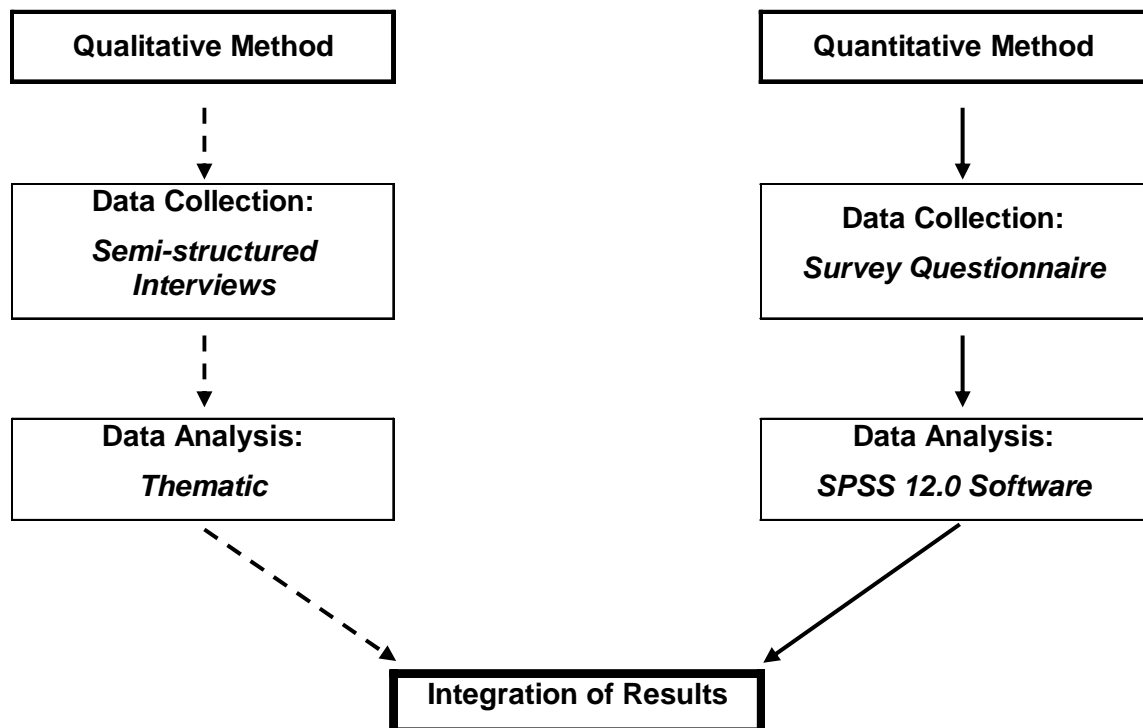
Furthermore, qualitative methods were used to explain and reinterpret what is suggested in the quantified data generated from the language preference survey. Miles and Huberman (1994) maintain that we should consider not which method to use, but which method is appropriate for a particular purpose.

In summary, this research itself entailed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, in order to explore different aspects of the overall project. The first objective was seen as most suited to the quantitative approach associated with content analysis; the two others, such as the exploration of language practice in the school and the

teachers' response to the LiEP, were most suited to a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviewing and close readings of various texts.

A further argument for the use of this methodology is the context for this study, namely, a rural community and the language issue being investigated. Literature indicates that rural schools and communities are not well understood by policy makers and professionals; and rural education is under-researched, contributing to a weak knowledge base (Sherwood, 2001). Furthermore, in respect of language policy, Cooper (1987: 183) states that "language {policy} cannot be understood apart from its social context or apart from the history which produced that context." Due to the weight of these assertions, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in complementary ways to obtain data that would assist in the achievement of the objectives of study.

**Figure 3.2: The structure of the mixed method approach used in this research**



The issue of ethics in research is a key concern. As Ely et al. (1991: 28) describe it, "Ethical concerns are woven through every aspect of it." According to Cohen and Manion (1996: 233), the use of multiple data collection methods is called triangulation.

The term describes the use of two or more methods of data collection in a single study. For Mouton and Marais (1990: 91), the inclusion of multiple sources of data collection is likely to increase the reliability of the observation and further, the use of different methods of data collection in a single project compensates for the limitations of each.

In this study, the use of survey questionnaires, questionnaires, interviews, perusal of school records, establishing the language profiles of learners, teachers and parents, and observation of lessons in classrooms, have served to build a valid assessment of the existing language practice at the four schools on rural commercial farms. The data was used in a triangulating perspective during the collation process.

Internal and external validity was addressed in this study. Internal validity, the extent to which findings are congruent with reality, was addressed by using triangulation and confirming interpretations with informants. In this study, internal validity was evidenced by noting and reviewing responses from participants. In terms of external validity, a description of all aspects of the study which includes the context and responses of participants, are provided to allow for other researchers to decide on appropriateness (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994).

The extent to which findings have been consistent, has been addressed by the exploration of the underlying educational research theory, triangulating data and providing a detailed commentary on how this study was undertaken. It must be noted that 100% of the learner population of the grades indicated earlier of the four rural commercial farm schools were used in the study.

Newman's (1997: 14) definition adequately sums up and argues for the choice of eclecticism to research methodology:

*On one hand the quantitative style "measures objective facts; focuses on variables; reliability is the key; is value free; is independent of context; focuses on many cases/subjects; analyses statistics and the researcher is detached." On the other hand, the qualitative style constructs social reality and cultural meaning; focuses on interactive processes and events; is authentic; the values are present and explicit; is*

*situationally constrained; focus on a few cases/ subjects; analyses themes; and the researcher is involved.*

### 3.5 The research process

In this section, I discuss the important aspects of the research process that underpin the stages of data production, namely, methodological approaches employed in the study (summarised in Table 3.2); the research participants; the research instruments and the data analysis.

**Table 3.2 Methodological approaches used in the study**

<b>CRITICAL QUESTIONS</b>	<b>MODE OF ENQUIRY</b>	<b>SOURCE OF INFORMATION</b>	<b>INSTRUMENTS</b>	<b>PLACE / FREQUENCY</b>
<b>Critical question 1:</b> What is the language preference and use of a selected rural commercial farm community?	<b>Quantitative</b> Cohen, L & Manion, L (1996)	Learners; parents and teachers from four schools on rural commercial farms	Language preference survey questionnaire ( <b>Appendix A</b> )	Each participant was interviewed once and the questionnaire was filled in during the interview at the four schools
<b>Critical question 2:</b> How do teachers on rural commercial farm schools respond to the LiEP and its implementation?	<b>Qualitative</b> Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (1994) Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (1994) Ely, M. with M. Anzul, T. Friedman, D Garner & A Steinmetz (1991)	Teachers; school governing body chairpersons and principals	Semi-Structured Interviews ( <b>Appendices B; C; D; E</b> )	One interview per respondent was conducted mainly at the schools
<b>Critical question 3:</b> What are the implications of the language preference and use of a selected rural commercial farm community and teachers' responses to the LiEP and its implementation for language practice at rural commercial farm schools?	<b>Quantitative &amp; Qualitative</b> Cohen, L; Manion, L & Morrison, K (2001) Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1994)	Derived from data collected for critical questions one and two	Language preference survey questionnaire ( <b>Appendix A</b> ) Semi-Structured Interviews and Questionnaires ( <b>Appendices B; C; D; E</b> )	The information gleaned from data for Critical Questions 1 and 2 will inform the answer to Critical Question 3

### 3.5.1 Research participants

The literature reviewed describes various methods of sampling participants for different types of investigations (Cohen & Manion, 1996; Morse, 1998). I chose the purposive sampling technique where schools within a particular geographic proximity in the rural Kungwini area in the Gauteng Province who met the criteria for the study and who were willing to participate were selected. The following categories and numbers of respondents participated in the study:

- 120 learners (2 schools selected 100% of Grade 7 learners; one school selected 100% of Grades 6 and 7 learners as this was a multi-grade class, and one school selected 100% of Grades 4 to 7 learners as these learners comprised one multi-grade class).
- 30 teachers from the 4 rural commercial farm schools.
- 167 parents from the 4 rural commercial farm schools.

In interacting with this sample, I became acutely aware that when conducting research on the oppressed or poor, their lives are exposed whilst the researcher's life remains protected and not implicated in the text. This kind of disclosure and exposure are very often one-sided. Fine (1994) defines this as a form of imperialism. As an instance of this one-sidedness, some of the participants asked many questions of me, demonstrating an interest in my personal and professional background, which made me realise that I was in some way an imperialist. Therefore, I endeavoured each time to disclose my background, my standpoint as a researcher and the purpose of the research, fully cognisant that who I am affects the participants' responses (Chiseri-Strater, cited in Leibowitz, 2001).

There are many viewpoints in literature concerning the disclosure and anonymity of the research participants' identities. Yin (1994), on the one hand, is of the view that using individuals' real names allows for cross-checking by the reader, unless the issues are controversial, in which case anonymity becomes necessary. On the other hand, Ely et al. (1991) argue that even when research participants agree to have their names used, researchers should guard against this, as these participants because of their naive willingness need to be protected.

Williams (1996) is of the opinion that omitting to refer to actual research participants reduces the opportunity for public acknowledgement or praise. Others such as Carter (1997, cited in Leibowitz, 2001) prefer to use pseudonyms when interpreting the participants' comments because when interpreting such comments the researcher is changing or appropriating something of that individual, but resort to using the participant's real name for oral or written quotes as in the case where the participant speaks for herself/ himself.

In the case of this study, all participants have been allocated pseudonyms and their anonymity is respected in this way.

### **3.5.2 Quantitative methodology**

A methodology is considered part of a paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This section addresses the choice of quantitative methodology as an appropriate technique to collect data to research problems. A research methodology covers strategic decisions about the choice of data collection methods and data analysis.

A quantitative researcher seeks facts and statistics that are quantifiable. He/She believes that reality can be studied objectively and is value free. Moreover, the quantitative research findings are based on the researcher's interpretations of the relationship between variables (Newman, 1997). Quantitative research is an effective technique in addressing, to a large extent, many of the problems of reliability, internal validity and the external validity of measures and procedures (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This method is therefore deemed appropriate to increase the quality of the research outcomes. Data from different sources was needed to address the research questions. These sources included principals, teachers, parents and learners from four rural commercial farm schools which comprised a sample of 361 participants in order to explore language preference and use.



### 3.5.2.1 Survey methodology

Neuman (2003)<sup>66</sup> argues that surveys are very beneficial in producing information that is statistical in nature. Surveys are usually designed with the objective of awareness, knowledge, behaviour and opinions. Surveys are therefore suitable for research questions about self-reported beliefs or behaviours (Neuman, 2003), including preferences.

The primary method of data collection for the study is a survey questionnaire. The reason for selecting this method is that the major part of this study relates to the respondents' views about language preference and use in a rural community.

The *Language Preference and Use Survey (Appendix A)* was adapted from the PanSALB MarkData (2000) study that surveyed language use and preference of 2000 participants across the country from different contexts. The argument for the use of this adapted version of the survey questionnaire is that this study focuses only on respondents that are involved with education on rural commercial farms, and seeks to explore the implications of community language use and preference for language policy and practice at the schools on these rural commercial farms.

The language preference survey was premised on a critical inquiry agenda seeking to ascertain existing, as well as future, language use and preference in the context of the language policy of the country. It also tried to elicit the extent of multilingualism of the target group. Language surveys in multilingual societies have a dual function: they provide information crucial to informed language planning; they also raise awareness of the dominant and dominated languages and their speakers and of language matters in general (Plüddemann et al., 2004b). The population census often neglects language issues. As we have seen, recent population censuses (1996; 2001) in South Africa have added little understanding to actual patterns of language use and linguistic diversity in a multilingual society.

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<sup>66</sup> Chapter Three: Research Methodology, University of Wollongong Cited in [www.library.udw.edu.au/adt-NWU/uploads/approved/adt](http://www.library.udw.edu.au/adt-NWU/uploads/approved/adt)

In the light of limitations of census data, focused language surveys have an important role to play, particularly in a multilingual society in the process of social transformation. The South African Constitution of 1996, the Language-in-Education Policy for public schools (DoE, 1997a) and other reports and policies which recommend that mother-tongue education and fostering multilingualism be retained and developed as core language values, all expressly commit the State to promoting multilingualism. It is self-evident that the successful realisation and monitoring of these policies will depend on an updated and multifaceted database that is informed by focused language surveys, amongst other sources of information (Plüddemann et al., 2004b). However, the surveys have drawbacks because of the large scale movement of people across the country, changes in language preferences and the multilingual nature of language speakers in South Africa, language use is dynamic (Mesthrie, 1995: xvii).

Language statistics remain crucial to informed language planning and should therefore be collected and constantly updated systematically, taking into account the different contexts. It must be noted that even the most scientific study is ideological and political, since questions of power and values are inherent and the phrasing and sequencing of questions and reflect choices that are supported by particular beliefs about language use and language attitudes (Plüddemann et al., 2004b).

The design of the survey questionnaire was steered by the elements of critical inquiry. The survey was structured into six sections (namely, Sections A to F). All respondents answered *Section A* which had five items dealing with use of language in private situations; *Section B* which had nine items dealing with use of language in public situations; *Section E* which had five items dealing with public language policy; *Section F* which had four items dealing with the extent of multilingualism. In addition, teachers and parents answered *Section C* which comprised two items dealing with work situation; *Section D* had three items which dealt with language use in the classroom was answered by learners.

This survey used a sample of three hundred and seventeen respondents of three categories, namely, one hundred and sixty seven parents of children who attend the

schools on the four rural commercial farms, one hundred and twenty learners and thirty teachers. The learners were selected mainly from grade seven classes and parents were selected according to their availability. Each respondent was interviewed by a community researcher over a four-week period. The community researchers were chosen for their ability to speak the community languages and were briefed on the interview process and how it had to be conducted and recorded.

### **3.5.3 Qualitative methodology**

Qualitative research is used to describe how groups of people live, or how they cope with their daily lives. This provides a rich description that enables the researcher to understand and make sense of reality. In other words, it enables the researcher to consider experiences from the informants' perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In this study the teachers, principals and parents are the informants and their views and beliefs are important to understand how they experience their world. In other words, to gain access to the teachers' and principals' personal and professional understandings with regard to LiEP, I had to elicit responses on the personal experiences of individuals. It is an approach that does not separate the personal experiences of teachers from the policy implementation process. The focus on the personal is with reference to the social, political, economic and cultural debates and not separated from it (Hariparsad, 2004).

Further to this, the qualitative methodology takes account of the complex social contexts that shape human experience and actions. Schools are considered to be within complex social contexts and the qualitative methodology is able to accommodate the complexities that are involved in social settings (Bassegy, 1999). The qualitative work in this research will also complement the quantitative survey work, which will allow the researcher to gain a full picture of the views and feelings of issues around language policy implementation.

This study relied on a wide range of data sources. The purpose of collecting data from a variety of sources is not only to establish validity as defined by Yin (1994: 34), or to ensure "methodological triangulation" (Cohen and Manion, 1996: 248), but to enrich

and deepen the study by asking more aspects of the same question (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Research instruments used in the study included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis.

### 3.5.3.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed so that they were clear and unambiguous; minimised the potential errors from respondents; engaged the interest and encouraged the co-operation of respondents and elicited answers as close as possible to the truth (Cohen and Manion, 1980: 80).

Of the two questionnaires prepared for qualitative analysis, the first questionnaire (**Appendix B**) required teachers to write in their personal and professional details and to respond to issues around the understanding and implementation of the Language-in-Education Policy. This instrument was based on the assumption that what teachers do in their classrooms and the decisions they make are affected by their own understandings, beliefs and attitudes about language and learning.

The second questionnaire (**Appendix F**) required the principal to provide contextual information for compiling the school profile, in order to give the reader a rich description of the schools in this study.

### 3.5.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

According to Cohen and Manion (1980: 243), interviews make it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge and information), what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs), and what a person likes and dislikes (values and preferences). Interviews were an important means to elicit data from all four sites in this study.

Data gathering consisted of semi-structured individual interviews. Cohen and Manion (1980: 243) are of the view that in contrast to a structured interview, the semi-structured interview is an open situation, having greater flexibility and freedom, allowing for a richer collection of data. This does not mean that the semi-structured

interview is a more casual affair, for in its own way, it also has to be carefully planned. This is in accordance with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001), who indicate that semi-structured interviews need to have a form of structure, a clear focus and sequence, but allow for an open-ended format to allow the interviewee lexical latitude.

Semi-structured interviews are based on the knowledge or assumption that the respondents have a particular experience on which they can elaborate. The interviewer guides and specifies the topics for which information is sought and focuses on the respondents' subjective experiences. This allows the respondents to describe in detail the experiences, as it is meaningful. This kind of interview allows the interviewer to freely probe and ask follow-up questions (Doyle, 2004; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002).<sup>67</sup>

The preparation of the interview schedules for this study was done immediately after the research aims and critical questions were formulated. This involved translating the research objectives into the questions that formed the main body of the interview schedule. The questions were formulated such that they adequately reflected and probed the information that I, the researcher, wished to glean viz. key understandings of the Language-in-Education Policy and understandings of multilingualism which related to critical questions two and three. Most of the questions used the indirect approach which encouraged "frank and open responses" (Cohen and Manion, 1980: 248).

All the interviews, except one (namely, SGB chairperson of one school who had to be interviewed at his place of work) was conducted in the principals' offices at the four schools. Interviews were conducted with the teachers (**Appendix C**), principals (**Appendix D**) and school governing body chairpersons (**Appendix E**) at all four schools. The interviews were structured around a set of predetermined questions to facilitate information on admission; past, present and future language policies of the school; language use at SGB meetings and parent attitudes to the existing language policy. The inclusion of the interview with the chairpersons of the SGBs was

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<sup>67</sup> Chapter Three: Research Methodology, University of Wollongong. Cited in [www.library.udw.edu.au/adt-NWU/uploads/approved/adt](http://www.library.udw.edu.au/adt-NWU/uploads/approved/adt)

considered necessary in view of the South African Schools Act of 1996, which gives governing bodies the power to formulate the school language policy.

At the interview sessions, all interviewees were briefed as to the nature and purpose of the interview and respondents were made to feel at ease. With the permission of the interviewees, all responses were tape-recorded and notes were made on key aspects of the responses. Responses were read back to the interviewees to ensure that the correct information was understood and recorded.

### **3.5.3.3 Document analysis**

A large amount of literature was made available for me to interrogate. First, the school logbooks that indicate important events and issues of staffing provided insight into the history of the schools. The Annual School Survey that records conditions of the infrastructure, the enrolment figures and staffing as well as information of learners in the school, provided the necessary information about the school and its ranking within the Department of Education. Other useful information was gleaned from newsletters, circulars and school policies.

### **3.5.4 Data organisation and analysis**

#### **3.5.4.1 Language preference and use survey questionnaire**

The *language preference and use* survey questionnaires (**Appendix A**) which responded to critical question 1 were categorised according to the three categories of respondent namely, parents, teachers and learners. Each category of questionnaires was numbered accordingly. The letter “P” preceded the numbering of questionnaires for parents; “L” for learners and “T” for teachers to allow for easy identification. The questionnaires were filed according to the school names. This means that a box file containing questionnaires for each of the four schools with the three categories of respondents was created. A matrix was created for clear reference to questionnaires.

The data from the *language preference survey* required quantitative analysis and an experienced statistician was employed to capture the data and generate the quantitative

analysis. The statistician used the SPSS for 12.0 Windows to arrive at the descriptive statistics.

#### **3.5.4.2 Contextual and teacher questionnaires**

The questionnaire on the context of the school (**Appendix F**) was used to compile a profile of the school, which is described in Section 3.3.3 of this chapter. The questionnaires on the teachers' understanding of the LiEP (**Appendix B**) were coded and filed according to the critical questions to which they responded.

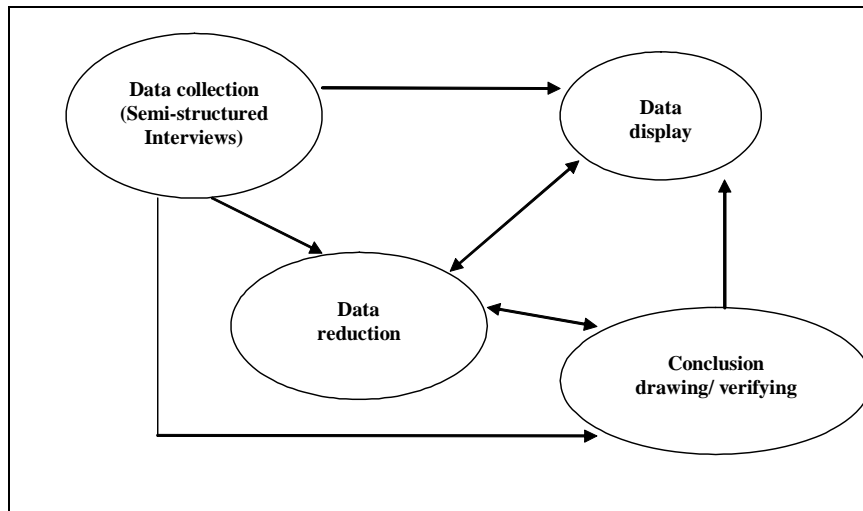
#### **3.5.4.3 Interviews**

I personally conducted each interview; recorded on tape and made notes during the course of the interviews. In the interests of time and my inexperience in transcribing, the task of transcribing the interviews was outsourced to a qualified transcriber and the transcription was done verbatim. Each interview, as pertaining to the critical question and school, was filed accordingly.

#### **3.5.4.4 Analysis of interviews and questionnaires**

As I collected the data, I commenced with the first level of analysis which involved a model of reduction, display and verification of data. In this model, qualitative data analysis is a continuous iterative enterprise where issues of reduction, display and analysis episodes follow each other (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Figure 3.3 illustrates this process.

**Figure 3.3: Components of qualitative data analysis as per the Iterative Data Analysis Model (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 12)**



A descriptive analysis of the data was then undertaken. In this first level of analysis the emerging trends per category per section of each school were described. The data from the questionnaires was collected and coded, then aligned to the critical questions and the LiEP. I compared data from the variety of sources which eventually led to developing themes which were subjected to content analysis in my bid to understand the teachers' practices. The transcriptions of interviews in all four sites were also analysed for content. Tentative trends emerged which were revisited constantly to examine whether the explanations and interpretations made sense. Miles and Huberman (1994) stress the importance of comparing and contrasting data. Comparing was particularly useful in helping to see similarities and differences among practice in the four schools. This deepened the analysis.

In summary, an inductive analysis of data provided the basis for a thick description of the language preference and the implementation of the LiEP in the four schools on rural commercial farms in this study. Specific analytical techniques included open coding, identification of themes, development of assertions, pattern matching, development of conceptual matrices and the creation of a chain of evidence that might lead to the development of new theories and propositions. A comprehensive account of how each school understood the LiEP was developed and is presented in Chapter Four.



### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that a qualitative and quantitative approach is necessary to answer the critical questions relating to language preference and use via a multi-method approach. It highlighted the contextual features of the schools that participated in the study, and argued for the specific tools chosen for data collection. The following chapter presents the studies themselves (the four research sites), which will indicate the extent to which this methodology has proven appropriate to answer the critical questions posed in this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LANGUAGE MATTERS IN A RURAL FARM COMMUNITY: VOICES IN BABEL<sup>68</sup>

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings and discussions are presented in three sections. The language preference and use survey questionnaire is discussed first (see Appendix A) in response to Critical Question 1, namely: What is the language preference and use of a selected rural commercial farm community? The data was collected from three groups of respondents, namely, parents, learners and teachers and analysed according to a modified version of Spolsky's (1974)<sup>69</sup> categories: linguistic, socio-cultural, political, economic and educational. In Section Two, the findings related to the questionnaires and interviews with teachers in respect of their understandings and beliefs with regard to the LiEP are discussed and respond to Critical Question 2: How do teachers on rural commercial farm schools respond to the LiEP and its implementation? (see Appendix B and Appendix C). These findings are analysed according to Ruiz's<sup>70</sup> (1984) model of language which uses three theoretical positions: language-as-a problem, language-as-a right and language-as-a resource. The third section captures the findings of the organisational issues with regard to existing and future school language policies which were gleaned from interviews conducted with principals and school governing body chairpersons (see Appendix D and Appendix E) and also responds to Critical Question 2.

Throughout this dissertation, the term "African languages" is used as opposed to the use of "indigenous languages". The justification for employing the one term instead of the other is derived from Perry's (2003) reasoning of the issue. By using the definition of the United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO), Perry (2003) has argued that only the Khoisan people qualify as indigenous people on account of their

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<sup>68</sup> This chapter discusses the data collected from parents, teachers, principals and learners. In essence, the views and feelings about language use are discussed. Hence the title, *Voices in Babel* indicates this.

<sup>69</sup> Spolsky's categories were used to analyse the immediate or wider social context that have a bearing on language learning (See Stern, 1983). In the context of this study, it is used as an organizing framework to discuss the various findings in respect of language preference and use.

<sup>70</sup> Ruiz's model of *language-as-a problem*, *language-as-a right* and *language-as-a resource* is used to describe language policy planning e.g. language as a problem is used to describe language of the apartheid era where the two official languages were imposed on the majority of the people of South Africa. The constitutional and policy frameworks guarantee language as a right. The multilingual policy in the democracy is viewed as a resource.

descent from populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region at the time of colonial conquest or the establishment of present state boundaries. The other black people who arrived 800 years after are actually latecomers who cannot be called indigenous. By implication, therefore, only the Khoesan languages can be called indigenous. Hence this study uses the term “African languages” rather than “indigenous languages”. Further to this, the use of the terms “mother tongue” and “home language” in the context of this thesis is clarified. While the term “mother tongue” is universally referred to as the language a child is born into, “home language” in the curriculum context refers to the language that is spoken at home and it is assumed the language in which the child is most proficient. Hence the highest of the three levels of language offered in the curriculum is Home Language. In the context of this thesis the terms “mother tongue” and “home language” are used interchangeably.

For the purpose of clarity, the following table has been designed, indicating the instruments used to elicit the findings for three sections referred to above and the respondents who participated in the study.

**Table 4.1: Discussion plan for findings**

INSTRUMENT	PARTICIPANTS	SCHOOL				TOTAL
		Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	
<b>SECTION ONE Language Preference and Use Survey (Appendix A)</b>	Learners	30	39	30	36	<b>135<sup>71</sup></b>
	Parents	50	50	17	50	<b>167<sup>72</sup></b>
	Teachers	10	6	3	13	<b>32<sup>73</sup></b>
<b>SECTION TWO Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix B) and Interviews (Appendix C)</b>	Teachers	4	5	2	9	<b>20</b>

71 Represents the total population of Grade Six and Seven learners.

72 Represents uneven participation.

73 Represents total population of teachers.

INSTRUMENT	PARTICIPANTS	SCHOOL				TOTAL
		Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	
SECTION THREE Principal Interview (Appendix D) SGB interview (APPENDIX E)	Principals	1	1	1	1	4
	SGB	1	1	1		3
<b>Total</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>361</b>

In the next section, the data resulting from the language preference and use survey are discussed.

#### 4.2 Section One: Language preference survey

The language preference and use questionnaire was aimed at examining the use of language in a rural farm community. It assesses the use of language, language requirements and the extent to which the language needs are addressed in public. The findings are analysed according to the categories enlisted by Spolsky (1974) and relate to linguistic, socio-cultural, economic, educational, and political categories of analysis. The list forms a convenient inventory of aspects which may sometimes act as constraints, but at other times enhance opportunities for language use and influence language teaching and learning (Stern, 1983).

Through the use of Spolsky's (1974) typology, the following themes will be used to discuss language preference and use in the rural commercial farm community which comprises parents, teachers and learners from four rural farm schools:

- **Linguistic profile**, which deals with the private language use, namely the languages mainly spoken at home, mixing of languages, languages spoken as a child, language used to talk to oneself and languages spoken most fluently.
- **Socio-cultural**, which examines language preference and use in public situations, such as at the post office, police stations, clinics, hospitals, government departments, religious services, supermarkets and banks.

- **Economic**, which discusses language use in interviews and in work situations.
- **Educational**, which deals with language use in school situations; and the extent of multilingualism.
- **Political**, which examines the views on public language policy and the speeches in parliament.

Data collected in respect of learners, teachers and parents is presented within these themes. The following grid provides a graphic representation of the participants for this section of the study, the language preference and use survey.

**Table 4.2: Participants in the language preference and use survey**

PARTICIPANTS	SCHOOLS				TOTAL
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	
Learners	30	39	30	36	135 <sup>74</sup>
Parents	50	50	17	50	167 <sup>75</sup>
Teachers	10	6	3	13	32 <sup>76</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>334</b>

The table above evidences an uneven number of participants among all categories, namely, learners, parents and teachers and therefore it would not be representative to make a comparative analysis. Hence, the findings provide a descriptive overview of results and sketches qualitatively the trends revealed by the results. The analysis serves as an indication of the broad findings of the survey, revealing major patterns and problems in language preference and interaction. While all of the major patterns are indicative of the total population, there is cross-referencing among schools and selective comparisons. The data for each category of respondents (namely, teachers, learners and parents) is described collectively and the results of the four schools are depicted as total sample constituting 100%. The tables and the discussion are organised such that the data for all four schools per category of respondents are done collectively. A final discussion is offered at the end of each theme which brings

<sup>74</sup> Represents the total population of Grade six and seven learners.

<sup>75</sup> Represents uneven participation.

<sup>76</sup> Represents total population of teachers.

together the major trends, patterns and problems relating to language use and preference in respect of teachers, parents and learners.

#### **4.2.1 Linguistic profile: Language use in home and private situations**

In this section, *languages spoken mainly at home; home language mixing with other languages; childhood languages spoken; languages used for discourse with oneself and languages spoken most fluently* are examined for learners, teachers and parents. The description of patterns and general trends in the data set is an important feature of descriptive statistics.<sup>77</sup> Before attempting to understand language preference and use, one has to be able to describe it. In a sense descriptive statistics is one of the bridges between measurement and understanding. In addition, the detail presented in each of the above mentioned categories allows for a deep understanding of language preference and use which will assist in determining the implications for language policy and practice at the schools on the rural commercial farms in the study.

##### **4.2.1.1 Languages spoken mainly at home**

According to Skutnabb-Kangas et al. (2006: 321), “our language and culture are our identity and tell us who we are, where we came from and where we are going...”. When reviewing the language composition of the respondents at the four schools (Table 4.3), it is evident that most come from a variety of language backgrounds which indicates the unique world views and complex cultures of a multilingual community (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002: 2) at the schools, especially Entabeni and Nottingham. It is also evident that among the teachers, isiZulu dominates at both Entabeni (15.6 %) and Nottingham (6.3%), while Sepedi (6.3%) is dominant at Kindersorg and Afrikaans (40.6 %) at Wesdorp.

However, the data also indicates that a large number of teachers are not isiZulu home language speakers at the three schools where isiZulu is taught at home language level. This has implications for teaching and learning, particularly in the Foundation Phase where the LoLT is isiZulu.

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<sup>77</sup> Chapter Four: Analysing data. Part 2; Descriptive Statistics (undated). School of Psychology, University of New England.  
[http://www.une.edu.au/WebStat/unit\\_materials/c4\\_descriptive\\_statistics/introduction.htm](http://www.une.edu.au/WebStat/unit_materials/c4_descriptive_statistics/introduction.htm)

**Table 4.3: Languages spoken mainly at home**

What language do you mainly speak at home?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				40.6%	40.6%			.6%	22.2%	22.8%	.7%		.7%	23.7%	25.1%
English	3.0%				3.0%				.6%	.6%				.7%	.7%
Sesotho	6.1%		3.1%		9.2%	3.7%	.6%			4.3%	1.0%	1.5%			2.5%
Setswana	3.0%	3.0%			6.0%	.6%				.6%	1.5%	.7%	7%		2.9%
Sepedi		3.0%	6.3%		9.3%		.6%	.9%		1.5%			5.9%	1.5%	7.4%
SiSwati	4.0%				4.0%		1.2%	.6%		1.8%		.7%			1.4%
isiNdebele		3.0%			3.0%	11.7%	15.4%	6.8%		33.9%	5.9%	14.1%	10.4%		30.4%
isiXhosa						.6%	3.1%			3.7%		4.4%			4.4%
isiZulu	15.6%	6.3%			21.9%	10.5%	6.8%	1.2%		18.5%	10.4%	3.0%	4.4%		17.8%
Tshivenda		3.0%			3.0%	1.2%				1.2%		.7%			.7%
Xitsonga						2.5%	6.8%			9.3%	3.0%	3.7%			6.7%
Multiple languages								.6%	1.2%	1.8%					
TOTAL	31.7%	18.3%	9.4%	40.6%	100.0%	30.8%	34.5%	10.4%	24.0%	100.0%	22.5%	28.8%	22.8%	25.9%	100.0%

Obanya in a study in Nigeria (2004: 10), says that learning is hampered because teaching is done in a language in which neither the teacher nor the learner has an appropriate level of mastery. In a study, *Getting learning right*<sup>78</sup>, by the President's Education Initiative, Vinjevold (1999: 221) noted the frustration that teachers felt because of the mismatch in language competence of teachers and learners. In the case of Wesdorp, all teachers are Afrikaans home language speakers, which complements the LoLT of the school (Afrikaans).

The data for the parent category from the four communities show that 11.7% of parents at Entabeni; 15.4% of parents at Nottinghill and 6.8% of parents at Kindersorg speak mainly isiNdebele at home; 22.2% of the parents from Wesdorp are Afrikaans home language speakers. It is evident that isiNdebele dominates in three of the communities and Afrikaans in the fourth community. Overall the three languages of "home and hearth" (Probyn, 2006: 391) are isiNdebele (34.0%) and isiZulu (18.5%) in the three communities and Afrikaans (22.8%) in the fourth community.

The language composition of the learners indicates that 10.4% of learners of Entabeni speak mainly isiZulu at home. Most of the learners (14.1%) at Nottinghill and Kindersorg (10.4%) are isiNdebele home language speakers, while 23.7% of the learners at Wesdorp are Afrikaans home language speakers. Overall, isiNdebele (30.4%) dominates as the most spoken language among the learners in the study.

Most teachers come from a variety of language backgrounds which indicates the multilingual nature of the staff at the schools. For the parents and learners it is evident that isiNdebele dominates in three of the communities and Afrikaans in the fourth community. This is an important indicator in respect of transformation in South Africa where linguistic human rights in theory give citizens the right to be able to choose the LoLT for their children, thus providing the opportunity for marginalised languages to grow and develop (Balfour and Mitchell, 2004).

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<sup>78</sup> The purpose of the study was to provide a scientific basis for the future planning and delivery of teacher development and support programmes.



#### 4.2.1.2 Language mixing

Learning to speak languages in natural settings involves the acquisition of interactional patterns in terms of a wider socio-cultural and communicative competence for which Gumperz (cited in Wolff, 2000a: 20), offers the following definition:

*Whereas linguistic competence covers the speaker's ability to produce grammatically correct sentences, communicative competence describes his ability to select, from the totality of grammatically correct expressions available to him, forms which appropriately reflect the social norms governing behaviour in specific encounters.*

In responding to the above definition, it can be deduced that language use is context-driven and that particular communities use language according to their social norms. Individual multilingualism can, therefore, be viewed as an asset, not only of increased intellectual competence but also of social competence. Wolff (2000a: 5) describes any instance of interchanging usage of two or more languages within the same conversation or discourse by the same multilingual speaker as code mixing.

The data from the study as illustrated on (Tables 4.4 & 4.5) indicate the multilingual nature of the teachers, particularly from three of the schools, in that 23.3% of teachers from Entabeni, mixed home language with Afrikaans, English, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana and SiSwati; 16.7 % of Nottingham mixed home language with Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, isiNdebele and isiZulu; 10% of Kindersorg mixed home language with isiNdebele, Sepedi and Sesotho, and 3.3% of Wesdorp indicated mixing with English. Multilingualism is a useful resource in three of the schools as teachers speak three or more languages. However, it does appear that teachers at Wesdorp tend towards Afrikaans and English and a large percentage do not engage in language mixing. This could be attributed to their political history where the architects of apartheid were bent on making Afrikaans the sole language of the country.<sup>79</sup>

Parents from all communities engage in language mixing but the degree of mixing varies within each community. 23% at Entabeni and 25.5% at Nottingham indicated that they mix languages, while 8.7% at Kindersorg and 19.3% at Wesdorp indicated that they do not engage in language mixing. The level of mixing home language (isiNdebele) with isiZulu is 18.5 % among parents at Entabeni and 29.3% at

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<sup>79</sup> See Malherbe, E.G. (1977) for a discussion of Afrikaner nationalism.

Nottingham. The parents at Kindersorg have indicated mixing isiNdebele with isiZulu at 1.1% and English at 1.1%. The parents at Wesdorp have indicated mixing with English at 4.3%.

The data for learners indicate that 12.8 % of learners at Entabeni and 25.6% of learners at Nottingham engage in language mixing. 13.5% of learners at Kindersorg and 18.8 % of learners from Wesdorp indicated that their home language is not mixed. Overall a higher percentage of learners (54.1%) indicated that they mix their home language with other languages.

Language mixing for learners at Entabeni includes mainly isiZulu (6.5%) and isiNdebele (3.9%); for learners at Nottingham it includes isiNdebele (13%); at Kindersorg it includes isiNdebele (10.4%) and isiZulu (3.9%); and at Wesdorp it includes English (11.7%) and Sesotho (1.3%).

Bamgbose (1998: 1) notes that nothing is more natural than for Africans to speak several different languages and to learn the language of a neighbouring group whenever out-group interaction so demands. While the most commonly cited function of language is its use as a means of communication, it is certainly important for it makes social interaction possible and enables encoding and retrieval of information. However, an equally important function of language is its use as a bond in a speech community. The sentimental attachment of sharing the same language tends to reinforce this bond.

#### **4.2.1.3 Childhood languages**

Table 4.6 responds to the question “what language did you and your parents mainly use when you were a child?” Language is the first cultural symbol that a member of a family encounters, as described by Fishman (1989: 27):

*Language, is often regarded as having been “acquired with mother’s milk” - as in “the mother-tongue”. As a notion juxtaposed with metaphoric and, oftentimes, actual motherhood, it attains great affective powers akin to those of which primordialists speak.*

**Table 4.4 Language mixing**

Is the language which you mainly use at home mixed with another language or not?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Yes	23.3%	16.7%	10.0%	3.3%	53.3%	23.0%	25.5%	1.9%	4.3%	54.7%	12.8%	25.6%	9.0%	6.8%	54.1%
No	10.0%	3.3%		33.3%	46.7%	8.1%	9.3%	8.7%	19.3%	45.3%	9.8%	3.8%	13.5%	18.8%	45.9%
Total	33.3%	20.0%	10.0%	36.7%	100.0%	31.1%	34.8%	10.6%	23.6%	100.0%	22.6%	29.3%	22.6%	25.6%	100.0%

**Table 4.5: Languages mixed with home languages**

If YES, what language is mixed with your home language?

	TEACHERS					PARENTSS					LEARNERS				
	S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans	5.6%				5.6%	1.1%	1.1%		3.3%	5.4%	1.3%			3.8%	5.1%
English	5.6%			16.7%	22.2%	1.1%		1.1%	4.3%	6.5%	1.3%			11.7%	13.0%
Sesotho	11.1%	5.6%	5.6%		22.2%	7.6%	3.3%			10.9%	2.6%	1.3%		1.3%	5.2%
Setswana	5.6%	5.6%			11.1%		1.1%			1.1%	1.3%	1.3%			2.6%
Sepedi	5.6%		5.6%		11.1%	4.3%				4.3%	2.6%	1.3%	2.6%		6.5%
SiSwati	5.6%	5.6%			11.1%	1.1%	2.2%			3.3%			1.3%		1.3%
isiNdebele		5.6%	5.6%		11.1%	4.3%	6.5%	1.1%		12.0%	3.9%	13.0%	10.4%		27.3%
isiXhosa							2.2%			2.2%		1.3%			1.3%
isiZulu		5.6%			5.6%	18.5%	29.3%	1.1%		48.9%	6.5%	22.1%	3.9%		32.5%
Tshivenda							5.4%			5.4%		1.3%			1.3%
Xitsonga												1.3%			1.3%
Other African language											1.3%				1.3%
Multiple languages											1.3%				1.3%
TOTAL	38.9%	27.8%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%	38.0%	51.1%	3.3%	7.6%	100.0%	22.1%	42.9%	18.2%	16.9%	100.0%

In keeping with the idea that language is “acquired with mother’s milk,” the response to the question “what language did you speak as a child”, the data on Table 4.6 reveals that 9.7% of the teachers from Entabeni and 6.5% of teachers at Nottingham indicated isiZulu as their childhood language. For 6.5% of teachers at Kindersorg, Sepedi appears as a childhood language, with Afrikaans for 38.7% of teachers from Wesdorp. Across the four schools the teachers from Entabeni and Nottingham seem to come from the most linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The home language and language of childhood remains consistent for parents of all four communities. isiNdebele is the childhood language for most parents at Entabeni (10.5%), Nottingham (13.6%) and Kindersorg (5.6%) and Afrikaans for Wesdorp (22.2%).

While it is evident that learners come from a variety of language backgrounds, the home language and language of childhood remains consistent for most learners at all four schools. This is an indicator of language strength in that childhood languages are consistent with home languages spoken, namely, isiZulu (8.3%) for Entabeni, isiNdebele (15%) for Nottingham and isiNdebele (10.5%) for Kindersorg and Afrikaans (24%) for Wesdorp.

#### **4.2.1.4 Discourse with oneself**

Extending Fishman’s (1989) notion of language being acquired through mother’s milk (cf 4.2.1.3), discourse with oneself (Table 4.7) is a very personal activity which involves using language in ways that best express one’s true feelings. When asked “*If you were thinking about a problem and perhaps talking or muttering to yourself, in what language would you think and talk to yourself?*” it was found that a high percentage of teachers use isiZulu at Entabeni (12.9%) and Nottingham (6.5%), and Sepedi at Kindersorg (6.5%) and Afrikaans at Wesdorp (41.9%). This finding is consistent with the languages used in their childhood for all respondents.

**Table 4.6: Childhood languages**

What language did you and your parents mainly use when you were a child?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				38.7%	38.7%	.6%		.6%	22.2%	23.5%	1.5%		1.5%	24.1%	27.1%
English						.6%			1.2%	1.8%	.8%			1.5%	2.3%
Sesotho						5.6%	1.9%	1.2%		8.7%	.8%				.8%
Setswana	6.5%	3.2%	3.2%		12.9%	.6%				.6%	1.5%				1.5%
Sepedi	3.2%	3.2%	6.5%		12.9%	1.2%	1.2%	.6%		3.1%	.8%	.8%	5.3%	1.5%	8.3%
SiSwati	3.2%				3.2%	1.2%	.6%	.6%		2.5%		.8%	1.5%		2.3%
isiNdebele	3.2%	6.5%			9.7%	10.5%	13.6%	5.6%		29.6%	6.0%	15.0%	10.5%		31.5%
isiXhosa	3.2%				3.2%	.6%	3.7%			4.3%		2.3%			2.3%
isiZulu	9.7%	6.5%			16.2%	6.2%	6.8%	1.9%		14.8%	8.3%	4.5%	3.8%		16.6%
Tshivenda						1.2%				1.2%					
Xitsonga						2.5%	6.2%			8.6%	2.3%	5.3%			7.6%
European origin									.6%	.6%					
Oriental Indian language	3.2%				3.2%										
Multiple languages									.6%	.6%					
TOTAL	32.2%	19.4%	9.7%	38.7%	100.0%	30.9%	34.0%	10.5%	24.7%	100.0%	22.0%	28.7%	22.6%	27.1%	100.0%

A high percentage of all parents at Entabeni (13.1%) use isiZulu; parents at Nottingham (12.5%) and Kindersorg (6.9%) use isiNdebele and parents at Wesdorp (21.3%) use Afrikaans as a language of discourse with oneself. The results are consistent with childhood languages and languages used mainly at home for all schools except for Entabeni where most parents have indicated the use of isiZulu and not isiNdebele. This indicates that isiZulu is stronger than isiNdebele.

Learners at Nottingham (12.8%) and Kindersorg (11.3%) use isiNdebele while learners at Entabeni (17.3%) and Wesdorp (21.1%) use isiZulu and Afrikaans respectively as a language of discourse with oneself. This indicates that the childhood languages for learners at Nottingham, Kindersorg and Wesdorp are used as the languages of discourse with oneself. Here again, there is an indication of the language strength of isiNdebele and Afrikaans in those communities. Stern (1992: 190) notes that “a person’s life-style, daily activities, interests, thoughts, in short his whole person is bound up with his first language.” However, isiZulu seems to have gained in strength at Entabeni. This shift, as reported by the principal<sup>80</sup>, is because isiZulu is the language of communication that is widely used in the province.

#### **4.2.1.5 Language fluency**

According to the Oxford dictionary, “*fluency*” means speech which is “natural” and “flowing”. Hence if one is to be described as being fluent in a language it means that one is able to operate in a given linguistic situation with specified ease or effect. Fluency then does not necessarily mean showing how much language one knows but rather demonstrating language use appropriately in a given context (Stern, 1992: 163).

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<sup>80</sup>80 During the interview with the principal of Entabeni a question was asked about the use of isiZulu rather than isiNdebele as LoLT. The principal responded that isiZulu is the language that most people speak in the province and its use at school will assist learners in their communication anywhere in the province.

**Table 4.7: Discourse with oneself**

If you were thinking about a problem or muttering to yourself, in what language would you think?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				41.9%	41.9%	.6%		.6%	21.3%	22.5%				21.1%	21.1%
English	3.2%				3.2%	1.3%			2.5%	3.8%		.8%		5.3%	6.1%
Sesotho						3.8%	1.3%			5.1%	.8%	.8%			1.6%
Setswana	6.5%	3.2%	3.2%		12.9%	.6%				.6%					
Sepedi	3.2%	3.2%	6.5%		12.9%		.6%	.6%		1.3%		.8%	4.5%		5.3%
SiSwati	3.2%						1.3%	.6%		1.9%		.8%			.8%
isiNdebele		3.2%			3.2%	7.5%	12.5%	6.9%		26.9%	1.5%	12.8%	11.3%		25.6%
isiXhosa	3.2%				3.2%		4.4%			4.4%	.8%	2.3%			3.1%
isiZulu	12.9%	6.5%			19.4%	13.1%	7.5%	1.9%		22.5%	17.3%	6.0%	6.8%		30.1%
Tshivenda		3.2%			3.2%	.6%				.6%	.8%	.8%			1.6%
Xitsonga						2.5%	6.9%			9.4%	1.5%	3.8%			5.3%
European origin									.6%	.6%					
Multiple languages									.6%	.6%					
TOTAL	29.0%	19.3%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	30.0%	34.4%	10.6%	25.0%	100.0%	22.6%	28.6%	22.6%	26.4%	100.0%

When asked “*which language do you speak most fluently or easily*”, Table 4.8 indicates that a high percentage of teachers at Entabeni (12.9%) and Nottingham (9.7%) are most fluent in isiZulu; while English tends to be quite low at Entabeni, it does not feature at all for Nottingham. The scenario at Kindersorg is different as teachers indicate fluency in Sepedi (6.5%), while English and isiZulu do not feature at all; all of the teachers are fluent in Afrikaans (41.9%) at Wesdorp. These are useful indicators as isiZulu and English are the two languages being offered at the three schools and Afrikaans and English at the fourth school. The data raises an important question in this study, namely, with this kind of linguistic profile what are the implications for learning and teaching?

A high percentage of parents at Entabeni (10.9 %) have indicated that they are most fluent in isiZulu but fluency in English tends to be quite low (1.3% of parents indicated fluency in English). Parents at Nottingham (11.5%) and Kindersorg (7.1%) are most fluent in isiNdebele with English not featuring at all; parents at Wesdorp (23.1%) have indicated fluency in Afrikaans with 1.3 % of parents indicating fluency in English.

A high percentage of learners at Entabeni (10.9%) are most fluent in isiZulu; learners at Nottingham (11.7%) and Kindersorg (10.9%) have indicated isiNdebele while learners at Wesdorp have indicated Afrikaans (23.4%) as the language in which they are most fluent.

A worrying factor is the lack of fluency in the LoLT and/or languages taught as subjects among all categories of respondents, except those from Wesdorp. This indicates that learners are not exposed to quality language use at home or school. This will certainly impact on their academic and social mobility as well as their access to jobs and further study. In reporting on an initiative to raise the literacy levels among the rural poor, the MEC for Education in the Western Cape observed:

*While the classroom itself remains the key because of the skills of the teacher and the resources of the school, I believe a campaign, which goes far beyond the classroom walls and gathers momentum in families, communities and workplaces, is necessary.*<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> See Literacy level lowest in rural areas – report. <http://www.iol.co.za/general/news/newsprints.php>



**Table 4.8: Language fluency**

What language do you speak most easily and fluently?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				41.9%	41.9%	.6%	.6%	.6%	23.1%	25.0%	.8%			23.4%	24.2%
English	3.2%				3.2%	1.3%			1.3%	2.6%	.8%			3.1%	3.9%
Sesotho	3.2%				3.2%	3.2%	1.9%			5.1%	1.6%				1.6%
Setswana	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%		9.7%	.6%		.3%		.9%		.8%	3.9%		4.7%
Sepedi	3.2%	3.2%	6.5%		12.9%		1.3%	.6%		1.9%		.8%			.8%
SiSwati							1.3%	.6%		1.9%	4.7%	11.7%	10.9%		27.3%
isiNdebele						9.6%	11.5%	7.1%		28.2%	1.6%	2.3%			3.9%
isiXhosa	3.2%				3.2%	.6%	2.6%			3.2%	10.9%	7.8%	6.3%	.8%	25.8%
isiZulu	12.9%	9.7%			22.6%	10.9%	6.4%	1.9%		19.2%		.8%			.8%
Tshivenda		3.2%			3.2%	.6%				.6%	2.3%	3.9%			6.3%
Xitsonga						3.2%	7.7%			10.9%	.8%				.8%
Multiple languages									.6%	.6%					
TOTAL	29.0%	19.4%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	30.6%	33.3%	11.1%	25.0%	100.0%	23.5%	28.1%	21.1%	27.3%	100.0%

The comment from the MEC alludes to teachers being skilled to teach literacy effectively and a collaborative effort by all stakeholders will contribute to improving literacy levels of learners. However, the data in this study shows that teachers themselves are not fluent in the LoLT and will therefore need support.

While the ability to speak many languages is a tremendous resource, Moyo (2001: 107) warns that “it is one thing to be a mother-tongue speaker of isiZulu or English and yet another to be an effective teacher of either of the languages”. She adds further that native speakership is not synonymous with expertise and competence in teaching the target language effectively. While there are many teachers trained to teach African languages such as isiZulu, a considerable number have not been trained appropriately to teach English as a LoLT in the Intermediate Phase. Epstein (1999: 12) supports this view, adding that teachers in poor rural schools do not speak English well because they received their teacher education in their mother-tongue and that while additive language instruction is touted as a goal, teachers themselves are still not equipped to teach English, let alone use an additive approach. She extends this argument by noting that with English as the LoLT, learners and teachers struggle with the teaching and learning of content subjects, which renders their English language ability insufficient and their content knowledge inadequate. The lack of access to English is perhaps the reason that English does not feature strongly in the results on Table 4.8, indicating the language in which one is most fluent. All respondents at Entabeni, Nottinghill and Kindersorg have indicated isiZulu, isiNdebele and Sepedi respectively. Fluency in English features weakly for teachers at Entabeni (1.3%) and does not feature at all in the two other communities. Wesdorp indicated fluency in Afrikaans and a small percentage of parents and teachers indicated English (1.3%) as well.

#### **4.2.1.6 Summarising emerging trends: Linguistic profile**

Philipson et al. (1994: 1) are of the firm view that linguistic human rights are aimed at the promotion of linguistic justice and the removal or prevention of linguistic inequalities or injustices that may occur because of language. The benefits gained from the implementation of these rights include the right to individual and collective identity. As Philipson et al (1994: 7) explain it, this is the right to be different, the right to identify with one’s mother-tongue, to learn it, to have education through it and to

use it. It is within this context of linguistic human rights, that the *languages spoken mainly at home; mixing of home language with other language; childhood languages spoken; languages used for discourse with oneself; and languages spoken most fluently* were reviewed.

Chumbow (1987: 22) argues that “the languages of a nation are its natural resources on the same level as its petroleum, minerals and other natural resources”. Hence multilingualism, a norm rather than the exception in South Africa, is a resource that should be developed like any other economic resource. The diversity of languages spoken by the people in the country testifies to the richness of this resource as noted in the study conducted in the four rural commercial farm communities. In reviewing the languages used mainly at home (Table 4.3), isiZulu appears as the language spoken mainly by teachers at Entabeni and Nottingham; and Sepedi for teachers at Kindersorg and Afrikaans for teachers at Wesdorp. Parents from Entabeni, Nottingham and Kindersorg indicate isiNdebele as the language mainly spoken at home, while this is Afrikaans for parents from Wesdorp. Learners of Entabeni have indicated isiZulu as a language mainly spoken at home; learners from Nottingham and Kindersorg indicated isiNdebele and learners from Wesdorp indicated Afrikaans as the language mainly spoken at home. A trend that emerges is that the home language of teachers from Entabeni, Nottingham and Kindersorg differs from the learners and parents in those communities. This is understandable as the teachers live outside the communities. The pattern is different for Wesdorp as the language (Afrikaans) is consistent for all categories of respondents. With regard to the learners, an inconsistency is noted for Entabeni, as the learners indicated isiZulu as the language mainly spoken at home while the parents indicated isiNdebele. This could be due to the influence of isiZulu as a language offered at the school, or perhaps learners come from homes where many languages are spoken and this makes it difficult to distinguish between languages mainly spoken. The language pattern is consistent for the two other schools. Overall, Afrikaans and isiZulu dominate as languages used mainly by teachers. It must be noted that the dominance of Afrikaans relates to the fact that all of the respondents from Wesdorp are Afrikaans home language speakers. isiZulu is the next dominant language for teachers and isiNdebele appears as the dominant language for parents and learners.

With reference to language mixing (Tables 4.4-4.5), a high percentage of teachers, parents and learners from Wesdorp and parents and learners from Kindersorg do not mix languages. All categories of respondents from Entabeni and Nottingham and teachers from Kindersorg do mix languages. The teachers indicate mixing home language with Sesotho and English; the parents and learners indicated mixing home language with isiZulu, Sesotho and isiNdebele. The level of mixing for both the parents and learners 54%, is higher than that of the teachers which is 53%. This result differs somewhat from the PanSALB MarkData (2000)<sup>82</sup> survey which indicated that intermixing occurred more with the younger respondents.

In keeping with the notion that language is regarded as having been “acquired with mother’s milk,” Table 4.6 reflects the childhood languages of the respondents’ home and language backgrounds. The childhood languages are consistent with the languages used mainly at home and for discourse with oneself (Table 4.7) for all categories of respondents. This indicates that the childhood languages are still in use, and illustrates the maintenance of language strength in these communities.

Table 4.8 indicates the languages in which one is most fluent. The concern that emerged is that most of the respondents indicated fluency in languages other than those of learning and teaching.

#### **4.2.2 Socio-cultural: Language use and preferences in public situations**

Closely associated with the language interactions are the socio-cultural factors in the environment. Some languages are held in either high or low esteem because of economic, political, or cultural values associated with them (Stern, 1983: 277-278). In this section the findings related to access to public services will be discussed.

With respect to public situations, questions were asked about language used with personnel at post offices, police stations, clinics, hospitals, government departments, religious services, supermarkets and banks. The picture that emerges from this analysis

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<sup>82</sup> The aims of the study were to identify the language choices that South Africans make in their domains of interaction activity; to establish the degree and quality of individual and societal bilingualism/ multilingualism across language groups, socio-economic categories and levels of education, and to assess the incidence of monolingualism and multilingualism in the dealings of South Africans with the media, in commerce, in industry and in the public sphere, in order to obtain accurate data for the purpose of language planning and language service provision.

will be useful in understanding the extent to which personal language preferences are catered for in public within the context of a multilingual society.

#### 4.2.2.1 Language use at the post office

Philipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995: 489) discuss the application of linguistic rights, in their article entitled *Linguistic Rights and Wrongs*, stating that “prohibiting the use of a language group in daily intercourse...” is actually failing to respect the linguistic rights of a group and in fact committing linguistic genocide. A review of the languages used and encountered by respondents in their interaction with public authorities and services, shows that English overall, and to some extent Afrikaans, is being widely used. While some interactions take place in African languages, access is limited due to use of English by personnel at public services.

The overall results as shown on Tables 4.9.1 and 4.9.2 indicate that English (16.1%) is spoken by teachers at Entabeni and the staff at the post office (16.1%); isiZulu is used by both teachers (9.7%) and post office staff (9.7%) at Nottingham. isiZulu is used by both teachers (6.5%) and post office staff (6.5%) at Kindersorg, and Afrikaans is used by teachers (25.8%) and staff at the post office (19.4%) at Wesdorp. However, a higher percentage of teachers at Wesdorp (22.6%) are spoken to by the Post Office staff in English. Overall English seems to be the most widely used in interactions between teachers (41.9%) and post office staff (48.4%).

The overall results for parents indicate the use of isiZulu for parents (9.2%) and staff at the post office (10.9%) of Entabeni and 4.2% for parents and 5.9% for post office staff at Kindersorg; 16.8% English for parents and 32.8% for post office staff at Nottingham; and 24.4% Afrikaans for parents and 21% for post office staff at Wesdorp.

The overall results indicate the use of English for learners (14.3%) and post office staff (16.1%) at Entabeni, with 7.9% and 12.9% at Nottingham respectively. At Kindersorg isiNdebele was applicable for learners (7.9%) and (8.1%) for post office staff while Wesdorp recorded English for learners (28.6%) and post office staff (32.3%). Although some respondents were able to use their home language at the post office, it would seem that overall the use of English dominates at post offices.

An interesting trend is that English is used more than Afrikaans in the Afrikaans community. This is probably due to the elevated status Afrikaans enjoyed in the apartheid era which now has been reduced to share equal status with other official languages, as well as the perceived high status of English which has become more widely used in the media and government.

#### **4.2.2.2 Language use at police stations**

When asked about language use at police stations, the overall results (Tables 4.10.1-4.10.2) indicate that teachers at Entabeni speak to the staff at the police station in isiZulu (10%) and English (10%) and are spoken to in isiZulu (10%); teachers at Nottingham are addressed in isiZulu (13.3%) and speak in isiZulu (13.3%). Teachers at Kindersorg are addressed in and speak isiZulu, Sepedi and Sesotho equally (3.3%). Teachers at Wesdorp are addressed in English (23.3%) and speak in Afrikaans (26.7%).

Parents at Entabeni (14.4%) speak to personnel at the police station in isiZulu and are spoken to in isiZulu (12.8%); parents at Nottingham (17.4%) speak in isiZulu and are spoken to in English (26.3%); parents at Kindersorg (5.3%) indicated that they speak in isiZulu and are spoken to in isiZulu (6%); parents at Wesdorp (15.3%) speak in English and are spoken to in English (17.3%). The overall results indicate the use of isiZulu (37.1%) by most parents and the use of English (45.9%) mostly by staff when parents interact with staff at the police station.

The results show that learners at Entabeni speak to staff in isiZulu (17.7%) and are spoken to in isiZulu (16.1%); learners at Nottingham speak and are spoken to in English (4.8% and 8.1% respectively); learners at Kindersorg speak and are spoken to in isiNdebele (8.1% respectively); learners at Wesdorp speak and are spoken to in English (37.1% and 35.5% respectively).

**Table 4.9.1 Language frequency response at the post office**

What Language do you mainly use to speak to the staff behind the counters?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans	3.2%			25.8%	29.0%	.8%	1.7%	.8%	24.4%	27.7%				27.0%	27.0%
English	16.1%	6.5%	3.2%	16.1%	41.9%	8.4%	16.8%		7.6%	32.8%	14.3%	7.9%		28.6%	50.8%
Sesotho							.8%			.8%					
Sepedi							.8%			.8%					
SiSwati							1.7%			1.7%	1.6%				1.6%
isiNdebele							4.2%	1.7%		5.9%			7.9%		7.9%
isiXhosa							2.5%			2.5%					
isiZulu	12.9%	9.7%	6.5%		29.1%	9.2%	10.9%	4.2%		24.3%	4.8%	6.3%			11.1%
Tshivenda														1.6%	1.6%
Xitsonga							1.7%			1.7%					
Multiple languages									1.7%	1.7%					
TOTAL	32.2%	16.2%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	18.5%	41.2%	6.7%	33.6%	100.0%	20.7%	14.2%	7.9%	57.2%	100.0%

**Table 4.9.2: Language frequency address at the post office**

What language do the post office staff mainly speak to you in?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans	3.2%			19.4%	22.6%			.8%	21.0%	21.8%				25.8%	25.8%
English	16.1%	6.5%	3.2%	22.6%	48.4%	5.9%	32.8%		11.8%	50.5%	16.1%	12.9%		32.3%	61.3%
SiSwati							.8%			.8%					
isiNdebele						.8%	1.7%			2.5%			8.1%		8.1%
isiXhosa	3.2%				3.2%	.8%	.8%			1.6%					
isiZulu	9.7%	9.7%	6.5%		25.8%	10.9%	5.0%	5.9%		21.8%	4.8%				4.8%
Multiple languages									.8%	.8%					
TOTAL	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	18.5%	41.2%	6.7%	33.6%	100.0%	20.9%	12.9%	8.1%	58.1%	100.0%

**Table 4.10.1: Language frequency response at police stations**

What language do you mainly use to speak to the staff behind the counters?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				26.7%	26.7%	.8%	.8%	1.5%	14.4%	17.4%				21.0%	21.0%
English	10.0%	3.3%		16.7%	30.0%	.8%	13.6%		15.2%	29.5%	1.6%	4.8%		37.1%	43.5%
Sesotho	6.7%		3.3%		10.0%	2.3%	1.5%			3.8%					
Setswana	3.3%				3.3%						1.6%				1.6%
Sepedi			3.3%		3.3%	1.5%	.8%			2.3%					
SiSwati						.8%	.8%			1.6%					
isiNdebele						.8%	4.5%	.8%		6.1%			8.1%		8.1%
isiXhosa							.8%			.8%					
isiZulu	10.0%	13.3%	3.3%		26.7%	14.4%	17.4%	5.3%		37.1%	17.7%	3.2%	4.8%		25.8%
Xitsonga							.8%			.8%					
Multiple languages									.8%	.8%					
TOTAL	30.0%	16.7%	10.0%	43.3%	100.0%	21.2%	40.9%	7.6%	30.3%	100.0%	20.9%	8.1%	12.9%	58.1%	100.0%

**Table 4.10.2: Language frequency address at the police stations**

What language do the police station staff mainly speak to you in?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans	6.7%			20.0%	26.7%		.8%	1.5%	12.0%	14.3%				19.4%	19.4%
English	6.7%			23.3%	30.0%	2.3%	26.3%		17.3%	45.9%	3.2%	8.1%		35.5%	46.8%
Sesotho	3.3%		3.3%		6.7%	3.8%	2.3%			6.0%				1.6%	1.6%
Setswana											1.6%				1.6%
Sepedi	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%		10.0%	3.0%	.8%			3.8%					
isiNdebele							.8%			.8%			8.1%		8.1%
isiZulu	10.0%	13.3%	3.3%		26.7%	12.8%	9.8%	6.0%		28.6%	16.1%	1.6%	4.8%		22.6%
Multiple languages									.8%	.8%					
TOTAL	30.0%	16.7%	10.0%	43.3%	100.0%	21.8%	40.6%	7.5%	30.1%	100.0%	21.0%	9.7%	12.9%	56.5%	100.0%



The data represented in Tables 4.10.3 - 4.10.4 indicate that while a small percentage of isiZulu (15%), Sepedi (5%), Setswana (5%), Sesotho (5%) and Afrikaans (25%) is used by teachers in the making of statements to the police, the level of usage of English (45%) is above the use of home language for verbal statements. In respect of written statements to the police, 25% of the statements are written in Afrikaans and 75% in English. Similarly, the data for verbal statements for the parents show that isiZulu (25%), Sepedi (1.8%), Sesotho (1.8%), isiNdebele (1.8%) isiXhosa (.9%), Tshivenda (.9%), Xitsonga (1.8%), English (36.6%) and Afrikaans (29.5%).

For written statements, isiZulu (9.1%), Sepedi (.9%), Setswana (.9%); isiNdebele (.9%), Xitsonga (.9%); Afrikaans (31.8%) and English (54%) are used by parents. While the percentages are smaller for the African languages, more African languages are used in police interactions for parents than for teachers. isiZulu is used more widely than other African languages, which indicates its currency.

The category of learners indicates that statements are made in isiZulu (11.6%) but written in English (12.2%) for learners at Entabeni; English (4.7%) and isiZulu (4.7%) for making statements and English (7.3%) for learners at Nottingham, and Afrikaans for making statements (39.5%) and writing statements (36.6%) for learners at Wesdorp. Learners at Kindersorg did not respond to this question, probably because they did not experience this item in any substantive way.

The use of language for the spoken and written statements at police stations indicates an inadequate language use situation and is problematic, as English fluency (see Table 4.8) is low. Further, it is important that the public should be able to check the accuracy of the statements given to the police. Alexandre (1972) and Prah (1995) note that wherever, proficiency in a minority official language serves as the favourable condition for success, the few who speak that language as a first language will naturally have an advantage over the many who speak it as a second or third language. Hence those who have limited access to the minority language are at a disadvantage and in this instance may be at risk in a legal sense. Afrikaans is used more frequently for written and spoken statements by teachers at Wesdorp.

**Table 4.10.3: Spoken language at the police station**

In what language was your statement made/taken?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				25.0%	25.0%	.9%	6.3%	.9%	21.4%	29.5%	2.3%			39.5%	41.8%
English	10.0%	10.0%	5.0%	20.0%	45.0%	2.7%	23.2%		10.7%	36.6%	7.0%	4.7%		30.2%	41.9%
Sesotho		5.0%			5.0%	1.8%				1.8%					
Setswana	5.0%				5.0%										
Sepedi			5.0%		5.0%	.9%	.9%			1.8%					
SiSwati															
isiNdebele						.9%	.9%			1.8%					
isiXhosa							.9%			.9%					
isiZulu	5.0%	10.0%			15.0%	12.5%	9.8%	2.7%		25.0%	11.6%	4.7%			16.3%
Tshivenda							.9%			.9%					
Xitsonga						.9%	.9%			1.8%					
TOTAL	20.0%	25.0%	10.0%	45.0%	100.0%	20.5%	43.8%	3.6%	32.1%	100.0%	20.9%	9.3%		69.8%	100.0%

**Table 4.10.4: Written language at the police station**

In what language was your statement written?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				25.0%	25.0%	4.5%	6.4%	.9%	20.0%	31.8%	7.3%			36.6%	43.9%
English	20.0%	25.0%	10.0%	20.0%	75.0%	12.7%	26.4%	2.7%	12.7%	54.5%	12.2%	7.3%		31.7%	51.2%
Sesotho															
Setswana							.9%			.9%					
Sepedi							.9%			.9%					
SiSwati															
isiNdebele							.9%			.9%					
isiXhosa							.9%			.9%					
isiZulu						3.6%	5.5%			9.1%	2.4%	2.4%			4.9%
Tshivenda															
Xitsonga							.9%			.9%					
TOTAL	20.0%	25.0%	10.0%	45.0%	100.0%	20.9%	42.8%	3.6%	32.7%	100.0%	22.0%	9.7%		68.3%	100.0%

A discrepancy between the use of home language (isiNdebele/Sepedi) and language of communication (isiZulu and English) tends to occur during interaction at official offices. The majority of respondents are able to use isiZulu and English in public situations. The teachers at Wesdorp are able to use English and Afrikaans in public situations. While isiZulu is being used, the marginalisation of isiNdebele, the home language of a large percentage of the respondents, is evident.

#### **4.2.2.3 Language use at hospitals, clinics and doctors' rooms**

In response to questions on language use at hospitals, clinics and doctors' rooms (Tables 4.11.1- 4.11.2), the teachers at Entabeni indicated that they are addressed in English (20%) and speak English (20%) to staff at the medical institutions, and teachers at Nottingham indicated the use of English (13.3%) as the means of communication at clinics and hospitals. Teachers at Kindersorg use English (3.3%) and Sesotho (3.3%), while teachers at Wesdorp use Afrikaans (40%). The use of English and Afrikaans tends to dominate. Overall English (40%) and Afrikaans (40%) seem to be used more widely by teachers and personnel at medical institutions. Hence the official languages of the apartheid era are still operational which in some ways hinders movement towards implementing multilingualism.

isiZulu is mainly spoken to parents (14.5%) and by parents to personnel at medical institutions (13.6%) in Entabeni; isiZulu (15.1%) is used by personnel at the medical institutions and parents speak English (17.0%) at Nottingham and parents at Kindersorg are spoken to in isiZulu (5.3%) and use English (3.4%) and isiZulu (3.4%) equally with personnel at clinics and hospitals. The parents of Wesdorp have indicated the use of Afrikaans (20.4%) in their communication with personnel at the clinics, doctors' rooms and hospitals and are spoken to in Afrikaans (18.4%). Overall the use of isiZulu (34.9%) by personnel and English (34.7%) by parents dominates in language interactions at medical institutions.

isiZulu appears to be the language of communication for learners at Entabeni (16.4%), Nottingham (15.6%) and Kindersorg (9.0%), while Afrikaans (24.6%) is spoken by learners at Wesdorp to personnel at clinics and hospitals. The staff at these places speak to learners in the learners' languages.

**Table 4.11.1: Language frequency address at clinics, hospitals and doctor’s rooms**

What language are you mainly addressed in?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans	3.3%			40.0%	43.3%	2.0%	1.3%	2.6%	18.4%	24.3%			.8%	22.4%	23.2%
English	20.0%	13.3%	3.3%	3.3%	40.0%	8.6%	11.2%	3.3%	7.2%	30.3%	6.4%	6.4%	.8%	6.4%	20.0%
Sesotho			3.3%		3.3%	.7%	.7%			1.4%	3.2%		.8%		4.0%
Setswana						.7%				.7%					
Sepedi							1.3%			1.3%			3.2%		3.2%
SiSwati							.7%			.7%					
isiNdebele							2.6%			2.6%		2.4%	4.8%		7.2%
isiXhosa	3.3%				3.3%	.7%	.7%			1.4%		2.4%			2.4%
isiZulu	6.7%	3.3%			10.0%	14.5%	15.1%	5.3%		34.9%	14.4%	17.6%	8.0%		40.0%
Tshivenda							.7%			.7%					
Xitsonga							1.3%			1.3%					
TOTAL	33.3%	16.7%	6.7%	43.3%	100.0%	27.0%	35.5%	11.2%	26.3%	100.0%	24.0%	28.8%	18.4%	28.8%	100.0%

**Table 4.11.2: Language frequency response at clinics, hospitals and doctor’s rooms**

What language do you mainly use?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				40.0%	40.0%	2.0%	.7%	2.7%	20.4%	25.9%			.8%	24.6%	25.4%
English	20.0%	13.3%	3.3%	3.3%	40.0%	8.2%	17.0%	3.4%	6.1%	34.7%	6.6%	9.8%		4.1%	20.5%
Sesotho	3.3%		3.3%		6.7%	1.4%	.7%			2.0%	1.6%		.8%		2.5%
Setswana															
Sepedi							.7%			.7%			2.5%		2.5%
SiSwati															
isiNdebele						2.0%	2.0%	2.0%		6.1%		1.6%	5.7%		7.4%
isiXhosa						.7%	2.0%			2.7%		.8%			.8%
isiZulu	10.0%	3.3%			13.3%	13.6%	9.5%	3.4%		26.5%	16.4%	15.6%	9.0%		41.0%
Xitsonga							.7%			.7%					
Multiple languages									.7%	.7%					
TOTAL	33.3%	16.7%	6.7%	43.3%	100.0%	27.9%	33.3%	11.6%	27.2%	100.0%	24.6%	27.9%	18.9%	28.7%	100.0%

The language trend that emerges is that English and Afrikaans appear to be most widely used by teachers; English, isiZulu and Afrikaans for parents and isiZulu and Afrikaans for learners. What is interesting is the relative strength of isiZulu among the parent and learner categories of respondents. The PanSALB Mark Data (2000) study showed that isiZulu is the most widely understood language in the country (over 70% of the population understand isiZulu).

However, in this study, it would appear that Afrikaans is the only home language that is used consistently by the Wesdorp community. isiNdebele, the home language of the majority of respondents, is marginalised.

#### **4.2.2.4 Language use at government offices**

The questions around the use of language in government offices (Table 4.12.1-4.12.2) show that the teachers at Entabeni speak in isiZulu (16.1%) and are spoken to in English (16.1%); teachers at Nottingham speak (12.9%) and are spoken to (12.9%) in English, and teachers at Kindersorg speak and are spoken to equally in English (3.2%), Sesotho (3.2%) and Sepedi (3.2%). Teachers at Wesdorp speak (32.3%) and are spoken to (35%) in English. Overall 61.3% of teachers and 67.7% of officials use English.

Most of the parents from Entabeni (3.7%), Nottingham (19.6%) and Kindersorg (4.7%) use isiZulu to communicate in government offices while Wesdorp uses English (22.4%) and the staff at the government offices address the parents from Entabeni (4.7%) and Kindersorg (3.8%) in isiZulu, Nottingham (38.7%) and Wesdorp (27.4%) in English. Overall, English appears to be widely used by parents (39.3%) in their interactions with the staff of government offices (67.9%).

Learners at Entabeni speak in English (11.1%) and isiZulu (11.1%) and are spoken to in isiZulu (11.9%); learners at Nottingham speak in English (2.2%), isiZulu (2.2%) and isiNdebele (2.2%) and are spoken to in isiZulu (4.8%); Kindersorg did not respond to this, perhaps because they have not experienced visits to government offices, and learners at Wesdorp are spoken to in English (59.5%) and speak in English (44.4%).

While a few African languages are being used in government offices as indicated by

the data, English tends to dominate. What is interesting is that while the respondents and officials speak English, the use of English among officials is statistically higher than that of respondents. Commenting on the use of language of public officials, Vesely (1998: 19) in her study on the impact of English on Xhosa learners, noted that the linguistic interactions of African language speaking government officials who rarely, if ever, speak an African language, publicly send a significant message about the low status of African languages in South Africa. The respondents in her study disapproved of the erstwhile president of the country, Nelson Mandela who is an isiXhosa home language speaker but has not spoken isiXhosa in public.<sup>83</sup>

Roodt (2003: 3) on the other hand, mourning the demise of Afrikaans as a privileged language, traces the enhanced use of English in government offices and business to the ANC's decision and insistence on having English as the lingua franca during the constitutional negotiations in 1993. Balfour and Mitchell (2004) assert that while language rights do exist they are restricted by circumstances that prescribe their use in national, political, economic, social and cultural domains. They share the view that the use of English as lingua franca, renders the use of other languages less prevalent in certain spheres. Plüddemann et al. (2004b: 25) note that paradoxically the outcome of the 1996 constitutional recognition of eleven official languages is that English has risen to an even higher status than during apartheid, at the cost of all of the other languages in South Africa. While it is clear from the official documentation that the will to do "the right thing" for the most part is apparent, Plüddemann et al. (2004b: 25) point out that it is important to emphasise the very real mismatch between the multilingual policy of official documentation and the actual language practice in government, education and business. Given the attitude of the "public role models" it is therefore not surprising that when expressing their feelings on use of language in public places, both teachers and parents did not mind the situation and that learners in this study liked using the English language. The learners' responses indicate their aspirations to be able to speak English fluently.

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<sup>83</sup> This study describes the impact that English has made in the homes, communities and schools of isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 students in two Cape Town townships. The ramifications of apartheid's influx control and education policies, as well as current language and education issues were investigated.

**Table 4.12.1: Language frequency response at government offices**

What language do you mainly use to speak to the staff behind the counters?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				6.5%	6.5%		2.8%	1.9%	14.0%	18.7%				24.4%	24.4%
English	12.9%	12.9%	3.2%	32.3%	61.3%	2.8%	14.0%		22.4%	39.3%	11.1%	2.2%		44.4%	57.7%
Sesotho	3.2%		3.2%		6.5%	.9%	.9%			1.9%					
Setswana															
Sepedi			3.2%		3.2%						2.4%				2.4%
isiNdebele							5.6%	.9%		6.5%		2.2%			2.2%
isiXhosa							.9%			.9%					
isiZulu	16.1%	3.2%			19.4%	3.7%	19.6%	4.7%		28.0%	11.1%	2.2%			13.3%
Tshivenda							.9%			.9%					
Xitsonga							3.7%			3.7%					
Multiple languages				3.2%	3.2%										
TOTAL	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	7.5%	48.6%	7.5%	36.4%	100.0%	24.6%	6.7%		68.8%	100%

**Table 4.12.2: Language frequency address at government offices**

What language do the staff mainly speak to you in?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				3.2%	3.2%		.9%	1.9%	7.5%	10.4%				11.9%	11.9%
English	16.1%	12.9%	3.2%	35.5%	67.7%	1.9%	38.7%		27.4%	67.9%	9.5%	2.4%		59.5%	71.4%
Sesotho	3.2%		3.2%		6.5%	.9%	.9%		.9%	2.8%					
Setswana				3.2%	3.2%										
Sepedi			3.2%		3.2%										
isiNdebele								1.9%		1.9%					
isiZulu	12.9%	3.2%			16.1%	4.7%	7.5%	3.8%		16.0%	11.9%	4.8%			16.7%
Tshivenda															
Multiple languages									.9%	.9%					
TOTAL	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	7.5%	48.1%	7.5%	36.8%	100.0%	21.4%	7.1%		71.4%	100%

#### 4.2.2.5 Language use at religious meetings

Table 4.13 illustrates the use of language in religious meetings. Teachers from Entabeni (12.9%) indicate a high percentage of isiZulu being used at religious meetings while Nottingham (9.7%) shows that English is widely used in religious services. Is this because the majority of teachers live outside their area of work in more urban areas? The teacher category of respondents at Kindersorg shows that Setswana (3.2%), Sepedi (3.2%) and isiNdebele (3.2%) are used in religious services, and Wesdorp indicated that a high percentage of Afrikaans (41.9%) is used at religious meetings.

Parents from Entabeni (20.5%), Nottingham (16.8%) and Kindersorg (5.6%) indicate a high percentage of isiZulu being used at religious meetings, while parents from Wesdorp (23%) indicate the use of Afrikaans.

A high percentage of learners at Entabeni (18.4%), Nottingham (16%) and Kindersorg (9.6%) indicated the use of isiZulu at religious meetings; learners from Wesdorp (16.8%) indicated the use of Afrikaans. A trend that emerges is that most respondents worship in their preferred languages which are African languages for most African language speaking respondents and Afrikaans for the Afrikaans language speakers. This is particularly important because language use in this instance is extended beyond the communicative function to a system of representation providing a shared world view on the level of society. Language is used to share a common reality with others and in so doing it constitutes a collective identity (Koenig, 1999). Religious practices are known to contribute to bonding groups and promoting social integration.

From the data, the question that emerges is why isiNdebele, the home language of most parents and learners, is not used in religious services. In attempting to answer the question of non-use of a language, Landweer<sup>84</sup> refers to language vitality in general, noting that whether a language appears to be “maintained” or “dying” depends on the collective impact of positive or negative indicators that place the language on a continuum of stable vitality, change in process due to other language interference, radical shift in process, and death. Language maintenance and shift are long-term consequences of consistent patterns of language choice throughout the speech community. She argues further that language choice can serve as a marker of ethnic identity, which can influence language choice.

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<sup>84</sup> See article entitled: Endangered languages: indicators of ethnolinguistic vitality (undated). Pages 1-18 <http://www.sil.org/sociolx/ndg-lg-indicators.html>



**Table 4.13: Language use at religious meetings**

What language was mainly used in the service?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				41.9%	41.9%			.6%	23.0%	23.6%				16.8%	16.8%
English	6.5%	9.7%			16.1%	.6%	.6%		1.9%	3.1%		.8%		7.2%	8.0%
Sesotho	9.7%				9.7%	4.3%	2.5%	.6%		7.5%	1.6%		.8%		2.4%
Setswana			3.2%		3.2%	1.2%	.6%			1.9%	.8%	.8%			1.6%
Sepedi			3.2%		3.2%	.6%	.6%			1.2%	1.6%	1.6%	.8%		4.0%
SiSwati															
isiNdebele			3.2%		3.2%	1.2%	5.0%	3.7%		9.9%		4.8%	8.0%		12.8%
isiXhosa						.6%	1.9%			2.5%		3.2%			3.2%
isiZulu	12.9%	6.5%			19.4%	20.5%	16.8%	5.6%		42.9%	18.4%	16.0%	9.6%		44.0%
Tshivenda							1.2%			1.2%	.8%	.8%			1.6%
Xitsonga						.6%	5.0%			5.6%	1.6%	4.0%			5.6%
Khoe															
Oriental / Indian language	3.2%				3.2%										
Multiple languages						.6%				.6%					
TOTAL	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	30.4%	34.2%	10.6%	24.8%	100.0%	24.8%	32.0%	19.2%	24.0%	100.0%

Nash (1987) demonstrates how the local group's strength of identity works to maintain its language choice. In other words, the perception a group has of English can be supportive or can undermine the value associated with their language and ultimately their own use of their language. Bourhis et al. (1981) notes that various status factors serve to reinforce ethnolinguistic vitality. How well a group is perceived by outsiders (e.g. by government and media) also has an impact on the value associated with the group's language. In the context of this study, isiNdebele is one of the eleven official languages with equal legal status to any of the other languages; however, in practice, because isiZulu is spoken more widely in public places in the area, isiNdebele, the language of most parents and learners at Entabeni, Nottingham and Kindersorg, is being marginalised. This evidences a situation referred to by Balfour and Mitchell (2004) as a "pecking order of languages" where isiNdebele in this case has less access to national resources for language development than isiZulu.

#### **4.2.2.6 Language use at supermarkets and shops**

The results as illustrated on Tables 4.14.1-4.14.2 indicate that for the teacher categories of respondents, isiZulu appears as the language of communication used by teachers (19.4%) and staff at supermarkets (22.6%) at Entabeni. Teachers at Nottingham use isiZulu (16.1%) and are addressed in isiZulu (12.9%). Teachers at Kindersorg use Afrikaans (3.2%), English (3.2%) and Sepedi (3.2%) equally and are also addressed in the same languages. Teachers at Wesdorp use English (22.6%) and are addressed in English (35.5%) at supermarkets and shops.

The results of the parent category of respondents at Entabeni have indicated isiZulu (16.5%) as the language of communication they use and they are addressed in isiZulu (18%). Parents of Nottingham have indicated that they use English (12.7%) and are addressed in isiZulu (24.2%). Parents from Kindersorg have indicated the use of Afrikaans (7%) and are addressed in Afrikaans (6.8%). Parents at Wesdorp have indicated that they use English (14.6%) and are addressed in English (19.3%) in shops and supermarkets.

**Table 4.14.1: Language frequency address at supermarkets and shops**

What language are you mainly addressed in?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans			3.2%	6.4%	9.6%	1.2%	1.9%	6.8%	5.0%	14.9%			6.2%	6.2%	12.4%
English	9.7%	3.2%	3.2%	35.5%	51.6%	8.7%	3.1%		19.3%	31.1%	13.1%	4.6%	4.6%	19.2%	41.5%
Sesotho						.6%	.6%			1.2%		.8%	.8%		1.6%
Setswana						.6%				.6%					
Sepedi			3.2%		3.2%	.6%	.6%			1.2%					
SiSwati															
isiNdebele						.6%	3.7%	.6%		5.0%		1.5%	3.8%		5.3%
isiXhosa												.8%			.8%
isiZulu	22.6%	12.9%			35.5%	18.0%	24.2%	3.1%		45.3%	8.5%	19.2%	7.7%		35.4%
Tshivenda							.6%			.6%					
Xitsonga												3.1%			3.1%
TOTAL	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	30.4%	34.8%	10.6%	24.2%	100.0%	21.6%	30.0%	23.1%	25.4%	100.0%

**Table 4.14.2: Language frequency response at supermarkets and shops**

What language do you mainly use?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY					S1: SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans			3.2%	19.4%	22.6%	3.2%	.6%	7.0%	10.1%	20.9%	.8%	1.6%	6.3%	13.3%	22.0%
English	9.7%		3.2%	22.6%	35.5%	7.0%	12.7%		14.6%	34.2%	11.7%	4.7%	4.7%	14.8%	35.9%
Sesotho	3.2%				3.2%	1.9%				1.9%					
Setswana															
Sepedi			3.2%		3.2%		.6%			.6%					
SiSwati							.6%			.6%					
isiNdebele						2.5%	4.4%	.6%		7.6%		1.6%	3.9%		5.5%
isiXhosa							1.9%			1.9%		2.3%			2.3%
isiZulu	19.4%	16.1%			35.5%	16.5%	10.1%	3.2%		29.7%	9.4%	17.2%	7.8%		34.4%
Tshivenda															
Xitsonga						2.5%				2.5%					
TOTAL	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	33.6%	30.9%	10.8%	24.7%	100.0%	21.9%	27.4%	22.7%	28.1%	100.0%

The results of the learners at Entabeni indicate English is used by learners (11.7%) at Entabeni and are addressed in English (13.1%) at supermarkets. Learners at Nottingham use isiZulu (17.2%) and are addressed in isiZulu (19.2%). Kindersorg has indicated isiZulu (7.8%) is being used by learners and isiZulu (7.7%) used by personnel at shops. Wesdorp has indicated that English (14.8%) is being used by learners and 19.2% is used by personnel at shops.

The trend that emerges is that English and isiZulu are used more widely by all categories of respondents.

#### **4.2.2.7 Language use at banks**

The data on Tables 4.15.1- 4.15.2 show that all teachers from Entabeni (26.7%), Nottingham (16.7%) and Kindersorg (6.7%) indicated that they use English at banks while teachers from Wesdorp (30%) use Afrikaans.

Parents from Entabeni (11.9%) and Kindersorg (2.5%) indicated the use of isiZulu at banks and parents from Nottingham (22.0%) have indicated the use of English. Wesdorp (23.7%) have indicated the use of Afrikaans.

With regard to interaction at the banks, Alexander (2005: 10) in an address at the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust stated that preliminary findings on a current study on communication patterns in the public service is showing an increased move towards the use of African languages.

Alexander (2005: 10) argues that one of the country's biggest banks has made available on their autobank screens instructions in isiZulu and Sesotho and that it intended making this facility available in all eleven languages. The results in this study have shown that overall a higher percentage of teachers (63.3%) and parents (41.5%) use mainly English in their interactions at the banks and they are addressed mainly in English (teachers: 63.3% and parents: 41.5%). Two points that arise are that perhaps the communities in the study have not encountered this facility; perhaps they bank at smaller banks or do not use autobanks. Furthermore, a larger issue is perhaps that of literacy levels which may prevent parents especially from using modern technology.

**Table 4.15.1: Language frequency address at banks**

What language are you mainly addressed in?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				26.7%	26.7%	1.7%	2.5%	.8%	16.8%	21.8%
English	26.7%	16.7%	6.7%	16.7%	66.7%	10.1%	28.6%	.8%	16.8%	56.3%
Sesotho	3.3%				3.3%		.8%			.8%
Setswana										
Sepedi										
SiSwati										
isiNdebele							.8%	.8%		1.6%
isiXhosa										
isiZulu	3.3%				3.3%	10.9%	5.0%	2.5%		18.4%
Multiple languages						.8%				.8%
TOTAL	33.3%	16.7%	6.7%	43.3%	100.0%	23.5%	37.7%	4.9%	33.6%	100.0%

**Table 4.15.2: Language frequency response at banks**

What language do you mainly use?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				30.0%	30.0%	1.7%	1.7%	.8%	23.7%	28.0%
English	26.7%	16.7%	6.7%	13.3%	63.3%	8.5%	22.0%	.8%	10.2%	41.5%
Sesotho	3.3%				3.3%	.8%	2.5%			3.4%
Setswana										
Sepedi										
SiSwati										
isiNdebele						.8%	.8%	.8%		2.5%
isiXhosa							.8%			.8%
isiZulu	3.3%				3.3%	11.9%	8.5%	2.5%		22.9%
Xitsonga							.8%			.8%
TOTAL	33.3%	16.7%	6.7%	43.3%	100.0%	23.7%	37.3%	5.1%	33.9%	100.0%

#### 4.2.2.8 Feelings about language used in public places

In respect of feelings towards language use in public places (Table 4.16), teachers from Entabeni (20.7%) prefer to use their language but do not feel too strongly about it. Teachers from Nottingham (17.2%) do not mind the use of a particular language. Teachers from Kindersorg (3.4%) like using the language and do not mind the situation. Teachers from Wesdorp (24.1%) prefer to use their own language and feel frustrated if another language is used. The question that emerges is why do teachers prefer the use of own language but do not feel strongly about it. Is it because teachers know their language rights and understand the full import of promoting multilingualism yet feel powerless to act? Is it just a complacent attitude, or do they see English as a language of opportunity? The latter seems to be the case as English is the language used most in public places and teachers may feel obliged to learn and use the language appropriately if they are to gain access to these places. Why do teachers from Wesdorp prefer to use their own language and feel frustrated that another language is used? It would seem that the language patterns of the past are deeply entrenched and therefore making it difficult for teachers to act decisively. Added to this is the lack of support from policy makers and government officials as shown in the study conducted by Vesely (2000).

Parents from Entabeni (7.1%) and Kindersorg (6.3%) do not mind the situation. Parents from Nottingham (18.8%) and Wesdorp (11.6%) indicate that they prefer to use their own language and feel frustrated that another language is used. Overall it appears that most parents (34.5%) do not mind the situation but an almost equal number (32.1%) prefer to use their own language and feel frustrated when another language is used.

The responses from learners at Entabeni (20.6%) indicate that they like using the language; the learners from Nottingham (7.4%) and Kindersorg (7.4%) indicate that they prefer to use their own language and feel frustrated that another language is used. Learners from Wesdorp (10.3%) prefer the use of their own language but do not feel strongly about it.

**Table 4.16: Feelings about language used in public places**

Which of the following describes your feelings about the language used?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
I like using the language	3.4%		3.4%	3.4%	10.3%	.9%	3.6%	.9%	.9%	6.3%	20.6%			8.8%	29.4%
I do not mind the situation	10.3%	17.2%	3.4%	3.4%	34.5%	7.1%	17.0%	6.3%	4.5%	34.8%	11.8%	4.4%		8.8%	25.0%
I would prefer to use my own language but do not feel strongly about it	20.7%			6.9%	27.6%	1.8%	4.5%	.9%	8.0%	15.2%		4.4%		10.3%	14.7%
Prefer to use my own language and feel frustrated by another				24.1%	24.1%		18.8%	1.8%	11.6%	32.1%		7.4%	7.4%	8.8%	23.5%
I insist on speaking my own language even though I am answered in another				3.4%	3.4%		3.6%	.9%	7.2%	11.7%				7.4%	7.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>41.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>32.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>32.4%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Most African language speaking respondents stated that while they preferred their own languages they did not feel too strongly about the situation. A sense of openness to other languages is evident. However, most Afrikaans respondents expressed frustration when they were not able to use their own language. What emerges is that for African language speaking respondents, being multilingual allows them to converse in a variety of languages which does not threaten loss. The Afrikaans speakers in contrast, because of their language history, have had access to every sector using the Afrikaans language and perhaps did not find it necessary to learn other languages except for English which they had to learn and resented the fact that they were compelled to learn it. Hence they experience frustration when not able to use Afrikaans in all situations. Wurm (2001: 22) in understanding this view states that multilinguals are less rigid in their attitudes and have a tendency to be more tolerant of the unknown than monolinguals (i.e. they are less hostile and suspicious); they are more inclined to regard manifestations of other cultures by individuals as acceptable and respectable, even though different from their own cultures.

#### **4.2.2.9 Summarising emerging trends: Socio-cultural: Language use and preferences in public situations**

In his consideration of language from a rights paradigm, Alexander (2004: 19) states that all human beings should have the right to use language of their choice in order to conduct their essential transactions such as going to school, religious places of worship or to the post office, the bank and the supermarket. If they are unable to do so, they are disempowered, unable to be part of the decision-making processes of the society concerned and unable to be part of vital decisions affecting their lives.

Five significant points emerge when examining language preference and use in public situations, namely at the post office, police stations, clinics, hospitals, government departments, religious services, supermarkets and banks.

First, the four main languages used in public situations as encountered by the respondents are isiZulu, isiNdebele, English, and Afrikaans. In respect of use of language at the post office (Tables 4.9.1-4.9.2), a higher percentage of isiZulu is used by teachers of Nottinghill and Kindersorg and parents of Entabeni and Kindersorg.



English is used mostly by all other respondents and the data indicates that overall English is more widely used at the post offices in the community.

Second, the level of usage of English is above the use of home language for both making and writing of statements to the police, with the writing of statements indicating a far higher percentage than making verbal statements (Tables 4.10.1-4.10.4). This therefore indicates an inadequate situation regarding the taking and in particular the writing of police statements for accuracy. Problematic as this is, it is important that the public should be able to check the accuracy of the statements given to the police.

Third, the use of language in hospitals and clinics (Tables 4.11.1- 4.11.2) indicates that a higher percentage of learners use isiZulu in their interactions at medical institutions, while English, isiZulu and Afrikaans are used among parents and teachers with English dominating. English usage dominates in government offices (Tables 4.12.1-4.12.2). It is interesting that while the respondents and officials speak English, the usage of English among officials is higher than that of respondents. Vesely (1998: 19), as noted, attributes the low status of the African languages to its minimal public use by government officials. Roodt (2003: 3) on the other hand, traces the increased use and current status of English to the constitutional negotiations of 1993, where the ANC insisted on proclaiming English as the sole official language. Plüddemann et al. (2004b: 25) observe a mismatch between the multilingual policy of official documentation and the actual language practice in government, education, and business.

Fourth, in respect of languages used in religious meetings (Tables 4.13.1), most respondents worship in their preferred languages, which are African languages for most African language speaking respondents and Afrikaans for the Afrikaans language speakers. This is important because religious practices are known to contribute to bonding groups and promoting social integration.

When asked about their feelings towards other languages used in the different public places (Table 4.16), most African language speaking respondents stated that while they preferred their own languages they did not feel too strongly about the situation. A

sense of openness to other languages is evident. However, most Afrikaans-speaking respondents expressed frustration when they were not able to use their own language.

To bring the discussion in this section to a close, it must be noted that the statistics on language use in public places demonstrate the dominance of English in spite of its relatively low status in personal and community interactions. The next section will review language use in interviews and work situations.

### **4.2.3 Economic: Language use in interviews and work situations**

Language is necessary to manage vast amounts of knowledge and equipment effectively in the workplace. Good language skills are necessary if one has to perform well in interviews and manage situations at the workplace. In this section, language use at interviews and in the workplace is discussed.

#### **4.2.3.1 Language use at interviews**

In respect of job seeking (Tables 4.17.1-4.17.2), a particularly important issue is the experience during interviews. A high percent of teachers from Entabeni (22.7%), Nottingham (13.6%) and Kindersorg (4.5%) were not able to interview in their own language, in contrast to a high percentage of teachers from Wesdorp (36.4%) who were able to interview in their own language. Teachers from Entabeni (29.4%) felt slightly disadvantaged as a consequence of communication in another language. The teachers from Nottingham (23.5%) and Kindersorg (5.9%) managed the interview in another language and teachers from Wesdorp were able to interview in their own language, indicating serious disadvantage if they are not able to do so.

A higher percentage of parents from Entabeni (7.6%), Kindersorg (3.3%) and Wesdorp (13.0%) indicated that they were not able to interview in their own language. Parents from Entabeni (8.0%) felt slightly disadvantaged as a consequence of communication in another language. An equal percentage of parents from Kindersorg (1.3%) felt slightly disadvantaged and seriously disadvantaged while a higher percentage of parents from Wesdorp (8.0%) felt no disadvantage at all. It would seem that English and Afrikaans remain the languages used in interviews.

Here again the hegemony of English rears its head as African language speaking respondents are disadvantaged by not being able to interview in their own language. As Alexander (2004: 20) notes, “we are not opposed to English-obviously - but to the hegemonic position of English, which necessarily puts other languages and varieties at risk to the point of threatening them with extinction”. Preventing access to jobs because of language is a violation of human rights. Alexandre (1972: 86) has demonstrated how in post-colonial Africa, one’s degree of proficiency in the ex-colonial language has become a determinant of class location and even class position. The Afrikaans-speaking respondents in this study use their own language in interviews. In some ways the old paradigm when English and Afrikaans were the only languages used for high status activities still prevails in these communities.

The dominant position of English is rapidly becoming entrenched in South Africa. One unfortunate result is that the majority of people (approximately 80%) do not have the command of English needed to succeed in higher education or to compete on an equal footing for the prestigious and higher paid jobs. Alexander (1997: 86) points out that no nation ever thrived or reached great heights of economic and cultural development if the vast majority of its people were compelled to communicate in a second or even third language. The African languages have little value in the market place if not combined with proficiency in English. As a consequence of the official language policies over the years, most African people attach little value to their mother-tongue and believe it to be deficient or impoverished in a way that makes it unsuitable for use in a modern society. However, Pandor (1995: 58) argues that some South Africans see multilingualism as a way to confront the linguistic imperialism that has held them back and to finally give people the “opportunity to demand language rights”. Furthermore, an economy based only on English in South Africa is unrealistic, since over 38 million people would need to learn what is now a language spoken by the minority.

**Table 4.17.1: Language use at interviews**

Were you able to use your own language?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Yes	9.1%	9.1%		36.4%	54.5%	6.5%	32.6%	1.1%	10.9%	51.1%
No	22.7%	13.6%	4.5%	4.5%	45.5%	7.6%	25.0%	3.3%	13.0%	48.9%
TOTAL	31.8%	22.7%	4.5%	40.9%	100.0%	14.1%	57.6%	4.4%	23.9%	100.0%

**Table 4.17.2: Feelings about language use at interviews**

If you were not able to use your own language, how did you feel?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Not disadvantaged - I managed quite easily	11.8%	23.5%	5.9%	5.9%	47.1%	2.7%	9.3%		8.0%	20.0%
Slightly disadvantaged - It would have been better to use my own language	29.4%	5.9%		5.9%	41.2%	8.0%	48.0%	1.3%	6.7%	64.0%
Seriously - disadvantaged- I should have been able to use my own language				11.8%	11.8%		10.7%	1.3%	4.0%	16.0%
Total	41.2%	29.4%	5.9%	23.5%	100.0%	10.7%	68.0%	2.7%	18.7%	100.0%

**Table 4.18.1: Language use at work**

What language do you mainly speak at work?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans		4.5%		22.7%	27.3%	3.8%	1.5%	13.1%	20.0%	38.4%
English	13.6%	13.6%			27.3%		6.2%		10.8%	16.9%
Sesotho						3.1%				3.1%
Setswana			4.5%		4.5%					
Sepedi			9.1%		9.1%					
isiZulu	27.3%	4.5%			31.8%	6.2%	35.4%			41.6%
TOTAL	40.9%	22.7%	13.6%	22.7%	100.0%	13.1%	43.1%	13.1%	30.8%	100.0%

**Table 4.18.2: Language used with supervisors**

What languages do you mainly use when speaking to people more senior than you?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				26.1%	26.1%	4.1%	37.7%	13.9%	18.0%	73.7%
English	34.8%	21.7%	4.3%		60.9%	4.1%	3.3%		9.8%	17.2%
Sesotho	4.3%				4.3%	2.5%				2.5%
Setswana			8.7%		8.7%					
isiNdebele							.8%			.8%
isiXhosa										
isiZulu						3.3%	1.6%			4.9%
European origin									.8%	.8%
TOTAL	39.1%	21.7%	13.0%	26.1%	100.0%	14.0%	43.4%	13.9%	28.7%	100.0%

#### 4.2.3.2 Language at work

Street (cited in Webb)<sup>85</sup> sees literacy as “social practice” and uses the term “vocational literacy” to refer to workers’ ability to control their occupational situations. To do so, one needs knowledge, skills, the potential to work effectively and the potential to qualify for jobs. Language is used as an instrument in the construction of identity (values, norms, attitudes, understanding and self-confidence) and as an instrument of social interaction. It has the power to assist workers to move out of situations of poverty. A review of language use at the workplace, the data (Tables 4.18.1-4.18.2) shows that isiZulu (27.3%) maintains its position as a language of work for teachers at Entabeni, though they use English (34.8%) to address seniors; English is used by teachers at Nottingham to communicate with staff (13.6%) and seniors (21.7%). For teachers at Kindersorg, Sepedi is used for communication with staff (9.1%) and Setswana for interaction with seniors (8.7%); Afrikaans maintains its position as the language of work (22.7%) for teachers at Wesdorp and is also used to address seniors (26.1%).

In respect of language use at work, parents at Entabeni (6.2%) and Nottingham (35.4%) use isiZulu; parents at Kindersorg (13.9%) and Wesdorp (20.0%) use Afrikaans. isiNdebele, the home language of parents in the three schools, does not feature as a language mainly spoken at work. It is interesting to note that the language of communication between teachers and seniors is dependent on the language of the seniors. In two of the schools where the principals are English-speaking, the staff address them in English. At the third school, the principal is addressed in Setswana and the principal at Wesdorp is addressed in Afrikaans. Afrikaans remains the language parents use to address seniors since most of the farm owners are Afrikaans speakers and most parents are farm labourers. The question that emerges is why parents address their seniors at work in Afrikaans. History reveals that one strategy of the National Party to get Africans to learn Afrikaans was to increase their power by increasing the number of Afrikaans users. Malherbe (1977: 73-74) described this intention as:

*The native will in future be a much bigger factor in the development of our country than is the case at present, and we must shape that factor so that it serves our purpose, assures our victory, and perpetuates our language, our culture and our volk...The kaffir who speaks Afrikaans...can be our cultural servant as he is our farm servant.*

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<sup>85</sup> Webb, VN, (undated). Language, educational effectiveness and economic outcomes <http://www.up.ac.za/academic/libarts/crpl/information-pamphlet-Le3o.pdf>

Afrikaans and English still occupy positions of power in these rural commercial farm communities.

#### **4.2.3.3 Summarising emerging trends: Economic**

This section discussed language use in interview situations and work situations. The data on Tables 4.17.1-4.17.2 indicates that interviews for jobs for all African language speaking respondents are not conducted in their home language. Most respondents in the Afrikaans-speaking community admit to being interviewed in their own language and feel seriously disadvantaged if they were not interviewed in their own language. This reinforces the historical paradigm when English and Afrikaans were dominant. With respect to language use at work (Tables 4.18.1-4.18.2), it must be noted that the home language of isiNdebele of most parents in the three schools does not feature as a language mainly spoken at work. The language of communication between teachers and seniors is dependent on the language of the seniors. Afrikaans remains the language parents use to address seniors: most farm owners are Afrikaans speakers and most parents are farm labourers. It is clear from the data that Afrikaans and English still occupy positions of power in this rural community. In the next section, issues surrounding language use at school and the extent of multilingualism among the respondents are explored.

#### **4.2.4 Education: The extent of multilingualism and language use in school situations**

Literacy helps people understand decontextualised information and language, verbal as well as written, and paves the way for further learning. The United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) was launched because "literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all ... [and] creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy" (United Nations, 2002).

The South African Constitution (1996) enshrines the value of being able to read, write, count and think for all citizens, and spells out the importance of the individual's

development and education as a contributor to the development of society, and the nation. Tables 4.19-4.22 deal collectively with respondents' understanding of spoken languages, and their speaking, reading and writing abilities (extent of multilingualism), which are issues of literacy. Literacy lies at the heart of the educational experience. If a person develops excellent reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, he/she will succeed in all areas in life. Application of these skills in daily interactions results in the development of personal skills, namely, building confidence and expressing preferences, showing pride in what one does and respecting others by listening and acknowledging opinions and enjoying interactions with others.<sup>86</sup>

#### **4.2.4.1 Understanding spoken languages**

The spoken language(s) that are best understood by teachers as illustrated in Table 4.19, is isiZulu at Entabeni (17.9%) and Nottingham (10.8%); Setswana at Kindersorg (7.2%) and Afrikaans (32.1%) at Wesdorp. For parents, isiNdebele is the language best understood at Entabeni (16.6%), Nottingham (13.4%) and Kindersorg (12.1%), while at Wesdorp it is Afrikaans (19.8%). For learners, the spoken languages that are best understood are isiZulu at Entabeni (19.7%), Nottingham (8.8%) and Kindersorg (17.1%); at Wesdorp it is Afrikaans (20.3%).

Overall the languages used most widely from the sample are isiZulu (28.7%) and Afrikaans (32.1%) for teachers; isiNdebele (42.1%) and Afrikaans (19.8%) for parents, and isiZulu (45.6%) and Afrikaans (20.3%) for learners.

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<sup>86</sup> See article entitled Skills in first language English (undated). <http://www.cie.org.uk>



**Table 4.19: Understanding spoken languages**

What languages do you understand if spoken?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				32.1%	32.1%				19.8%	19.8%				20.3%	20.3%
English	14.3%	3.6%		3.6%	21.5%	2.5%			3.8%	6.3%	1.8%	3.5%		13.9%	13.9%
Sesotho						3.2%	3.2%			6.4%		.9%			.9%
Setswana	3.6%		7.2%		10.8%	.6%				.6%	.9%				.9%
Sepedi		3.6%	3.6%		7.2%		.6%			.6%					
SiSwati												.9%			.9%
isiNdebele						16.6%	13.4%	12.1%		42.1%		5.3%	4.4%		9.7%
isiXhosa							2.5%			2.5%		1.8%			1.8%
isiZulu	17.9%	10.8%			28.7%	3.8%	8.3%	1.0%		13.1%	19.7%	8.8%	17.1%		45.6%
Tshivenda						.6%				.6%					
Xitsonga						1.9%	5.1%			7.0%		2.7%			2.7%
Multiple languages						1.8%	1.2%			3.0%					
TOTAL	35.7%	17.9%	10.7%	35.7%	100.0%	31.0%	33.3%	13.1%	23.6%	100.0%	26.5%	23.9%	26.5%	33.9%	100.0%

**Table 4.20: Speaking ability**

What languages do you speak well enough to, for example, explain a problem you have, to someone in a shop or to an official?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				32.1%	32.1%	1.3%	.6%		19.9%	21.8%				20.2%	20.2%
English	14.3%			3.6%	17.9%	3.9%			1.3%	5.2%	4.4%			7.9%	7.9%
Sesotho						3.9%	1.9%			5.8%					
Setswana		3.6%			3.6%	.6%				.6%	.9%				.9%
Sepedi	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%		10.7%		.6%			.6%					
SiSwati							.6%			.6%		.9%			.9%
isiNdebele						4.5%	10.3%	6.9%		21.7%		6.1%	6.1%		12.3%
isiXhosa						.6%	2.6%			3.2%		1.8%			1.8%
isiZulu	17.9%	7.2%	7.1%		32.2%	12.3%	10.3%	1.3%		23.9%	21.1%	11.4%	20.5%		53%
Tshivenda		3.6%			3.6%	.6%				.6%					
Xitsonga						1.3%	5.8%			7.1%		3.5%			3.5%
Khoe								.6%		.6%					
Oriental / Indian language								1.3%		1.3%					
Multiple languages						1.8%	1.2%			3.0%					
TOTAL	35.7%	17.9%	10.7%	35.7%	100.0%	31.0%	34.2%	11.0%	23.9%	100.0%	26.4%	23.7%	26.6%	23.8%	100.0%

**Table 4.21: Written language ability**

Think of the language you know best: Can you write it well enough to write a letter to a shop or an Employer?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Very well	32.1%	17.9%	10.7%	21.4%	82.1%	28.8%	12.8%	7.1%	21.2%	69.9%	17.1%	4.6%	12.6%	16.2%	50.5%
Fairly well	3.6%			10.7%	14.3%		18.6%	.6%	2.0%	21.2%	8.1%	15.3%	7.2%	8.1%	38.7%
A little				3.6%	3.6%	.6%	3.2%			3.8%	1.8%	.9%	6.3%		9.0%
Cannot write						1.3%	.6%	3.2%		5.1%		1.8%			1.8%
Total	35.7%	17.9%	10.7%	35.7%	100.0%	30.8%	35.3%	10.9%	23.1%	100.0%	27.0%	22.5%	26.1%	24.3%	100.0%

**Table 4.22: Reading ability**

Which language can you read in well enough to understand things which are printed in newspaper articles?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Afrikaans				34.6%	34.6%	.1%		.7%	22.6%	23.4%	1.1%			19.5%	20.6%
English	23.1%	11.5%		7.6%	42.2%	7.8%	3.1%		3.9%	14.8%	8.7%	4.3%		4.3%	17.3%
Sesotho						2.3%	1.6%			3.9%		2.2%			2.2%
Setswana						.8%	1.6%			2.4%					
Sepedi	3.8%		.5%		4.3%	.8%	.8%			1.6%			1.1%		1.1%
SiSwati												1.1%	1.1%		2.2%
isiNdebele						1.6%	5.4%	3.2%		10.5%		3.3%	9.8%		13.1%
isiXhosa						.8%	1.6%			2.4%					
isiZulu	3.8%	7.5%	7.6%		18.9%	9.3%	17.8%	4.7%	.8%	32.6%	18.6%	14.1%	7.6%		40.3%
Tshivenda												3.3%			3.3%
Xitsonga						.8%	3.1%			3.9%					
Multiple						2.4%	.8%	1.6%		4.8%					
TOTAL	30.7%	19.0%	8.1%	42.2%	100.0%	26.7%	35.8%	10.2%	27.3%	100.0%	28.3%	28.3%	19.6%	23.9%	100.0%

#### **4.2.4.2 Speaking ability**

The language that respondents speak well enough to explain a problem as shown in Table 4.20, for teachers is isiZulu for Entabeni (17.9%), Nottingham (7.2%) and Kindersorg (7.1%) and Afrikaans (32.1%) for Wesdorp. For parents, isiZulu appears to be the language in which they speak well enough to explain a problem at Entabeni (12.3%); for Nottingham it is isiZulu (10.3%) and isiNdebele (10.3%); for Kindersorg it is isiNdebele (6.9%) and for Wesdorp it is Afrikaans (19.9%). For the learners, isiZulu is the language that they speak well enough to explain a problem at Entabeni (21.1%), Nottingham (11.4%) and Kindersorg (20.5%); for Wesdorp it is Afrikaans (20.2%). Overall, isiZulu and Afrikaans are the two languages used most in interactions involving speaking among all categories of respondents. isiZulu is used most widely by learners (53%).

#### **4.2.4.3 Written language ability**

In respect of competence in written communication, Table 4.21 illustrates that teachers at Entabeni (32.1%), Nottingham (17.9%), Kindersorg (10.7%) and Wesdorp (21.4%), rated this ability as very well. Parents at Entabeni (28.8%), Kindersorg (7.1%) and Wesdorp (21.2%) rated their writing ability “very well”; those at Nottingham (18.6%) did not: they rated their competence “fairly well”. Learners at Entabeni (17.1%), Kindersorg (12.6%) and Wesdorp (16.2%) rated this ability as “very well” while Nottingham (16.2%) rated their competence as “fairly well”. Overall the rating for competence as “very well” is 82.1% for teachers, 69.9% for parents and 50.5% for learners.

#### **4.2.4.4 Reading ability**

When asked about language competence in reading (Table 4.22), teachers at Entabeni (23.1%), and Nottingham (11.5%) indicated English as the language they know well enough to read an article; Kindersorg indicated isiZulu (7.6%) and Wesdorp indicated Afrikaans (34.6%). Parents at Entabeni (9.3%), Kindersorg (4.7%) and Nottingham (17.7%) indicated isiZulu, and those at Wesdorp indicated Afrikaans (22.6%). Learners at Entabeni (18.6%) and Nottingham (14.1%) indicated isiZulu; Kindersorg (9.8%) indicated isiNdebele and Wesdorp (19.5%) indicated Afrikaans. Overall Afrikaans and isiZulu seem to be widely used in reading.

**Table 4.23.1: Language use in class**

For subjects other than language subjects, what is the language of instruction - what language do the teachers normally use in the class?

Learners Only	School category				Total
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	
Afrikaans				16.7%	16.7%
English	26.0%	39.6%	10.4%		76.0%
isiZulu	5.2%		1.0%		6.3%
Total	31.3%	40.6%	11.5%	16.7%	100.0%

**Table 4.23.2: Question on use of other languages**

Do your teachers use other languages as well?

Learners Only	School category				Total
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	
Yes	18.8%	38.6%	5.0%	9.9%	72.3%
No			20.8%	6.9%	27.7%
Total	18.8%	38.6%	25.7%	16.8%	100.0%

**Table 4.23.3: Other languages used by teachers**

If yes, what other languages do they use?

Learners Only	School category				Total
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	
English			2.3%	11.5%	13.8%
Sesotho	4.6%				4.6%
Sepedi	5.7%		2.2%		7.9%
isiZulu	24.0 %	44.8%	4.6%		55.2%
Total	34.3%	44.8%	9.2%	11.5%	100.0%

#### 4.2.4.5 Languages of teaching and learning

It is evident from the data on Tables 4.23.1-4.23.3 that at Entabeni, Nottingham and Kindersorg, English occupies a dominant position as the language of teaching and learning. While 72.3% of the learners indicated that other languages are used in the teaching situation, 20.8% of learners at Kindersorg indicated that their teachers do not use other languages. Other languages used by teachers (informally/ orally) in the teaching and learning situation are Sesotho, Sepedi and isiZulu at Entabeni; isiZulu at Nottingham and isiZulu and Sepedi at Kindersorg and English at Wesdorp. It must be noted that the African languages indicated as used in the teaching and learning situation are used informally and are not indicated in the school language policy. English tends to dominate in the teaching and learning situation at three of the schools and Afrikaans at the fourth.

#### 4.2.4.6 Summarising emerging trends: Language use in education

This section examines the extent of multilingualism and language use in school situations. It is evident from the data that at Entabeni, Nottingham and Kindersorg, English occupies a dominant position as the language of teaching and learning, although other languages are used by teachers as well. At Entabeni Sesotho (as informal communication for making meaning) is an alternative; at Nottingham and Kindersorg isiZulu is the other language used. At Wesdorp, Afrikaans occupies a dominant position as the language of teaching and learning and the alternative used by teachers is English. The hegemony of English in the schooling system is particularly problematic as most teachers are not (highly) proficient in it. Hence, for most children, advanced proficiency in English becomes unattainable (Alexander, 2000). A study on the subject of *medium of instruction and its effect on matriculation results in 2000* conducted in the Western Cape showed that the mismatch between learner home language and the LoLT is accompanied by large scale under performance by the majority of learners. October (2002: 5) is of the view that:

*... African language speaking learners in the Western Cape will tend to do badly in the matriculation examination largely because the medium of instruction and assessment is not the mother-tongue, a second or third language.*

According to the Draft Literacy Strategy (DoE, 2006b: 10), the Monitoring of Learning Assessment (MLA) Survey found that the utilisation of unqualified and underqualified educators is a common phenomenon, particularly in rural schools. This practice, often dictated by a shortage of human resources, impacts negatively on the quality of teaching and the resultant performance of learners. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that many teachers feel “unqualified” to teach against the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards. In most provinces, the implementation of the NCS was supported by an *orientation* to the new aspects of the new curriculum. Provinces were thereafter tasked with the responsibility to provide ongoing support. However, the monitoring of the Orientation Programme for NCS indicates that participants in most provinces often did not get support after the initial training. This led to an uneven quality in the implementation with a lack of structured planning and teaching, which would indeed have had a negative impact on the quality and effectiveness of language teaching across the curriculum.

Black schools prior to 1994 were required by the Bantu Education Act (1953) to offer three languages, namely an African language, English and Afrikaans. For white schools, education was dispensed exclusively in Afrikaans or English depending on whether one was English- or Afrikaans-speaking. South Africa is twelve years into democracy and the LiEP is in its ninth year of implementation. However, the only changes made to the status quo are that the black schools have dropped Afrikaans and in so doing, English has gained greater status (Kamwangamalu, 1995: 125). The subtractive method of language teaching continues. In white schools, the status quo remains. Mother-tongue teaching in Afrikaans or English continues and no attempts are made to implement additive multilingualism.

Alexander (2000, 2001b) avers that most black South Africans' lack of confidence in the value of African languages is a symptom of the apartheid syndrome. They have come to believe that if they learn English then they will overcome their deficit. Alexander refers to the resultant damage to self-esteem as fatal. Despite awareness programmes, African languages are not used at all as LoLT or used only in the initial years of schooling and then replaced by English, which becomes the dominant language in the classroom. However, teachers are not proficient enough to use it adequately as a language of teaching and learning. Teachers do not feel equipped to teach communicatively because they do not have the training, resources or good models of communicative language teaching (Samuel, 1998; Pandor, 1995). Consequently, learners' literacy in both their own language and English at the end of primary schooling is often poorly developed. The systemic evaluation results of the Department of Education affirm this contention (DoE, 2004).

#### **4.2.5 Political: Public language policy**

The choice of particular languages in the curriculum, the relative emphasis to be placed on different languages and the general emphasis on language learning are largely determined by factors beyond the immediate environment. Among these is often an almost implicit interpretation of political forces in the wider community or nation (Stern, 1983). In this section, the decisions around public language policy, languages used as LoLT at schools and language use in parliament are reviewed.

**Table 4.24: Feelings about language treatment**

Think about the policies which have been adopted in recent years which affect languages spoken by SA. As regards your own home language, which of the following would best describe the way you feel?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottinghill	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
I feel satisfied about the way my language is treated	19.4%	9.7%	6.5%		35.5%	25.0%	3.8%	6.3%	1.9%	36.9%	12.5%	1.6%	20.3%	3.1%	37.5%
Because of practical difficulties when there are many languages I feel that my Language is treated as well as I could expect.	6.5%		3.2%	9.7%	19.4%	.6%	30.6%	3.1%	10.6%	45.0%	8.6%	28.1%	3.1%	6.3%	46.1%
All things considered, I am fairly dissatisfied about the way my language is treated	6.5%	3.2%		19.4%	29.0%	5.0%	.6%	1.3%	3.1%	10.0%	.8%			8.6%	9.4%
I am very dissatisfied about the way my home language is treated		3.2%		12.9%	16.1%	.6%			7.5%	8.1%	1.6%	.8%		4.7%	7.0%
Total	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	31.3%	35.0%	10.6%	23.1%	100.0%	23.4%	30.5%	23.4%	22.7%	100.0%



#### **4.2.5.1 Feelings about treatment of home languages**

A question was posed regarding the perceptions of the manner in which home languages are treated. Table 4.24 shows that at Entabeni, 19.4 % of teachers were satisfied with the treatment of their language in general and a further 6.5 % of teachers were of the opinion that their languages are treated as well as can be expected given the practicalities of the situation. Overall 6.5% of teachers were dissatisfied. The teachers at Nottingham (9.7%) were satisfied with the treatment of their language in general; 3.2% of teachers were fairly dissatisfied and a further 3.2% were very dissatisfied. The teachers (6.5 %) at Kindersorg were satisfied with the treatment of their language in general; (3.2%) of teachers were of the opinion that their languages are treated as well as can be expected given the practicalities of the situation. The teachers (19.4%) of Wesdorp were dissatisfied with the treatment of their language and overall 12.9% of teachers were very dissatisfied.

Overall 36.9% of parents were satisfied with the treatment of their language in general. The higher percentage of satisfaction came from Entabeni (25.0%) and Kindersorg (6.3%); 45% of parents (mostly from Nottingham and Wesdorp) indicated that because of practical difficulties when there are many languages, they felt that their languages were treated as well as could be expected. Overall, 10% of the parents were fairly dissatisfied (mostly from Entabeni) and 8.1% were very dissatisfied (mostly from Wesdorp).

Overall 12.5 % of learners at Entabeni and 20.3% of the learners at Kindersorg were satisfied with the treatment and 28.1 % of learners at Nottingham felt that their languages were treated as well as can be expected. 8.6% of the learners at Wesdorp were fairly dissatisfied about the way their language was treated. Overall, 46.1 % of the learners at Nottingham were of the opinion that their languages were treated as well as can be expected, while 37.5% felt satisfied about the way their language was treated.

#### **4.2.5.2 Decisions regarding the public use of languages**

Table 4.25 presents the replies to a question on the relative importance of various decision-makers concerning language policy. In general, the government is perceived to be the most important factor for teachers at Entabeni (30%), Nottingham (13.3%) and Wesdorp (20%), in contrast to Kindersorg (6.7%), where the media is perceived to be the most important factor.

**Table 4.25: Decisions about the public use of language**

In general, who makes the most important decisions as regards the public use of languages?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Government	30.0%	13.3%		20.0%	63.3%	20.0%	.6%		17.9%	38.5%	22.2%	.8%		12.8%	35.8%
Business		3.3%			3.3%		.6%		.6%	1.2%	.8%	1.6%		1.6%	4.0%
Advertising			3.3%	6.7%	10%	4.5%	5.2%	.6%		10.3%		3.2%	2.4%		5.6%
Media			6.7%	6.6%	13.3%	1.9%	9.0%	10.3%	.6%	21.9%	.8%	3.2%	21.4%	2.4%	27.8%
Speakers of the languages	3.3%			3.3%	6.6%	5.8%	20.7%		1.3%	27.8%		22.3%		3.2%	25.5%
Other				3.3%	3.3%									1.6%	1.6%
Total	33.3%	16.7%	10.0%	40.0%	100.0%	32.3%	36.1%	11.0%	20.6%	100.0%	23.8%	31.0%	23.8%	21.4%	100.0%

**Table 4.26: Feelings about language of instruction in public schools**

Think about the situation of language of instruction in public schools. Which of the following would come closest to the way you feel?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Mother-tongue instruction and good teaching of another official language	3.2%	9.7%		25.8%	38.7%	1.3%		1.3%	16.9%	19.5%	1.6%	1.6%	.8%	16.7%	20.7%
Learners should have the opportunity to learn both their mother-tongue and English equally well	12.9%	6.5%	9.7%	9.7%	38.7%	28.1%	3.8%	7.6%	4.4%	43.9%	17.5%	4.2%	11.1%	4.0%	36.8%
Learners should learn through both English and their mother-tongue				6.5%	6.5%	1.9%	3.8%		1.3%	10.7%	1.6%	11.6%	5.6%		18.8%
It is more important that learners learn in English than in other languages		16.1%			16.1%		26.9%	1.9%	1.3%	30.0%	2.4%	14.3%	6.3%	.8%	23.8%
Total	16.1%	32.3%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	31.3%	34.4%	10.6%	23.8%	100.0%	23.0%	31.7%	23.8%	21.5%	100.0%

For the parents at Entabeni (20%) and Wesdorp (17.9%), the government appears to be the most important decision-maker on the public use of languages. The speakers of other languages appear to be the decision-makers for Nottingham (20.7%) and 10.3 % of Kindersorg indicating the media as influencing the decisions about public language policy. Learners at Entabeni (22.2%) and Wesdorp (12.8%) perceive the government to be the most important factor while learners at Nottingham (22.3%) view speakers of other languages as the key decision-makers. Learners at Kindersorg (21.4%) consider the media to be the most important decision-maker.

When reviewing the above findings it is important to note that a number of factors determine the decisions around public languages policy. During the apartheid era, the government made all the decisions around language policy and the majority of people of this country had no say in the decision although it affected them. The consequence of these decisions eventually led to the Soweto Uprising in 1976.<sup>87</sup> In the new dispensation, while the government is largely responsible for the development of the policy, there was wide consultation, which Alexander (1989) calls a bottom-up approach. However, how the official languages are viewed is related to marketing of the language by speakers using them in all sectors and in all interactions. The media also plays a role in elevating the status of languages by the amount of use the language enjoys in the media. For example, the respondents' view that African languages should be used in parliamentary speeches is indicative of the desire for the media to market the African languages and for politicians to promote the policies that they put in place.

#### **4.2.5.3 Language of instruction in public schools**

Table 4.26 shows that 12.9% of the teachers at Entabeni and 9.7% of the teachers at Kindersorg support the option that both mother-tongue and English be learned equally in schools as media of instruction. The teachers at Nottingham (16.1%) are of the view that it is more important for learners to learn in English than in other languages. In an interview with the principal, he observed: “basically we are promoting English”.<sup>88</sup> And those at Wesdorp (25.8%) favour the option that mother-tongue instruction and good teaching of

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<sup>87</sup> See Chapter 1, Section 1.2 (footnote 12)

<sup>88</sup> See 4.4 of this chapter: School organisation and existing language policy

another official language should be available. Overall 38.7% support the view that learners should learn the mother-tongue and English or another official language.

Parents from Entabeni (28.1%) and Kindersorg (7.6%) supported the option that both mother-tongue and English be learned equally in schools as media of instruction. Parents from Nottingham (26.9%) agreed that it is more important that learners learn in English than in other languages. Parents from Wesdorp (16.9%) favoured the option that mother-tongue instruction and good teaching of another official language should be available to learners. Overall 43.9% felt that the learners should have the opportunity to learn both their mother-tongue and English equally well.

Learners at Entabeni (17.5%) and Kindersorg (11.1%) indicated that they should be given the opportunity to learn both their mother-tongue and English equally well. Learners at Nottingham (14.3%) felt that it was more important to learn through English than in other languages and learners at Wesdorp (16.7%) favoured mother-tongue instruction and good teaching of another official language. Overall 32.5% of learners felt that learners should have the opportunity to learn both their mother-tongue and English equally well.

In reviewing the feelings of language use in the school, it is evident that the learning of both mother-tongue and English was favoured by the two African language speaking communities. Language is considered to be the core identity of a culture and any discussion about language is linked to access to education and social mobility. The English language in South Africa is considered to be the language of power and access. However, linguistic equity cannot be achieved without concerted efforts to rehabilitate the African languages. Indeed, the bilingual approach has uncovered pedagogical foundations for achieving proficiency in English and home language.<sup>89</sup>

The Nottingham community would prefer the use of English only, which in itself indicates the high status of English and the inevitable negative social meaning of African languages. This preference is probably due to the increased use of English in high-

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<sup>89</sup> See Martin, K (2004) Multilingualism in South Africa: the role of Mother-tongues in Achieving Social Equity [http:// www.stanford.edu/jbaugh/saw/Kahdeidra-Multilingualism.html](http://www.stanford.edu/jbaugh/saw/Kahdeidra-Multilingualism.html)

function public contexts. While the school governing bodies have chosen English as the LoLT from Grade 4 onwards, this presents a serious problem of lack of English language proficiency among learners and teachers. English in this case acts as an obstacle to educational development.<sup>90</sup> Hence learners' ability to participate meaningfully in school learning activities is intimately linked to their proficiency in the language of learning at school (Cummins, 1984). While learners may have a general language ability, they lack the command of English needed to comprehend the various concepts, principles and techniques required in the different Learning Areas. They may have acquired Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), but lack Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS consists of the "visible" aspects of language such as pronunciation, basic vocabulary and grammar, which allow learners to participate satisfactorily in undemanding everyday communications. However, a more refined command of language or CALP is necessary if they are to achieve academic success (Cummins 1992). Gravelle (1996) claims that almost all learning involves language, whether in its written or spoken form. For learners it is the language used in the classroom that will be most demanding. Learners' ability to participate meaningfully in school learning activities is intimately linked to their proficiency in the language of instruction at school. Those who lack this proficiency, stand out as low achievers (Plüddemann, 1997). It is thus imperative for learners of limited language proficiency to acquire English language skills to succeed academically.

#### **4.2.5.4 Learning of other South African languages**

Table 4.27 illustrates that a large number of teachers (54.8%) across all schools indicate that additional languages should not be taught at school. Parents (74.7%) and learners (69.8%) across all schools favoured the teaching of additional languages. From the data it is evident that the parents and learners are more open to promoting multilingualism as a resource, as described by Chumbow (1987). The data in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 indicate the diverse backgrounds of the respondents and Bamgbose (1998) argues that it is natural for African language speakers to use more than one language in a single conversation. Hence it is not uncommon for parents and learners to be in favour of learning other languages.

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<sup>90</sup> See Webb, V (2005) African Languages as the media of instruction in South Africa: Stating the case. <http://cat.inist.fr/amodele-affichen&cpsid=16236048>

**Table 4.27: Learning of other South African languages**

If learners at school are learning English and their home languages, do you think that they should also learn any other South African languages?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Yes	16.1%	6.5%	3.2%	19.4%	45.2%	25.9%	25.9%	3.8%	19.0%	74.7%	19.0%	25.4%	12.7%	12.7%	69.8%
No	16.1%	9.7%	6.5%	22.6%	54.8%	4.4%	9.5%	7.0%	4.4%	25.3%	4.8%	4.8%	11.1%	9.5%	30.2%
TOTAL	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	30.4%	35.4%	10.8%	23.4%	100.0%	23.8%	30.2%	23.8%	22.2%	100.0%

**Table 4.28: Speeches in parliament**

Do you understand what they are saying?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Fully	6.5%	12.9%	3.2%	16.1%	38.7%	5.1%	4.4%	.6%	12.0%	22.2%	5.7%			4.1%	9.8%
As much as I need to	22.6%		6.5%	12.9%	41.9%	5.7%	4.4%	1.9%	4.4%	16.4%	9.8%	24.6%	.8%	10.7%	45.9%
Often do not understand what they are saying	3.2%	3.2%		12.9%	19.3%	10.8%	22.8%	5.1%	3.2%	41.9%	4.1%	1.6%	16.4%	7.4%	29.5%
Very seldom understand what they are saying						10.1%	3.8%	1.9%	3.8%	19.6%	4.9%	5.0%	3.3%	.16%	14.8%
Total	32.3%	16.1%	9.7%	41.9%	100.0%	31.6%	35.4%	9.5%	23.4%	100.0%	24.6%	31.1%	20.5%	23.8%	100.0%

However, the teachers probably spoke from a practical viewpoint, given their experience of staff shortages and other resources that impact on the quality of teaching and learning. They may also view this as additional workloads. There is, moreover, the difficulty they face teaching the current languages (English and isiZulu) that are timetabled: they themselves experience language difficulties especially with English, as pointed out by Mayo (2001) and Epstein (1999).

#### **4.2.5.5 Speeches in parliament**

An issue that is relevant to the effective participation of language minorities in the governance of the country arises from the fact that most speeches and statements by leaders in the country are delivered in English. The results in Table 4.28 indicate that 22.6% of teachers at Entabeni and 6.5% of teachers from Kindersorg understand (parliamentary speakers) as much as they need to; 12.9% of teachers from Nottingham and 16,1% from Wesdorp understand speeches by parliamentary officials fully. The question is whether this situation persists because of more exposure to English/Afrikaans.

Parents from Entabeni (10.8%), Nottingham (22.8%) and Kindersorg (5.1%) often do not understand what they are saying, while 12% from Wesdorp understand fully what is being said in parliament. Overall, 41.9% often do not understand what parliamentarians are saying.

The learners at Entabeni (9.8%), Nottingham (24.6%) and Wesdorp (10.7%) understand as much as they need to. A large percentage of learners at Kindersorg (16.4%) often do not understand what is communicated in English. Overall a high percentage of learners (45.9%) understand as much as they need to.

Vesely (2000) concludes that the perception that English is of superior status and the language of power is evidenced by the use of English for speeches in parliament by high profiled politicians. However, access to understanding what is being said is denied because of limited English language proficiency among the majority of South Africans.

#### 4.2.5.6 Use of languages in parliament

Table 4.29 presents the feelings of respondents on how regularly languages other than English should be used by leaders. The teachers from Entabeni (27.6 %) and Kindersorg (6,8%) support the view that leaders in government should use other languages in their speeches from time to time. 10.3% of teachers from Nottingham feel that leaders in government should use other languages in their speeches regularly; teachers from Wesdorp (27.6%) feel that it was unnecessary to use other languages. A fairly large group of respondents (21.5% of parents from Entabeni; 17.7% of parents from Nottingham, and 10.1% of parents from Wesdorp) support the view that leaders in government should use other languages in their speeches from time to time. Parents from Kindersorg (5.7%) felt that other languages should be used regularly. Learners from Entabeni (22.1%) held the view that other languages should be used from time to time. Learners from Kindersorg (13.9%) felt that other languages should be used regularly and an equal percentage of learners from Wesdorp (9.0%) felt that other languages should be used from time to time and regularly. Overall, a fairly large percentage of learners at all schools supported the view that leaders in government should use other languages in their speeches from time to time.

An interesting conclusion is that while most respondents felt that other languages should be used (an indication of openness to multilingualism and access to the majority in the country), the teachers of Wesdorp thought it unnecessary to use other languages. This attitude indicates their loyalty to Afrikaans and English, the two languages with which they are most familiar as well as the blatant unwillingness to raise the status of the African languages.



**Table 4.29: Use of other languages in parliament**

Do you feel that they should make use of languages other than English?

	TEACHERS					PARENTS					LEARNERS				
	SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY					SCHOOL CATEGORY				
	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total	Entabeni	Nottingham	Kindersorg	Wesdorp	Total
Yes, Regularly		10.3%		13.8%	24.1%	8.9%	5.7%	5.7%	3.2%	23.5%		8.2%	13.9%	9.0%	31.1%
Yes, From time to time	27.6%	6.9%	6.8%		41.3%	21.5%	17.7%	3.8%	10.1%	53.2%	22.1%	9.0%	6.6%	9.0%	46.7%
Using other languages is unnecessary	6.9%			27.6%	34.5%	1.3%	12.0%	1.3%	8.9%	23.4%	2.5%	13.9%	2.5%	3.3%	22.2%
Total	34.5%	17.2%	6.8%	41.4%	100.0%	31.7%	35.4%	10.8%	22.2%	100.0%	24.6%	31.1%	23.0%	21.3%	100.0%

#### 4.2.5.7 Summarising emerging trends: Political

This section examines the views on public language policy and will discuss the status of Afrikaans and the African languages in relation to the responses to questions in the language preference survey. The history of language policy and practice in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 shows that Afrikaans occupied a position of power. The National Party, which was the ruling party, ensured the modernisation of Afrikaans. The rise of the Afrikaans language for the Afrikaner became a symbol of a struggle for national identity and in the course of time the state school was seized upon as a means to foster the ideal that Afrikaans would become the sole language of the country (Malherbe, 1977: 2). This ideal was supported by the statement made by the then Prime Minister of South Africa, J.G. Strijdom:

*Every Afrikaner who is worthy of the name cherishes the ideal that South Africa will ultimately only have one language and that language must be Afrikaans (Malherbe, 1977: 72).*

Kloss (1977: 10) reflects on the strides Afrikaans has made over the years in education:

*Unless we consider Arabic an African tongue ... Afrikaans is the only non-European/non-Asiatic language to have attained full university status and to be used in all branches of life and learning ... All other university languages have their main basis in either Europe or Asia... 'There is a strong likelihood that of the new university languages outside Europe (new ones as against old ones such as Japanese, Arabic or Chinese) only Hindi, used by some 250 million speakers, Indonesian by 100 million speakers, and Hebrew match the development of Afrikaans.*

While the architects of apartheid were striving to position Afrikaans as a language of power, at the same time the marginalisation of black South Africans was set in motion. The aim of the Bantu Education Act (1953) was to teach the black child that he was a foreigner in white South Africa, that equality with whites was not for him, and that there was no place in the community above the level of certain forms of labour. In time, Afrikaans became associated with oppression by the majority of the black population in the country.

However, in 1994, the end of apartheid and the beginning of a democracy freed Afrikaans from its apartheid shackles but made it one of the eleven official languages. As a result its future as a public language is far from secure (Giliomee, 2003). This is also evident in the response to the question on the treatment of languages in this study. The Afrikaners are mostly dissatisfied and admit to frustration when they cannot speak their language.

When reviewing the language policy and practice of black people, it is evident that the Bantu Education Act (1953) had serious implications for languages of learning and teaching in black schools. The black learners associated mother-tongue instruction with one of apartheid's strategies to deny them access to higher education, which restricted their social and economic mobility. They saw education in their own mother tongue as a trap by the government to prevent them from acquiring sufficient command of the high status languages, namely, Afrikaans and English. Hence the rejection of Afrikaans after 1976 had an uncalculated effect of advancing the position of English not only over Afrikaans but also over the African languages. Since 1976, English has been the only language of instruction in black schools. With the introduction of the eleven-language policy, nine African languages enjoy status equal to Afrikaans and English. The response to the question on the treatment of their languages therefore sees most of the African respondents being mostly satisfied, which is a shift in attitude to languages from the apartheid era. However, the data indicates that English is still a dominant language in most public interactions in the community, while the African languages remain the languages used at home and in personal interactions in the community.

#### **4.2.6 Summary**

In the review of language use and preference in the rural commercial farm community in this study, it became evident that while most of the respondents displayed a commitment to their home languages and languages of communication, English is widely used in public interactions.

In instances such as job interviews and writing of police statements this does disadvantage the respondents as it affects their access to better paying jobs, and perhaps their legal rights with respect to writing police statements.

English occupies a dominant position as the language of teaching and learning at three of the four schools. However, the matter of concern is that the hegemony of English in the schooling system is particularly problematic as most teachers are not (highly) proficient in it. Hence, for most children advanced proficiency in English thus becomes unattainable. Afrikaans continues to be used by the Afrikaans community and is the only home language used consistently throughout schooling.

A tolerant attitude is displayed by most African language speaking respondents when their languages are not being used in public interactions, in contrast to feelings of frustration and resistance to non-accommodation of languages felt by the Afrikaans-speaking community.

The study found that there is a dominant use of isiZulu as a home language, and marginalisation of isiNdebele, by most of the respondents in the three African language speaking communities. However, it is interesting to note the openness with which parents and learners indicated their desire to learn other South African languages.

### **4.3 Section Two: Teacher understandings and beliefs with regard to the LiEP**

In this section, the findings elicited from the questionnaires and interviews with teachers relating to their understandings and beliefs about the LiEP are discussed (see Appendix C and Appendix D). Ruiz's (1984) model which views language from three theoretical positions, namely, *language-as-a problem*, *language-as-a right and language-as-a resource* is used as a framework to analyse the data.

A number of sociolinguists including Lo Bianco (1990)<sup>91</sup> and Akinnaso (1991)<sup>92</sup> have explored and found useful this avenue for understanding the origin of language policies as well as their implementation strategies. Furthermore, since language use and preference in South Africa are deeply rooted in a history of political, social and economic struggle, this typology assists in shedding light on issues of language policy understandings and beliefs.

Borrowing from Ruiz's typology, I have attempted to collate the data from the questionnaires and interviews in the following ways:

- **Language-as-a problem**

In this category I draw on the data relating to the following specific questions from the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix B):

- Old understandings and beliefs that had to be changed-  
*What old understandings and beliefs did you have to change with regard to language in education? (Appendix C: Part F)*
- Views about statements regarding the LiEP-  
*What are your views about each of the following statements?*
- The policy must be viewed in relation to our larger agenda of reconstruction and development (Appendix B: Part D, Question 1).

- **Language-as-a right**

The data from the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix B) relate to the following issues:

- Information available to teachers regarding the LiEP (Appendix B: Part B)-  
*(a) Are you aware of the policy document on LiEP?*  
*(b) Was the document made available to all educators at your school?*  
*(c) If yes, state how.*  
*(d) Do you have a personal copy of the LiEP document?*  
*(e) How did you first become aware of the LiEP?*

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91 With regard to Australia

92 With regard to Nigeria

- Accessibility of the LiEP (Appendix B: Part C)-
  - (a) *Is it easy to understand?*
  - (b) *Does it provide clear guidelines for implementation?*
  - (c) *Does it allow for flexible implementation?*
- Teacher understandings and beliefs about LiEP-  
*What new understandings and beliefs did you acquire with regard to the LiEP?*  
(Appendix B: Part G)
- School Language Policy formulation (Appendix B: Part D, Questions 9-11; 14-15)-  
*What are your views about each of the following statements?*
  - (a) *Every school should have a school language policy.*
  - (b) *The SGB will determine the language policy of the school and stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism.*
  - (c) *The parent exercises the minor learner's language rights on behalf of the minor learner.*
  - (d) *All schools shall offer at least one approved language as a subject in Grade 1 and Grade 2.*
  - (e) *All schools shall offer at least two approved languages, of which at least one shall be an official language, from Grade 3 onwards.*

Interviews with teachers (Appendix C):

- The following questions that view language as right are discussed-
  - (a) *Has the school governing body discussed a language in education policy design for your school? Explain.*
  - (b) *Do you see it as an important issue on their agenda? Comment.*

- **Language-as-a resource**

The data from the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix B) relating to the following questions was analysed:

- Main reasons for the introduction of the LiEP-  
*What do you think were the main reasons why the LiEP was introduced to schools? (Appendix B: Part E)*

Interviews with teachers (Appendix C) were structured around their understandings of the LiEP; their views about the need for the policy; benefits for teachers and learners from the policy, and possibilities and opportunities for the successful implementation of the LiEP.

### 4.3.1 Language-as-a-problem

*Language is seen as a problem* in societies where the ruling ideology is segregation. The response is to promote a language policy based on elevating the language of the ruling class. According to Heugh (1995: 452), restricted access to the language of the ruling class has several effects:

- An artificial inequality among languages takes root and the gap between the dominant language and the others widens.
- The “other languages” (and consequently their speakers/users) are rendered inferior in status and hence instrumentally of little value.
- The power base of the ruling class is bolstered in the process.

An analysis of teachers’ views about the old understandings and beliefs that they had to change with the introduction of LiEP, supports all three views generally but more specifically the second, namely that “other languages” (and consequently their speakers/ users) are rendered inferior in status and hence instrumentally of little value. This is evident from the responses of teachers especially in respect of the old understandings and beliefs that they had to change with the introduction of the LiEP. Teacher responses often alluded to mismanagement of language priorities, language sanctions and the oppressive nature of the official languages of the past. Respondent Tracy from Wesdorp acknowledged that “*Afrikaans and English were the only two recognised official languages.*”

Language in education policies in South Africa have always been developed by a white minority. Although the policies affected the black majority directly, no person of colour had a say in its formulation. This is evidenced by the following statements:

*We did not have a choice. (Purity: Nottinghill School)*

*The government department made the choice on which language should be used in school. (Themba: Nottinghill School)*

*Language policies were oppressing other languages because some languages were regarded as inferior meanwhile others were superior. (Zanele: Entabeni)*

It is obvious from the data that diversity was a problem which needed to be eliminated and all people of other languages and cultures needed to be brought into the dominant group. Ruiz (1984) is of the opinion that the dominant group, however, is hierarchically configured so that newcomers are less equal than those who continue to enjoy political and economic privileges. Language policy in this orientation is impelled toward privileging the language of the ruling class to the detriment of other languages, which again are rendered instrumentally valueless. This “less than equal status” is illustrated by the following comment from a teacher:

*...our home languages were not allowed. We were not allowed to explain to the learners in their own mother-tongue. (Nthabiseng: Entabeni)*

In 1948, when the Nationalist Party came into power, Afrikaans was given a privileged status. Not only was it used in government and the media, it was also introduced as a compulsory language taught at school. Hence the historically disadvantaged schools during the apartheid era (in this study the schools on rural commercial farms) taught three languages, that is, isiZulu, English and Afrikaans. For many black South Africans, Afrikaans was seen as the language of the oppressor. As Afrikaans and English became the languages of power, the African languages were rendered valueless:

*Language policies forced learners to learn in languages sometimes they do not even understand. (Zanele: Entabeni)*

This comment captures how teachers experienced the language policy prior to democracy and the feelings and views they had to change in the new dispensation.

The belief that language was a problem in the apartheid era is emphasised by the total agreement of teachers that the LiEP must be viewed in relation to our larger agenda of



reconstruction and development (Appendix C: Part D, Question 1). Samuel (2005: 13) observes that the post-apartheid South African education context is infused with the euphoria that policy will be a major contributor to the transformation of our education system. Furthermore, Manganyi, (2001: 28) argues that the purpose of the language in education policy in line with the progressive orientation of other educational policies issued by the first democratic government of South Africa, was “to uproot old practices, beliefs, values about the social order and to replace them with new ways of conducting national business.” Hence, language policy of the apartheid era was based on the concepts of segregation and assimilation, which was problematic to the majority of the people in the country.

### **4.3.2 Language-as-a-right**

*Language viewed as a right* is consistent with those societies that place value on the principles of social integration. The South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, aimed at promoting the ideals of democracy and human rights. One of the policies that arose from this is the LiEP of 1997. This was a fundamental change to the language policy of the past. It recognises the development and promotion of eleven official languages and multilingualism, which gave individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (DoE, 1997a: 2-3).

Information dissemination and advocacy are important first steps in policy implementation. Questions relating to policy awareness revealed the following:

#### **4.3.2.1 Awareness and accessibility of the LiEP**

Tables 4.30.1-4.30.5 indicate 90% of respondents were aware of the policy document and 75% agreed that a copy was made available to all teachers at their school. 50% stated that they were first made aware of it at a staff meeting at their school via a departmental circular<sup>93</sup> and 10% participated in workshops on the policy. 65% had personal copies of the policy and 35% indicated that they were first made aware of the policy by the principal.

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<sup>93</sup> The provincial Department of Education makes policy documents known to schools via circulars that are numbered and dated for easy reference and tracking.

**Table 4.30: Teacher awareness and knowledge of the LiEP**

<p><b>Table 4.30.1: Are you aware of the policy document on LiEP?</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Yes	90	No	10	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.30.2: Was the document made available to all educators in your school?</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Yes	75	No	25	Total	100				
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<p><b>Table 4.30.3: If Yes, Please state how.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Workshop</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Circular</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Workshop	25	Circular	60	Other	15	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.30.4: Do you have a personal copy of this policy document on Language in Education?</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Yes	65	No	35	Total	100		
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<p><b>Table 4.30.5: How did you first become aware of the policy on Language in Education?</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>I read the policy document</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I was told by Principal</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I was invited to a workshop</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>It was discussed at a staff meeting</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	I read the policy document	5	I was told by Principal	35	I was invited to a workshop	10	It was discussed at a staff meeting	50	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.30.6: It is easy to understand.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Yes	95	No	5	Total	100
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Total	100																				
	Percent																				
Yes	95																				
No	5																				
Total	100																				
<p><b>Table 4.30.7: It provides clear guidelines for implementation.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Yes	65	Not sure	35	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.30.8: It allows for flexible implementation.</b></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yes	65	Not sure	35	Total	100						
	Percent																				
Yes	65																				
Not sure	35																				
Total	100																				
Yes	65																				
Not sure	35																				
Total	100																				

Of significance here is the important role played by the principal, who is the instructional leader in the school, in policy dissemination. Curriculum delivery is the core business of a school and the principal is the manager who is ultimately responsible for the implementation of policy. The Employment of Educators Act 76 (1998: C64) attests that one of duties of the principal is “to ensure that Departmental circulars and other information received which affect members of the staff is brought to their notice as soon as possible...” Policy implementation begins with advocacy and creation of awareness among the teachers. This has been done through staff meetings which principals use to discuss curricular and administrative matters. However, information dissemination includes making copies of the relevant policies available to the teachers. All teachers should be in possession of the document, but only 65% of the

teachers have personal copies. One wonders why these teachers did not have copies of the policy.

Tables 4.30.6-4.30.8 indicate that 95% of the respondents found the policy easy to understand, while 65% agreed that it provided clear guidelines for implementation and allowed for flexible implementation. 35% were not sure about the same. This lack of clarity raises the question about how implementation is progressing and what kind of monitoring and support is in place.

#### **4.3.2.2 New understandings acquired through the LiEP**

In determining the new understandings and beliefs that teachers acquired with the introduction of the LiEP, the issue of language-as-a-right emerged. Teachers understood the policy to cater for “*medium of instruction which is the language of their choice*”; *the right to get instruction in their mother-tongue* and that *all languages are equal and must be treated with respect*”. The view that emerged strongly is that of the need to observe the linguistic rights of individuals and minorities:

*To redress the issue of historically disadvantaged languages. To protect, promote and fulfil and extend the individual language rights even those individuals who are in a minority. (Zanele: Entabeni)*

Although language choice is a right and the teachers articulated the same in their responses, the reality is that schools still operate in the old paradigm (see 4.4).

#### **4.3.2.3 School language policy**

The South African Schools Act 1996 places the decision of determining the school language policy in the hands of the School Governing Body (SGB). Tables 4.31.2-4.31.3 indicate that 85% of the respondents *agreed* that every school should have a school language policy, and that the SGB will determine the language policy of the school and stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism. All respondents (Table 4.31.1) indicated that their schools had a school language policy. This is heartening as the LiEP aimed at providing a framework to enable schools to formulate appropriate school language policies that align with the intentions of the new policy, namely to maintain home language/s while providing access to the effective acquisition of additional language/s and to promote multilingualism.

**Table 4.31: School language policy**

<p><b>Table 4.31.1: Does your school have a school language policy?</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Yes	100	<p><b>Table 4.31.2: Every school should have a school language policy.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	85	Disagree	15	Total	100										
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Total	100																						
<p><b>Table 4.31.3: The SGB will determine the language policy of the school and stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	85	Not sure	15	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.31.4: The parent exercises the minor learner's language rights on behalf of the minor learner.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	65	Not sure	25	Disagree	10	Total	100				
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<p><b>Table 4.31.5: All schools shall offer at least one approved language as a subject in Grades 1 &amp; 2.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>95</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	85	Not sure	5	Disagree	5	Total	95	<p><b>Table 4.31.6: All schools shall offer at least two approved languages of which at least one shall be an official language.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>System</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	90	Not sure	5	Total	95	System	5	Total	100
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System	5																						
Total	100																						

However, on analysing the school language policies, it was found that three of the schools offer isiZulu as LoLT from Grades 1-3 and switch to English as LoLT from Grades 4-7, with isiZulu as a subject. Hence, the subtractive model of the apartheid era still continues in practice which is contrary to the intentions of the LiEP.

In addition, while the mother-tongue of the majority of the learners is isiNdebele, the LoLT in the early years is isiZulu. Hence learners in Grades 1-3 begin learning in a foreign language and hop into English as LoLT in Grade 4, which is another foreign language. This raises two concerns. First, educational psychologists and linguists agree that the use of the mother-tongue is beneficial for the learner's cognitive development. At a pedagogical level the use of mother tongue/ home language as LoLT also facilitates the acquisition of linguistic skills, concepts, vocabulary and content in various disciplines encountered for the first time, as the language of learning is familiar to the learner. When the learner shifts from mother tongue/ home language to an additional language as LoLT, the transfer is considerably well facilitated from one

language to another. Success goes beyond academic development alone as it includes the learner's success in their emotional, socio-psychological and cognitive development. Hence the cause for concern is that the learners at these rural commercial farm schools face the danger of becoming semi-lingual (Mayo, 2001).<sup>94</sup> Second, while isiNdebele is one of the official languages in the country, it would seem that its status is being marginalised at schools where it could be promoted. Hence its lack of currency may lead to its death.

The data on Table 4.31.6 indicate that 90% *agreed* that all schools should offer at least two approved languages, of which at least one should be an official language, from Grade 3 onwards and. 85% *agreed* that all schools should offer at least one approved language as a subject in Grades 1 and 2 (Table 4.31.5).

Table 4.31.4 shows that 65% *agreed* that the parent exercises the minor learner's language rights on behalf of the minor learner but 25% were not sure and 10% disagreed. There seems to be a lack of clarity around this item among the respondents.

From their interviews, I gleaned that most teachers vouch for the governing body's discussion of the language policy of the school at a meeting. This is evidenced by the following statement:

*The SGB considered the community's most used languages and they democratically chose English and isiZulu. They later did a parents' meeting and they all agreed to choose that two languages. (Zola: Entabeni)*

Respondents also agree that the LiEP is an important issue on the agenda because:

*It is important for the parents that their children are being taught in their home language. (Trudy: Wesdorp)*

*They want the better education for the learners; they are flexible to do amendments as long as they lead to betterment of their learners' education. (Zola: Entabeni)*

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<sup>94</sup> Semi-lingualism refers to a situation where one speaks two languages but both of them at a lower level than monolingual counterparts. Basically this means that the learner could grow up with competence in neither home language nor an additional language (Moyo, 2001).

*They will know why we have chosen that language as medium of instruction.*  
(Zanele: Entabeni)

### 4.3.3 Language-as-a-resource

*Language-as-a-resource* is consistent with the principles of interdependence, where different communities/languages are seen to co-exist in an interdependent manner. Here each language and its community of speakers are validated as part of the whole. Language-planning orientations that have language-as-a resource as their fundamental principle are better able to ensure that the linguistic rights of communities are protected because, quite simply, value is attached to each language, not only for sentimental<sup>95</sup> reasons but also for instrumental purposes, so that each is seen as part of the national assets which, in the interests of national good, must be protected, nurtured and harnessed.<sup>96</sup> The view that each language is a resource to the nation carries with it the notion of functional/instrumental uses of languages or functional multilingualism. When asked about the teachers' understandings of the policy and the need and benefits of the policy, the views the teachers expressed supported the notion that language is a resource. They alluded to the recognition of all eleven languages to facilitate communication across all ethnic groups, non-discrimination and affirming one's self respect.

#### 4.3.3.1 Teacher profile

In viewing language-as-a resource, particularly in education, teachers play an important role in promoting attitudes towards language use. Therefore, in this section I construct a profile of the twenty teachers from the four research schools based on the information which I obtained from a questionnaire which each teacher completed. For the purposes of confidentiality and anonymity the real names of the schools and teachers are not used. Pseudonyms are used throughout.<sup>97</sup> This profile is important to this study as no two teachers are identical in their experiences, personalities and interpretations of their role as members of a community involved in the practice of teaching and learning. Samuel (2005: 8) describes the identity of teachers thus:

*The identity of teachers is a kaleidoscope of many permutations: race, class, gender,*

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<sup>95</sup> This includes cultural and religious attachments.

<sup>96</sup> "A sense of national identity is more likely to develop out of functional relationships within a society than out of deliberate attempts to promote it" (Kellman quoted in Alexander, 1989: 52).

<sup>97</sup> Pseudonyms for the four schools are Wesdorp, Kindersorg, Entabeni and Nottingham.

*language, age and stage of career. Each of these different permutations yields particular kinds of interpretations and framings of their relationship to professional development. No uniform identity of being a teacher is thus possible.*

**Table 4.32: Teachers' Profile**

<p><b>Table 4.32.1: Designation of educator</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Teacher level 1</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Head of department</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Principal</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Teacher level 1	75	Head of department	15	Principal	5	Other	5	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.32.2: Respondents age group</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Under 25</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30 - 34</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35 - 40</td> <td>45</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40 - 49</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50 - 59</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Under 25	5	30 - 34	5	35 - 40	45	40 - 49	30	50 - 59	15	Total	100
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	Percent																										
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30 - 34	5																										
35 - 40	45																										
40 - 49	30																										
50 - 59	15																										
Total	100																										
<p><b>Table 4.32.3: Teaching experience in years</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0 – 5</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 – 10</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 – 15</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 – 20</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More than 20</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	0 – 5	15	6 – 10	20	11 – 15	15	16 – 20	30	More than 20	20	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.32.4: Respondent's gender</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Male	30	Female	70	Total	100				
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Total	100																										
	Percent																										
Male	30																										
Female	70																										
Total	100																										
<p><b>Table 4.32.5: Formal qualifications</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2 year diploma</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 year diploma</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Degree</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Degree &amp; Diploma</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Missing</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	2 year diploma	5	3 year diploma	40	Degree	15	Degree & Diploma	5	Other	25	Total	90	Missing	10	Total	100									
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Other	25																										
Total	90																										
Missing	10																										
Total	100																										

Tables 4.32.1-4.32.5 provide a holistic description of the twenty teachers showing that 75% of the respondents are level one educators; 15% are heads of department, 5% principals and 5% early childhood practitioners.<sup>98</sup> Each of these categories of educators has specific responsibilities for curriculum delivery at the school. Seventy percent of the respondents are female. The majority of the respondents are in the 35-40 year age category with the most respondents having teaching experience of 16-20 years. In terms of the language profile of the teachers across the four schools, 43.3% are Afrikaans home language speakers, 23.3% are isiZulu, 13.3 % are Setswana,

<sup>98</sup> In terms of the Employment of Educators Act of 1995 school-based educators are categorised in one of five levels, ranging from level 1 to level 5. Level 1 is the starting category, level 2 being Heads of Department, Level 3 Deputy Principal and levels 4 and 5 occupied by Principals depending on the number of learners.

13.3% are Sepedi, 3.3% are isiXhosa, 3.3% are Tshivenda and 3.3% are isiNdebele. Most of the teachers have a minimum qualification, i.e. a three-year diploma.

**Table 4.33: Main learning area being taught**

TEACHER	MAIN LEARNING AREA					
	MATHS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY	LANGUAGE, ARTS & CULTURE	EMS	SOCIAL SCIENCES	LIFE ORIENTATION	LITERACY, NUMERACY, LIFE SKILLS
W1						X
W2		X				
W3	X	X	X	X	X	
W4	X		X	X		
W5	X	X			X	
W6	X		X		X	
W7						X
W8	X	X	X	X	X	
W9		X		X		
K1	X	X	X	X	X	
K2						X
E1		X			X	
E2						X
E3	X					
E4		X			X	
N1						X
N2				X		
N3			X			
N4	X	X				
N5	X	X				
	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 4.33 on Learning Areas indicates that across the four schools, all eight Learning Areas are being taught. However, it is noted that 35% of teachers are responsible for more than one Learning Area. This is indicative of the fact that the staffing norms and provisioning for the old curriculum which based provision on the total number of learners and not the learning areas to be taught, are still operational and have not been revised to cater for the needs of the new curriculum and changes to school language policies. This is further compounded by the fact that the schools on the rural commercial farms have relatively low enrolment figures and therefore, according to



the norms, do not qualify for a large staff complement; hence the teacher overload. With this kind of provision, teachers are forced to teach Learning Areas that they may not even be qualified to teach.

#### **4.3.3.2 Main reasons for the introduction of the LiEP**

Teachers' understandings of the main reasons for the introduction of the LiEP allude to the importance of bilingualism, as shown in the following statement: "... learners reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages and the importance to communicate in other languages" (Trudy: Wesdorp). The fostering and recognition of languages that were previously undermined, equipping learners for the future and promoting the mother-tongue, are other factors. One teacher acknowledged that the policy supports the maintenance of home language while providing access to the acquisition of additional languages. Of importance is the view that mother-tongue instruction facilitates the learning of concepts and making meaning for young children:

*...Because children can learn easier in a language in which they are familiar with especially in day to day of their lives. In that way they easily grasp the content. (Purity: Nottinghill)*

Another teacher alluded to the fact that lack of language use may lead to language death:

*It's important to have South Africa's different languages. Otherwise some of the schools only have one language – all the other languages will disappear. (Zola: Entabeni)*

#### **4.3.3.3 Teachers' views on the LiEP**

Tables 4.34.1-4.34.6 illustrate that 95% of the respondents believe that one of the principal aims of LiEP is to promote multilingualism. 95% noted that the policy is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and region. 85% noted that the policy assumes that the learning of more than one language should be the general principle in our society, 95% agree that the policy aims to develop and promote all eleven official languages and that the mother-tongue/ home language of the learner is to be maintained while providing access to acquisition of additional languages. This indicates that the teachers have a fairly good understanding of the LiEP and its stated intentions.

**Table 4.34: Teachers' views with regard to the LiEP's intentions**

<p><b>Table 4.34.1: One of the principal aims of the policy is to promote multilingualism.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	95	Not sure	5	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.34.2: The policy is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language, region.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	95	Disagree	5	Total	100		
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<p><b>Table 4.34.3: The policy assumes that the learning of more than one language should be the general principle.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	85	Not sure	10	Disagree	5	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.34.4: The home language of the learner is to be maintained while providing access to acquisition of additional languages.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Sure</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	95	Not Sure	5	Total	100
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Agree	95																		
Not Sure	5																		
Total	100																		
<p><b>Table 4.34.5: The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	95	Disagree	5	Total	100	<p><b>Table 4.34.6: The policy aims to develop and promote all 11 official languages.</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Percent	Agree	95	Not sure	5	Total	100		
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Total	100																		
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Agree	95																		
Not sure	5																		
Total	100																		

#### 4.3.3.4 Intentions to implement additive multilingualism

While most teachers agree that additive multilingualism is one of the principal aims of LiEP and see multilingualism as a resource, their schools have not made any significant moves in that direction. All respondents from Wesdorp state that their school had not attempted to implement additive multilingualism. The Entabeni and Nottingham respondents cited the following human resource challenges:

*...being restricted by manpower and resources. (Zola: Entabeni)*

*...we do not have the teachers to offer any other language. (Gloria: Nottingham)*

In analysing the responses of the teachers, it is important to note that the Wesdorp School is 102 years old and that the status quo in respect of language policy has not changed since. When the teachers and the principal speak about the importance of mother-tongue, they mean Afrikaans. Of a roll of 280 learners, 8 are African language speaking and 272 are Afrikaans-speaking. In respect of language use, the eight black learners for whom Afrikaans is an additional language do not enjoy the same privilege

as the white Afrikaans-speaking learners in the school. They are subjected to Afrikaans as the LoLT. The principal is of the firm view that those eight learners are coping extremely well and his comment: “...if you talk to them you won't even say that they are African” reveals a hegemonic impulse to turn African children into Afrikaans. This situation has grave implications for sound education as Fishman (1989) states that language links people with reality - and if particular languages promote a particular perception of reality - then needless to say language bears immense importance for a given cultural (ethnic) group. One is therefore prompted to question the perception of reality the eight children have, since their home languages do not even feature as subjects on the school timetable. In this case, access to education in the mother-tongue is restricted by policy, that is, SASA which restricts parents from insisting on the right to mother-tongue education where the language of the community, in this instance Afrikaans, (the language of the majority) is chosen by the SGB (Balfour & Mitchell, 2004).

In the case of Entabeni, it would seem that resources are a problem and rightly so. In introducing the LiEP with its progressive ideals, no changes were made by the DoE in terms of staffing norms and provisioning.

#### **4.3.3.5 Overall understanding of the policy**

The teachers' overall understanding of the policy is indicated by their views that learners are to be taught in the mother-tongue and that the policy promotes multilingualism and respect for the eleven South African languages and provides the rules for language practice in schools. A succinct understanding is captured by one respondent:

*...that learners reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages and the importance of communicating in other languages. (Leila: Wesdorp)*

The main goals of the policy, according to teachers, are to accord the same language privilege and opportunities to all learners and to promote mother-tongue instruction and multilingualism. One teacher viewed access to language as a key indicator of successful living:

*The main goals are to create a learner who is confident and independent with respect for the environment and to participate as an active citizen. (Carina: Wesdorp)*

Whilst most teachers referred to the promotion of multilingualism and mother-tongue instruction as the main goals of the LiEP, one teacher viewed its goal as promoting English:

*To learn to use English to communicate with everyone in South Africa and in the world. (Leila: Wesdorp)*

This interpretation is not surprising in the light of the importance that is attached to English in all the schools in this study. The tension between the status of African languages in relation to English which is viewed as the language of power and access, continues to exist.

Teachers viewed the broad purposes of multilingualism as the means to understand other cultures, to communicate with respect and understanding and to promote marginalised languages. The idea that multilingualism will foster acceptance and good relationships is evidenced by the following view:

*It is to allow learners to fit in every society because our country has many cultures. (Gloria: Nottinghill)*

#### **4.3.3.6 Benefits of the policy and success indicators**

With regard to the benefits of the policy for both learners and themselves, teachers felt that the greatest benefit was that the communication barrier would be lifted and that meaningful two-way communication would ensue in the mother-tongue that is common to both teacher and learner. This would ensure an improvement in learner success rate and emotional and social well-being, which is captured in the following statement:

*It will improve their understanding of concepts. It will make my job easier because learners will quickly understand whatever I will be teaching in their mother-tongue. (Gloria: Nottinghill)*

In respect of the outcomes that will evidence success of the policy, teachers believed that when learners are able to listen, speak, read and write, then the policy would prove to be successful. Furthermore, one teacher recognised the importance of laying a firm language foundation for success in later years:

*By improvement of learning and teaching and producing learners who will do well in high school and tertiary level. (Thembi: Nottingham)*

#### **4.3.4 Implementation challenges**

Further to Ruiz's submission (section 4.3), I forward yet another category of analysis, namely 'implementation challenges'. In this section I attempt to explain the lack of fit between educational policy and educational practice in terms of the lack of capacity to translate official vision into contextual reality. This includes political symbolism; the way in which the LiEP was introduced to teachers; the choice of LoLT and the lack of professional development support; policy contradictions; and human resources.

##### **4.3.4.1 Political symbolism**

Educational policy making in South Africa can be described as a struggle for achievement of political symbolism to mark the shift from apartheid to a post-apartheid society. Jansen (2002) argues that every single case of education policy-making demonstrates, in different ways, the preoccupation of the state with settling policy struggles in the political domain rather than in the realm of practice. Most teachers in the study agreed that the introduction of the LiEP and the concept of additive multilingualism are political in the move from apartheid. This is evidenced by the following statement:

*During apartheid years most whites were not interested in black cultures and languages. They promoted their own culture. (Zanele: Entabeni)*

The introduction of LiEP, therefore, symbolises a discursive break from the past language practice and heralds a climate that promotes freedom of language choice. However, the question that arises is whether the implementation plans and necessary resources needed for its implementation have been properly thought through.

Teachers' beliefs about policy influence their attitude and will to implement policies. While positive attitudes were displayed by most teachers, the negative ones need to be noted because they result in de-motivation and lack of enthusiasm to implement policy. Furthermore, educational change is not merely a technical exercise but also moral and deeply emotional (Fullan cited in Hariparsad, 2004). While teachers may be employed in well-resourced schools and have the necessary skills and qualifications, if they are not emotionally committed to educational reform, change will not take place. The following statement shows sensitivity to the demands that the introduction of LiEP makes on teacher Tracy from Wesdorp:

*...from above (Government) they want the teacher to teach and educate learners in languages they did not even know. Shame on the learners to cope with political issues among so called adults!*

As a researcher, my goal is to understand why teachers are not able to implement policy rather than to criticise them for their lack of capacity to translate official vision into contextual reality.

In the context of this study, other issues such as how the policy was introduced, the training received and kind of support that teachers receive, contribute to the degrees of implementation and non- implementation of the LiEP. This discussion follows.

#### **4.3.4.2 Introduction to the LiEP**

I argue here that the way in which policies are introduced and the kind of support teachers receive thereafter influences the extent of implementation. In this study, 75% of teachers received copies of the LiEP. The process of dissemination is such that principals receive these copies from the district office and pass them on to the staff. 35% of the teachers heard about the policy from the principal at a staff meeting and 10 % received training via a workshop. This indicates that for the majority it is assumed that the receipt of the policy means teachers will understand and implement policy according to its intentions. This is the relationship between policy and practice. This assumption is flawed as the mere presence of policy is no guarantee for its implementation. Furthermore, the staff meetings are such that time only allows for creating an awareness of the policy but not for intense or meaningful discussion. When it comes to implementing policy, Fullan (2001: 77) states that teachers “find that the

change is simply not very clear as to what it means in practice.” The need for intense discussions and meaning making workshops on the LiEP is stated by teacher Tracy from Wesdorp:

*Workshops were not conducted to introduce the Language-in-Education Policy in school, and educators find it difficult to understand it.*

#### **4.3.4.3 Choice of language of teaching and learning**

All four schools offer two languages; three offer isiZulu and English and the fourth offers Afrikaans and English. isiZulu is the LoLT in the Foundation Phase at three of the schools and the LoLT changes to English from Grade 4 onwards. isiZulu is assessed at home Language level. The mismatch between policy and practice is evident in that while isiNdebele is the home language for the majority of the learners, isiZulu is the LoLT in which they are assessed at home language level. Furthermore, since only 3.3% of the teachers are isiNdebele mother-tongue/ home language speakers, communication difficulties between learners and teachers are compounded. Noting the disadvantages of not learning in the mother-tongue/ home language, Obanya in a study in Nigeria (2004: 10) says that learning is hampered because teaching is done in a language in which neither the teacher nor the learner has an appropriate level of mastery.

Looking towards achieving quality education for all, the value of teachers being multilingual is expressed thus:

*I think that it would help if teachers were multilingual. (Ann: Wesdorp)*

Goodman and Flores (1979: 19) make the following observation on the language in which children should learn:

*From a theoretical perspective, learning to read in one's home language will be easier than learning to read a second language, particularly an unfamiliar one. The learner brings to the task of learning to read his or her native language which makes it possible to predict the meaning of the written form.*

The situation in which the learners in the study find themselves deprives them of meaningful learning. In Grade four the LoLT shifts to English and learners are

therefore exposed to another language which is also foreign to them. Teachers have acknowledged the difficulty in managing this situation:

*...in Grade 4 learners encounter huge problems regarding the LoLT and new Learning Areas. (Gloria: Nottingham)*

All teachers in the four schools are English second language speakers and have to cope with preparing learners to communicate effectively in English. From some informal observations, the communication in the classrooms where English is the LoLT, in many cases takes place in isiZulu and learners are then required to do written work in English. Hence the practised curriculum differs widely from the official curriculum, as teachers constantly resort to code-switching to get linguistically and psychologically closer to learners. Additionally, the teaching is teacher-dominated where “chalk and talk” replaces genuine teaching and learning.

Obviously, social and political factors influence and complicate decisions in schools, as do community/parents attitudes towards languages and literacy, whether and how literacy is used in the particular home languages, resources and teacher availability in different languages. It would seem from the following comment that parents make choices on issues of LoLT that are contrary to the intentions of the LiEP:

*...to get parents to understand that it's best for learners to get instructed in mother-tongue. (Trudy: Wesdorp)*

#### **4.3.4.4 Professional development workshops**

The majority of the teachers received teacher training prior to 1994. All training institutions in that period were run on racial lines with the black majority receiving training of a relatively poor quality. In this new dispensation, the introduction of new policies require intensive workshops, on-going school based support and monitoring and evaluation.

However, it is evident that beside the five-day orientation to the National Curriculum Statement (between 1997-2006), which included orientation to the Languages Learning Area, teachers have not received any workshop on the LiEP(1997). This orientation training is clearly not adequate to sustain a process of educational change in the classroom. Evans (2001: 65) avers that in implementing policy, teachers need to



argue and work through changes without which the technical changes that they are exposed to in their training are not likely to make a lasting impact on their teaching. Teachers in these schools are not, due to logistical problems, being given this opportunity to engage regularly with other teachers in the district and thereby to grow professionally by debating issues and coming to terms with realities in their various situations. Their need for such engagement is summed up thus:

*The educators have to be well trained and must also have more in-service courses and must also upgrade themselves and be inline with the new development and new strategies used. (Daisy: Entabeni)*

*I think we must have workshops on this policy and make people aware of the urgency to maybe equip themselves with another language. (Carina: Wesdorp)*

#### **4.3.4.5 Policy contradictions**

The aims of the LiEP are to facilitate learning and promote communication among South Africans through the development of additive multilingualism. However, in practice, their effect might be to counter both these aims (Desai, 2001). Prior to 1994, two languages with equal weighting were compulsory for promotion purposes; with the introduction of the LiEP, two languages with unequal weighting are required for promotion. This could result in learners being less multilingual in a formal sense. Three of the four schools offered three languages (isiZulu; English; Afrikaans) prior to 1994. When the LiEP was introduced, Afrikaans was dropped. Principals cite LiEP for this decision as well as the fact that learners are no longer seeking employment on the farm where communication in Afrikaans is a necessity. If multilingualism is the goal to which we aspire then the dropping of Afrikaans in the three schools should be replaced by another official language which in the context of this study should be isiNdebele; and the fourth school should consider introducing an African language.

#### **4.3.4.6 Human resources**

One of the key factors in making policy implementable is human resource provision. If additive multilingualism is to become a reality, more qualified teachers in the target languages need to be employed. This is the view expressed by teacher Tracy from Wesdorp:

*I think we need enough teachers.*

For increase in staff provision to become a reality, a revision of the staffing norms is required and in the case of farm schools the issue of redress needs to be clearly addressed. Professional development workshops focusing on the needs of the teachers should be planned. All African home language teachers should attend ongoing language courses and receive support in the African language LoLT and English, to be able to teach effectively.

#### **4.3.5 Summary**

This section has discussed the findings relating to the questionnaire and interviews on teacher understandings and beliefs with regard to LiEP. Ruiz's (1984) model, which views language from three theoretical positions, namely, language-as-a problem, language-as-a right and language-as-a resource, was used as a framework to analyse the data. The data surrounding language-as-a- problem showed that the old understandings of language were centred around the fact that only English and Afrikaans were official languages and that African languages were marginalised. Respondents viewed the new policy in relation to the larger agenda of reconstruction and development. The findings surrounding language-as-a- right showed that information on the LiEP was available and accessible to teachers, who believed that the LiEP promotes multilingualism and gives the African languages equal status to English and Afrikaans. They also confirmed that they understood the democratic rights of parents via the SGB to formulate the school language policy and that every school should have a school language policy. The findings surrounding language-as-a resource, illustrate that teachers understand that there was a need for the introduction of the new policy and that teachers and learners will benefit from it and that they require training and support in implementing the policy.

Further to Ruiz's submission, another category of analysis, namely the implementation challenges, was discussed. Among the many challenges outlined in Section 4.3.4, teachers have indicated that no intensive interrogation of the policy in workshop situation was conducted and this has implications for the choice and management of languages for teaching and learning as well as the provision of human and material resources.

#### **4.4 Section Three: School organisation and existing language policy**

The awesome responsibility placed on managers in charge of overseeing school improvement is contained in the Whole-School Evaluation, gazetted under the National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 2000). The Education Department is expecting schools to give attention to school improvement and quality enhancement. This policy specifies “Language of instruction” (DoE, 2000) as a process indicator in how the school is going to achieve its goals. It is to be given emphasis by district officials, SGB and School Management Teams as the overseers of the implementation of this policy so that school dropout rates can be decreased as a result of language medium (Meerkotter, 2003) and learners’ standards of attainment can be improved.

In order to establish aspects of school organisation school language policy, interviews, both formal and informal, were conducted with the principals and the chairpersons of the SGB.

The discussions with regard to the interviews with the principal were structured around the following aspects:

- language policies of the of past and future;
- mother-tongue instruction;
- implementation and design of the language policy;
- community attitude towards medium of instruction;
- vision for promoting multilingualism.

The purpose of the interviews with the SGBs was to ascertain the frequency of meetings; languages used in meetings and the SGB’s understandings of the LiEP and school language policy.

##### **4.4.1 Interviews with principals**

###### **4.4.1.1 Language policies of the past and future**

What emerges is that there were changes in the school language policies of three of the schools after 1994. Prior to 1994, Entabeni, Kindersorg and Nottingham offered isiZulu, Afrikaans and English. In the new dispensation, all three schools dropped

Afrikaans. Some of the views put forward in favour of this move include the introduction of LiEP, which stipulates the use of two languages (LoLT plus another language); that learners currently seek employment outside the farms where English is widely used and that English is regarded as the language of access. This is evidenced by the following views:

*For economic reasons English and isiZulu were preferred. Many of our learners are no more seeking employment on the farms and are moving into the cities for further studies and jobs. English and isiZulu are the main languages of communication in Gauteng. (Principal: Entabeni)*

*...because English is so much everywhere... (Principal: Kindersorg)*

A further reason offered for the choice of two languages is the stipulation in the LiEP which advocates one approved language for teaching and learning purposes, and one taken as a subject. Hence the interpretation of this stipulation in some ways conflicts with the concept of multilingualism. In the case of Wesdorp, it has served its interests of retaining the bilingual policy of the apartheid era where Afrikaans is the LoLT from Grade 1 to 7 with English being taught as an additional language in the curriculum. However, Wesdorp is the only school that practises mother-tongue instruction albeit by default.

What emerges in the decision of the three schools is that English has become more visible in the post apartheid era as a language of power and access. In keeping with this belief, access to English as a LoLT starts in Grade 4 in all three schools.

In response to the school language policies of the future, all four schools see no change in the policy. As one principal stated:

*Well, I don't know. It all depends on parents – that will decide if policy will change. (Principal: Wesdorp)*

#### **4.4.1.2 Mother-tongue education**

Research on the value of mother-tongue education around the world is substantial. Martin (2000: 60-62) showed that in schools that support mother-tongue education and where the learners are strong writers in mother-tongue, the results in written English

are also the highest. In his study in Alaska he found that when Yu'piq children are taught through the medium of English, they are treated by the "white" teachers as handicapped and they do not achieve; when they are taught through the medium of Yu'piq they are excellent writers, smart, happy learners. Skutnabb-Kangas (2002: 13) cites the case of Papua New Guinea where 470 languages are used as media of instruction in early grades; children become literate more easily in their mother-tongue than they did in English, and learn English more quickly and easily than their older siblings did under the old system where they learnt through English instead of mother-tongue. Their results were much higher than when they were immersed into English. The same experience is echoed over the world, with the Navajo, with the Saami, with all those minority groups who have mother-tongue education, like the Swedish speakers in Finland, the Welsh in UK and the Frisians in the Netherlands (Lee & McLaughlin, 2001).

While all principals acknowledge the importance of mother-tongue instruction in the curriculum, three stated that they had no plans for its introduction, citing reasons such as the implications for staffing and parental support for English:

*Mother-tongue (home language) is essential in the life of a child. Whereas the ideal is to offer mother-tongue as a subject, this is dependent on human resource provisioning...thus to offer every mother-tongue is clearly a very distant possibility. (Principal: Entabeni)*

*Our roll is too small and we are only two (staff). (Principal: Kindersorg)*

*No, no plans in this school, in fact our plans are, basically we are promoting English. (Principal: Nottinghill)*

*...And when the learners are at school besides what the normal curriculum offers I think when they see the learners improving the level of English then they are satisfied, they believe that they would be able to compete, to be competitive in the outside world maybe just walk into the bank or into post office they can communicate with people and they believe that English is important. (Principal: Nottinghill)*

From these findings, it is evident that the issue of human resource capacity and the number of African languages are real obstacles to promoting mother-tongue instruction. A further problem is the hegemony of English and the fact that isiZulu is a dominant African language which blinds schools from seeing the benefits of mother-tongue education. isiNdebele remains a marginalised language.

While the mother-tongue/ home language is the ideal tool for laying a solid foundation for quality education, these counter arguments are constantly being lodged. Obanya (2004: 21) in a study in Nigeria contributes useful thinking to this debate. First, in refuting the argument that there are too many African languages competing for attention which makes the choice of home language in education impossible, Obanya (2004: 21) states that while the choice is difficult, it is certainly not impossible. The demographic and sociolinguistic strength of specific languages can in fact be determined with some accuracy. This has been used in a number of countries to determine “zonal” languages for use in education. Second, in respect of the cost of training teachers and providing materials, he agrees that costs will be incurred but he sees addressing issues of quality in education such as training teachers to be creative and provision of quality materials such as artefacts, music, drama and dance as a long-term investment.

#### **4.4.1.3 Implementation and design of the LiEP**

At the time of the data collection process for this study, the LiEP was in its ninth year of implementation. The views expressed by principals about the design of the policy and their plans to implement it are important in understanding the challenges they face in the rural areas. Two principals’ views express the challenges faced:

*Whilst the policy gives credence to the constitution, implementation of policy must be supported by resources. (Entabeni: Principal)*

While the honesty of the second principal (Nottinghill) is commendable, the revelation of his lack of knowledge of the policy is frightening, to say the least:

*I’d be very honest; I haven’t really looked deeply in it. Roughly, I got an idea of what it is you know. I understand a bit from the outside. (Nottinghill: Principal)*

The question arises about the principal's lack of enthusiasm to endeavour to understand the policy and the impact of his management and leadership at his school as he gives guidance to policy implementation in his school. In terms of implementation of additive multilingualism, he is of the view that his school will not be participating:

*... it's not possible at our school at this moment. I can't see it working in the next two or three years, the multilingualism thing, all right.*

Is this attitude such because of the belief that English needs to be privileged and therefore requires all their energies? This could also imply that the principal is committed to raising the levels of language proficiency in English and isiZulu before embarking on teaching other languages. In essence he wants to consolidate bilingualism among his learners which is a good start to additive multilingualism.

#### **4.4.1.4 Community attitudes towards the LoLT**

It would appear that parents from all four school communities support the languages of teaching and learning at the schools. However, it was interesting to hear how principals justified the teaching of Afrikaans and English respectively. In some ways Wesdorp practices linguicism since they imply that they are not willing to offer an African language and if learners wish to attend they will have to comply with the policy of the school or attend a school that offers them an African language.

*Well, communities, most of them are Afrikaans. Here there are plenty of African schools in the area. So I think if the children prefer they can go to schools where they are taught in their own language. I think that if they want to come to my school, they are most welcome (Principal: Wesdorp).*

This is contrary to the stipulation in the NCS Grades R-9 (DoE, 2001: 4) that requires of all learners to “learn and African language for a minimum of three years by the end of the General Education and Training Band.”

In the case of teaching and learning at Nottingham, there is an emphasis on the teaching of English and a blatant admission that mother-tongue use is relegated only to the community but that English is for access to the outside world:

*The community is very happy, we, at our parents meetings they express their satisfaction. In fact they are also happy in some ways their children are learning to speak English, write English and read English. They don't have a problem with the mother-tongue at home, you know, it would seem that they are all comfortable with their mother-tongue in their forms of communication and our learners come from communities where they are not exposed to reading or any form of media, you know that type of thing, there is no form of media. They are comfortable at home with the way that they speak and they seem to be successful in that. (Principal: Nottingham)*

In promoting and advocating the use of mother-tongue, the argument that is made by its proponents is that it does not entail “saying farewell to the European language but reducing them to equality” (Philipson 1996: 162) or “converting them into popular rather than elite lingua francas” (Alexander, cited in Bhanot, 1994: 38).

In the discourse on preference for European languages in Africa, Alexander (1997: 88) notes that despite all efforts to make these languages available to the African masses, the efforts have been a resounding failure. In South Africa, the 1991 census statistics showed that 49% of black youth between fifteen and twenty-four years of age cannot speak, read or write English (van Zyl Slabbert, 1994). The Sunday times of 16 April 2000 indicated that about twelve million South Africans are illiterate and about twenty million others, mostly school children, are not fluent readers in any language. This year, 2006, the Human Sciences Research Council<sup>99</sup> showed that the failure to learn to read in early grades is largely due to the subtractive model teaching and learning that is still being practised in schools. The switch to English is abrupt, leaving learners without proper concept development in the mother-tongue.

#### **4.4.1.5 Vision for promoting multilingualism**

While all four principals in the sample schools recognise multilingualism as a resource, none of them have any concrete plans for its implementation. The principal

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<sup>99</sup> HSRC(2006) Without language everything is nothing in education. HSRC Review, Volume 4 Number 3, September 2006 [http://www.hsrb.ac.za/about/HSRC Review/Vol3 No3/6 language.html](http://www.hsrb.ac.za/about/HSRC%20Review/Vol3%20No3/6%20language.html)



from Nottinghamill would like to see that the languages he is offering currently are well managed and effectively taught before he introduces any other language. He states:

*We don't have a vision as such. I just look at it like the future like I am saying, I will happy the day I can tell you our learners are competent enough in English you see where as they can read, write and talk English properly. Once we overcome that, it comes to community issue I think. You know its not just me or my vision, I'll be happy when I see that isiZulu and English, they are doing well with that two there, We can throw it to the community and say lets now look at a third language, you know of which there are different communities, different cultures, you know and err then open it up to the community and say we are now looking at promoting a third language at school, but I will only do that when I feel that we have reached that stage, have overcome that English barrier. (Principal: Nottinghamill)*

The principal of Wesdorp is of the opinion that the learning of other languages will assist in better communication among learners and between teachers and learners:

*To be educated in more than one language is good. I would like to do more languages, 2 or 3 languages to speak and read and write. They can cope more between pupils if you can speak their language. They talk and you do not understand it and I don't like that. You can speak to any of them African people and they will understand you. That's functional language. I would like to see that introduced.*

While the principal acknowledges and applauds the concept of multilingualism, the school has no immediate plans to implement additive multilingualism. He cites the following concerns:

*Resources are the problem if you talk about languages, African languages. In this area most of the people are Zulu further down others are Sotho. So where do you draw the line? According to Pretoria and they insist then you must learn another language. That's the problem I see with learning African languages.*

What emerges from the above statement is that schools lack the necessary guidance and resources in terms of staffing and materials from the provincial offices on how to manage the choice of languages in a particular district or school.

The principal of Entabeni is of the view that multilingualism is being practised at his school:

*We use isiZulu in the Foundation Phase and use the additive approach in the Intersen Phase. The future of languages at the school will be determined by the community policy and pragmatism. Multilingualism must be promoted in order to facilitate better learning.*

While the claim is made that an additive approach is used in the Intersen Phase, the school's language policy does not reflect this.

In considering the overarching principles of the Constitution (1996), multilingualism should be presented as a resource and schools are expected to promote multilingual models in respect of the school language policy.

According to Sookrajh (1999: 315), there is no generally valid model of multilingualism that can be applied to all cultures, countries and circumstance. The context of each respective multilingual situation must be decisive in the decision to adopt certain policies. Every case of planning for multilingualism should be tailor-made for its language community and correspond to real communicative needs. Its strength should not be diluted with fashionable aims and ambitions.

It can thus be argued that schools should offer opportunities to develop diverse languages to promote and celebrate diversity, and that the school language policy should reflect the demography of the school and the community. However, the question that comes to the fore is: How can this efficiency be achieved by the school in the face of great linguistic diversity in the community and of course, limited resources, to which principals have alluded?

#### 4.4.2 Interview with school governing body chairpersons

The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain the frequency of meetings; languages used in meetings and the SGB's understandings of the LiEP and school language policy. What emerged from the interviews with the chairpersons of Entabeni and Nottingham was that the SGB meetings are conducted once every quarter on the average. The language used at the meetings is isiZulu and English. The discussions are translated into English for the principals who are non-isiZulu speakers. Both the chairpersons confirmed that they understand the LiEP generally, that the school language policies were drawn up in consultation with the parent community and that parents were satisfied with the language choice. Since most of the learners at Entabeni are isiNdebele home language speakers, a question was posed as to why isiZulu was chosen over and above isiNdebele as the LoLT of the school. The response was:

*...isiZulu is easy language and English is an easy language to understand each other. (SGB: Nottingham)*

The chairperson himself is isiNdebele speaking and has had no isiNdebele literacy learning at school, nor have his children. He sees the learning isiNdebele as a resource and recommends that teachers get a qualification in the language so that it can be taught at school. His passion for his mother-tongue is evident:

*Every Ndebele must talk isiNdebele. (SGB: Entabeni)*

#### 4.4.3 Summary

In order to establish aspects of school organisation and school language policy, the findings from interviews, conducted with the principals and the chairpersons of the SGB were analysed.

The findings with the principals showed that there were changes to school language policies in three of the schools after 1994 in that Afrikaans as a subject was dropped. The fourth school has not changed its policy and principals of all four schools do not see any changes to the policy in the near future. With regard to mother-tongue instruction, it was found that a subtractive model operates in three schools and mother-tongue remains the LoLT until Grade 7 in the fourth school. All four communities

were satisfied with the school language policies and principals did not have any plans to implement additive multilingualism. The interviews with the SGBs showed that the community was consulted in deciding on the school language policy and that they understood the LiEP generally.

#### **4.5 Testing the assumptions**

In Chapter One of this study, three assumptions were made. The analysis of the data has allowed for a testing of these assumptions and the following discussion attempts to respond to these assumptions.

*Assumption One: The language preference and use of the rural farm community tends towards African languages more than English and Afrikaans at Entabeni, Nottinghill and Kindersorg; while at Wesdorp language use and preference tends towards Afrikaans and English.*

The data shows that this assumption is clearly flawed with respect to language use and preference at the first three schools mentioned. While the respondents come from a multilingual background and are able to speak a number of languages and engage in language mixing, the use of English is greater than the use of African languages, particularly in school and public interactions. In essence the findings indicate that language use in public places of respondents from the rural commercial farm community is no different from that of the urban communities. This may be due to the fact that most public services are not on the farms but operate in built-up areas and respondents patronising these places are forced to speak in English. In respect of Wesdorp, there is an overwhelming sense of loyalty to the use of Afrikaans but in some public places such as shops and government services, English is used more than Afrikaans. Hence the assumption in this case is correct.

*Assumption Two: Teachers may not be able to align their own beliefs with the intentions of the LiEP (hegemony of English versus multilingualism).*

The data illustrates that teachers and principals have a good understanding of the LiEP and its principal aims and acknowledge a need for such a policy. However, their practice does not align with their personal beliefs about the policy. None of the schools indicated plans to implement additive multilingualism. The subtractive model of

language teaching continues to be practised in the first three mentioned schools where home language is used as a language of teaching and learning in the early years and an abrupt switch to English as LoLT takes place in Grade 4. Many of the teachers use English in their interactions and acknowledge English to be the language of access. When asked about language preferences in the teaching and learning situation, Nottinghill teachers indicated that the learning through English is more important than learning in another language. Generally, teachers felt that if learners are learning through English and another language they should not be taught other South African languages. Wesdorp is the only school that complies with an additive approach to mother-tongue, that is, Afrikaans is used consistently throughout schooling and English being taught as a subject. However, it must be noted that this situation has been operation since the apartheid era and that the school has made no attempt to introduce an African language. Hence no drastic changes have been made to school language policy in the new dispensation.

*Assumption Three: The language preference of a rural farm community does not resonate with the school language policies (pre-1994 language policies are still in existence).*

With regard to the school language policies of all four schools, it is evident that the only change made to the school language policy at Entabeni, Nottinghill and Kindersorg is that Afrikaans has been dropped from the curriculum. The absence of isiNdebele, the home language of most respondents in the study, as a curriculum offering indicates the language preference of the community is not accommodated in the respective school language policies. The LoLT in the early years is isiZulu and it changes to English in Grade 4. At Wesdorp no changes have been made to the school language policy. The language preference of the Wesdorp community resonates with the school's language policy. The principals in all four schools indicated that they had no plans to implement additive multilingualism.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the findings in three categories, namely,

- (i) the language preference and use questionnaire conducted with parents, learners and teachers

- (ii) the teacher questionnaire and interviews conducted with selected teachers
- (iii) principal and SGB interviews

The findings from the language preference and use questionnaire showed that the four rural communities in which language preference was explored, have exhibited commitment to their home languages and languages of communication. This is evident in their views on the public language policy, language of teaching and learning and choice of language in media. However, the use of English dominates in public interactions especially in government offices and school situations. While a tolerant attitude by most African respondents where their languages are not used has been demonstrated, feelings of frustration and resistance to non-accommodation of languages are voiced mostly from the Afrikaans-speaking community. The findings did show that use of isiZulu dominates. isiNdebele, the home language of most of the respondents in the three African communities is marginalised.

The findings on the teacher understandings and beliefs on the LiEP relating to the questionnaire and interviews were analysed according to Ruiz's (1984) model which views language from three theoretical positions, namely, language-as-a-problem, language-as-a-right and language-as-a-resource. The evidence from the data under the position, language-as-a problem showed that the old understandings of language were centred on the fact that only English and Afrikaans were official languages and the African languages were marginalised and respondents viewed the new policy in relation to the larger agenda of reconstruction and development. The evidence from the data under the position, language-as-a -right, showed that information on the LiEP was available and accessible to teachers; teachers believed that the LiEP promotes multilingualism and gives the African languages equal status to English and Afrikaans. They also confirmed that they understood the democratic rights of parents via the SGB to formulate the school language policy and that every school should have a school language policy. The evidence from the data under the position, language-as-a-resource, illustrated that teachers understand that there was a need for the introduction of the new policy and that teachers and learners would benefit from it but required training and support in implementing the policy.

Over and above Ruiz's (1994) submission another category of analysis, namely the implementation challenges, was discussed. Among the many challenges outlined in Section 4.3.4, teachers indicated that no intensive interrogation of the policy in workshop situation was conducted and this has implications for the choice and management of languages for teaching and learning and the provision of human and material resources.

The findings from interviews, conducted with the principals and the chairpersons of the SGB were analysed in order to establish aspects of school organisation and school language policy. These findings showed that there were changes to school language policies of three of the schools after 1994 in that Afrikaans as a subject was dropped. The fourth school has not changed its policy and principals of all four schools did not foresee any changes to the policy in the near future. With regard to mother-tongue/home language instruction, it was found that a subtractive model operates in three schools and mother-tongue remains the LoLT until Grade 7 in the fourth school. All four communities were satisfied with the school language policies and principals did not have any plans to implement additive multilingualism. The interviews with the SGBs showed that the community was consulted in deciding on the school language policy and that they understood the LiEP generally.

From the foregoing it is evident that while there is a will and commitment to multilingualism in policy, a real mismatch exists in actual practice especially in government and education. It is fitting to end this chapter with advice from Plüddemann et al. (2004b: 25):

*Only if the leadership is seen to take pride in all of South Africa's languages, only if the schools value every child's mother-tongue as a unique asset, and offer multilingual options; and only if the people are rewarded for their knowledge of a variety of languages in terms of jobs and status can language practice in South Africa eventually reflect language policy.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### EMERGING INSIGHTS: WHERE TO FROM BABEL?<sup>100</sup>

#### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four analysed the data on communities' language preferences and use. In keeping with the notion of involving all stakeholders in decision-making processes in a democracy, the attitudes of parents, teachers and learners towards language use and preference, and teacher beliefs and understandings of the LiEP, were canvassed. Opinions on public and private language use; public language policy and language choices in the language of teaching and learning, as well as the use of mother-tongue and additional languages as subjects, were also sought.

The findings were inter-related at the policy, community, and school levels. The study identified patterns and problems of language use at different levels. At a community level, it focused on the language profiles of parents, teachers and learners; language use in private and public situations; attitudes towards public language policy and language choices in the language of teaching and learning, as well as the use of mother-tongue and additional languages as subjects. At the school level, it focused on the beliefs and understandings of teachers and principals with respect to the LiEP and the challenges of implementation.

In this chapter I therefore discuss the insights emerging from the methodology used in the study, the context, literature and the data.

#### 5.2 Emerging insights

The following insights, drawn from the methodology; literature and the preceding analyses of the language preference and use survey; and the questionnaires and

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<sup>100</sup> The thesis culminates in this chapter entitled "Where to from Babel". It signifies a way forward to promote African languages while the same time providing access to quality English teaching and learning.



interviews relating to the teacher and principals' beliefs, and understandings of the LiEP and its implementation challenges, are discussed in the following way:

- ❑ methodology;
- ❑ rurality as a context;
- ❑ a multilingual community;
- ❑ the power of English in public interactions;
- ❑ policy implementation;
- ❑ languages of teaching and learning;
- ❑ mother-tongue instruction.

These insights are particularly relevant to the recommendations in Section 5.3, where I propose a market-orientated approach to mother-tongue education and access to quality English language teaching and learning for learners and teachers.

### **5.2.1 Methodology**

In my attempt to conduct meaningful research in rural communities, I took the advice articulated by Zafar (2004: 24), that thinking about the methodology is important as it brings into the picture the issue of the researcher's stance towards reality, how the existence of reality is questioned and making decisions on how to study it. I used critical theory to drive the methodology as it responds to human liberation and social justice issues (Prasad, 2005). Guba and Lincoln (1994: 112-115) depict the aim of critical enquiry as the critique and transformation of aspects of society: the key aspect here is that change is facilitated as individuals develop greater insight into existing state of affairs and are stimulated to act on it. Comstock (cited in Prasad, 2005: 149) argues that critical theory is a response to the experiences, desires and needs of oppressed people. Three of the five steps in the approach suggested by Comstock were used to guide the design, implementation and analysis of the research project. The first step is *interpretative* - calling for an understanding of the life worlds of the participants. The second step calls for an understanding of the relevant *socio-cultural structures* and processes that may mediate or constrain subjective understandings. The third step combines input from the first two steps into a single analysis that juxtaposes social actors' subjective interpretations with existing socio-cultural structures. This is

the moment of *ideology-critique* where the researcher actively looks for inconsistencies, contradictions, distortions and asymmetries.

In the context of this research, the language preference and use questionnaire was used to explore the attitudes of parents, teachers and learners towards language use and preference. Semi-structured interviews and a teacher questionnaire were used to ascertain teacher beliefs and understandings of the LiEP. Their opinions on public and private language use; public language policy and language choices in the language of teaching and learning as well as the use of mother-tongue and additional languages as subjects, were sought. My use of critical theory enabled me to understand the linguistic backgrounds of the respondents and the patterns of language use in the community (life worlds). What emerged is that communities are multilingual but the African languages are used only in the home and community, whereas they continue to be marginalised in public places where English is the dominant language. This indicates that the domain of language rights is characterised by division and, to some extent, marginalisation and alienation. That such marginalisation of African languages exists in the presence of a regulatory body such as PanSALB, indicates that the relationship between power, democracy and language is far from stable (Balfour & Mitchell, 2004).

The ambivalence was evident in that the community preferred to use its own languages in public but felt constrained by the hegemony of English and resultant low status of the African languages in the public and in schools. Hence what remains necessary is change in levels of awareness, practice, and policy to release the community from the powerlessness it feels in this situation.

### **5.2.2       Rurality as a context**

There are several reasons for embarking on the study of language preference and use in a community in a rural setting. First, the context is important because the category *rural* applies to a significant portion of the population numerically. Odora Hoppers (2004: 17) adds that rural inhabitants are important players in ensuring livelihoods for a sizeable proportion of people. *Rural* is therefore more common than *urban*. Second, the educational policies developed in the current dispensation (the LiEP in the context

of this study) have the potential to reach some meaningful depth in terms of rural realities but, for some reason are not achieving the desired intentions. Third, the rural learner is enmeshed in a number of contradictory and morally contested traditions of European thought, which occupy different power niches in educational and development “policy speak”. These traditions have implanted a negative attitude towards things rural. Theories of modernisation, development theories and traditions of science, colonial anthropology and several others, have all worked cumulatively to attempt the annihilation of the African personality, which is most vulnerable in the rural areas.

Fourth, many definitions of rural are confined to space, not people, and therefore overlook the obvious truism that it is people who have problems, not places. Even if the issue was space, rural cannot be seen as one single space, but rather as a multiplicity of social spaces that overlap the same geographical area, with each social space having its own logic, its own institutions and its network of actors (McDonagh, 1998: 49). In this study, the four rural commercial farm schools exhibited a multiplicity of social spaces within the same geographical location in that each indicated its own unique preferences and attitudes to language use in public and private domains.

Fifth, while there have been studies focusing on rural education and language policy implementation in general, none has focused on language preference and use and policy implementation in rural commercial farm schools solely. This study sought to approach the rural context with respect, in order to seek critical response from the public domain about language use and preference, as well as beliefs and understandings of LiEP, without giving me, the researcher, the special authorial voice of the all knowing expert (Howley, 2001: 8).

Emerging from the data and literature, the idea of why language policy has not been operationalized can be theorized using the starting point that despite the best efforts of the policies and rural communities themselves, these communities do not appear to benefit much from enabling policies. Instead, poverty leaves rural people without a

safety net and compromises their quality of life. It impacts negatively on their social cohesion, leading to a poverty of self-respect, self-confidence and human dignity, and the loss of power over one's own life. The high percentage of unemployment among parents, particularly in the first three schools, namely, 68% at Entabeni; 75% at Nottinghill; 70% at Kindersorg and 17.5% at Wesdorp that has led to the schools having to provide food and transport for the learners. Other factors include the poor infrastructure and lack of quality resources of schools which indicate the neglect on the part of the state. This calls for a re-examination of the efficacy of post-1994 state policies vis-à-vis a social justice agenda (Zafar, 2004: 8).

Within the social justice agenda, the mandate for state action is to move beyond political symbolism (Jansen, 2002) and the flawed promise of equal treatment and fairness for all through formal equality, to ensuring substantive equality. One way of addressing substantive equality in the education policy framework is to respond to inequality in a principled manner. This requires that the implementation of policies are supported by the necessary resources to achieve the intended outcomes. In the context of this study, it would mean a complete overhaul in the provisions of infrastructural, material and human resources. It also requires an education policy framework that does not limit its focus to the business of schooling but that is responsive to the possibilities for change and the human suffering surrounding the school. As such, it should be an all encompassing policy framework that Zafar (2004: 8) calls a pedagogy of compassion.

### **5.2.3 A multilingual community**

The data from the language preference survey illustrates that the African language speaking respondents, namely, parents, teachers and learners, come from a variety of language backgrounds. These reflect unique world views and complex cultures, which mirror the manner in which speech communities have resolved their problems in dealing with the world, and the way they have formulated their thinking, systems of philosophy and understanding of the world around them. The languages are the means of expression of the intangible cultural heritage of people, and they remain a reflection of these cultures (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002: 2). The respondents in this study have a

commitment to their home languages but the use of these languages is mostly confined to the “home and hearth” (Probyn, 2006: 391). Access to English in rural areas is minimal. The Afrikaans-speaking respondents use their language at home and in many public places but have also indicated that English has gained use in public places.

#### **5.2.4 The power of English in public interactions**

McClellan and McCormick (cited in Mazrui, 2002: 269) suggest that the constitutional recognition of the eleven languages in South Africa is largely “intended and perceived as a symbolic statement and that for instrumental purposes, English remains the dominant language in South Africa”. English is viewed as the language of opportunity, the language of international communication, the language of economic power, and the language of science and technology. In all public places English dominates as a high status language and thus the African languages have lost status, identity and role in spite of being spoken by people who outnumber those who are English home language speakers (Young, 1995: 64). In this study, the hegemony of English affects the respondents’ access to shops, banks, and medical care. According to Vesely (2000: 49), in the apartheid era, the speaking of an African language was not a requirement for medical practitioners. This severely affected the kind of medical care that was offered to African language speakers who could not speak English. The data for this study indicates that language access is still problematic for speakers of African language as English is still dominant in many public places.

In describing the status of the official languages, Cooper (1989: 100) distinguishes among three types of official languages: statutory, working and symbolic official languages. A *statutory* official language is a language that the government has specified as official or declared as appropriate by law. A *working* official language is used by a government for its daily activities, whereas a *symbolic* official language is the language which a government uses as the medium for symbolic purposes. During the period of the 1961 Constitutional dispensation, English and Afrikaans were both statutory and working official languages. Afrikaans also functioned as a symbolic official language. While the languages designated as official in terms of the 1996

Constitution are constitutionally recognised, all except English have very limited use as *working* official languages and no *symbolic* role. As a matter of fact, their inclusion in the constitution seems to be the only symbolic act with which they can be associated. Lack of political will and support on the part of the South African government has been cited as one of the reasons for the non-implementation of the multilingual policy (Alexander 1999, Du Plessis 1999, and Kamwangamalu 2001). Bamgbose (2000: 2) extends the argument by suggesting that:

*Apart from the lack of political will by those in authority, perhaps the most important factor impeding the increased use of African languages is the lack of interest by the elite. They are the ones who are quick to point out that African languages are not yet well developed to be used in certain domains or that the standard of education is likely to fall, if the imported European languages cease to be used as media of instruction at certain levels of education. Hence, a major part of non-implementation of policy can be traced to the attitude of those who stand to benefit from the maintenance of the status quo.*

English continues to be used widely in government offices, as shown by the responses to the language preference questionnaire in this study. Most respondents indicated a preference for the African languages to be used in speeches in parliament from time to time.

### **5.2.5 Policy implementation**

In his examination of the term “language policy,” Driven (1991: 165) notes that it is understood to mean the official policy of a government in planning the use of one or more of its languages in its country. He argues further that the term could also refer to the attitudes of different population groups towards the language legislation and other languages of their country. According to Plüddemann et al. (2004b: 18), Driven’s interpretation of the term includes the attitudes of language communities towards official legislation and that Alexander (1989) and Heugh (2003) have argued for a bottom up rather than a top down approach to language planning. Jansen (2002) is of the view that where educational policy commands from “above” are ignored in the classroom, policy is what happens at the chalkface; practice becomes policy. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (cited in Plüddemann et al., 2004b) argues that unless policy is

negotiated among the various stakeholders, and teachers' experiences and knowledge are taken as a necessary starting point, policy will remain a dead letter. A case in point is that rural school teachers, particularly in the ex-DET schools, have limited English language proficiency themselves and work with learners who have little or no exposure to English in their immediate environment. The result is that while English is the LoLT, most of the teaching takes place in an African language but learners perform written tasks in English. In effect English language learning is being compromised resulting in poor learner performance.

In examining the data on policy concerns, I borrow from Lewis and Naidoo (2004: 101-103) to provide a re-theorization of policy implementation issues as this informs a deeper understanding of the data. National policy mandates such as the LiEP are but frameworks or a national architecture that provide a rubric within which actors, based on their own theories of action continually design, enact, and re-enact policy at all levels. The design, enactment and re-enactment occur at the level of the community and school. Therefore, it is deemed essential to go beyond an understanding of the policy intent and to view the various stakeholders as active agents in the creation of their changing conceptions of language practice. Their perspectives can be understood by an articulation of theories of action (Argyris and Schön, 1974) or "cognitive maps" that constitute frameworks used to guide, interpret, and justify their actions (Spillane et al., 2002). Based on their particular theory, individual stakeholders adopt particular strategies to deal with changing language demands. In this chapter I posit that particular theories of action, or maps that guide action, inform the LiEP in practice. The concept of theory of action provides a means to explore assumptions informing educational policies and practices at systemic, programmatic and individual levels. Within a theory of action, one may distinguish between theories that are explicit (espoused), and implicit (theories-in-use): when someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he usually gives is his espoused theory of action for that situation. This is the theory of action to which he gives allegiance, and which, upon request, he communicates to others. However, the theory that actually governs his actions is his theory-in-use, which may or may not be compatible with his espoused theory (Argyris and Schön, 1974: 6-7). These theories will be used in

relationship to the data on policy implementation, discussed in Sections 5.2.5.1 and 5.2.5.2.

### **5.2.5.1 Theory of action**

The first post-apartheid language-in-education policy (LiEP) (1997) for public schools takes the Constitution (1996) as its point of departure. In brief, the LiEP endorses multilingualism, the building of a non-racial nation, an additive approach to language in education, and gives individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) at their school. The policy aims to promote and develop all the official languages, and to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages. It marks a deliberate shift away from apartheid-era prescriptions regarding languages of learning and teaching, and languages as subjects. For the first time African languages may be used as the LoLT throughout schooling. Thus English and Afrikaans no longer have a most favoured status. It is clearly the intention of the policy to promote education that uses learners' mother-tongue/ home language(s) for learning, while at the same time providing access to other languages; in most cases English is one of the other languages. Teachers and principals in this study have indicated an awareness of the LiEP; the belief that there was a need for the policy; that it will benefit learners and teachers and that mother-tongue education is necessary.

### **5.2.5.2 Theories-in-use**

The LiEP obliges each school to decide on their own language policy in terms of LoLT and the languages to be taught as subjects. Moreover, school language policies should promote additive multilingualism defined as maintaining home languages, while providing access to and effective acquisition of additional languages. Although the LiEP encourages the use of learners' home languages as LoLT, it appears from research (Probyn et al., 2002; Vinjevold, 1999) that the theories-of-use in rural schools have been towards introducing English as LoLT in Grade 4, as shown in the three schools in this study where an African language is used as the LoLT, or straight from Grade 1.



There is considerable debate surrounding these issues. Heugh (2000: 5) states that “no language policy will ever succeed unless an accompanying plan is implemented.” Vesely (1998: 17-18) observes that the absence of a departmental implementation plan has meant that the hegemony of English has gone largely unchallenged. In general, schools have received very little guidance on why and how an additive policy based on the primacy of the mother-tongue should be followed. Kamwangamalu (1995: 93) finds a discrepancy between official language policy and practical application, while Benson (2005: 8) extends the argument by stating that when policy dictates nationwide implementation before there has been adequate investment of time and resources in teacher training, the challenge is greater.

A major aim of this research project was to explore community language preference and use, and teacher beliefs and understandings, for the purpose of conscientising and encouraging a change in perspective on the value accorded languages in a rural commercial farm community and schools, so as to activate changes in policy and practice. Findings show that all four groups within the community reflect the ideology of post-apartheid South African society, insofar as there is a marked shift towards English as the language of power in interactions with the public, namely, shops, banks, medical services, government and media. The rural commercial farm community, in which language preference was explored, exhibited a commitment to its home languages and languages of communication. This is evident in the views expressed on the public language policy, language of teaching and learning and choice of language in media. However, the use of English dominates in public interactions, especially in government offices and school situations. While a tolerant attitude by most African language speaking respondents where their languages are not used has been demonstrated, feelings of frustration and resistance to non-accommodation of languages were noted mostly from the Afrikaans-speaking community. The findings showed that the use of isiZulu dominates and that the home language, isiNdebele of most of the respondents in the three African language-speaking groups, is in fact marginalised.

The current school language policies of the selected areas are the results of internalised thoughts, actions and perceptions that require change at the levels of awareness,

practice and policy. This orientation is clearly reinforced by the aspirations for access within the broader community; hence the linguistic offerings are geared in that direction. The curriculum and administration of the school are the key areas that could reverse this ideological position so that language is used to provide meaningful opportunities for African home language speakers. However, it must be noted that the change in the school's language policy cannot address the socio-political and socio-economic dilemma facing the rural communities on commercial farms. This research aimed at exploring language preference and raising awareness in the community about the relationship between language policy and social practices.

In three schools, the subtractive model<sup>101</sup> is practised, which requires informed interventions in order to counter the effects of the hegemony of English and assist schools to implement mother-tongue within an additive paradigm.

From the teacher questionnaire and interviews, which were designed around understandings and beliefs of the LiEP, it is evident that while most teachers are aware of the LiEP and its intentions, they are not able to implement this policy in a manner that encourages additive multilingualism and mother-tongue instruction. The main reasons cited are lack of guidance from provincial departments of education and lack of resources. Hence the theories of action cannot be reconciled with their theories-in-use.

## 5.2.6 Languages of teaching and learning

Balfour (cited in Balfour & Mitchell, 2004: 1) states that:

*Current language policy...still aspires to the notion of language equality, without recognising that in comparison to English, other languages start the race towards development and recognition on a decidedly less than unequal footing.*

This inequality is very evident in education and the liberal educational ethos espoused by the curriculum is rendered invisible in the presence of the powerful notion of

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<sup>101</sup> The subtractive model of language teaching describes the abrupt end of an African language as LoLT and the introduction of English as LoLT. This model results in deficiencies in learning, resulting in poor academic performance of learners.

English as a language of power and prestige (Balfour & Mitchell, 2004). There has been little actual change in classrooms in the schools on rural commercial farms in the study, since post-apartheid government policies have been in effect. Implementation of the multilingual policy by schools has had little effect upon the teaching of English and on the promotion of multilingualism thus far. While three of schools have selected English as the LoLT, many teachers still do not speak English well. Consequently, most of the classes are still conducted at least partially in a language (mainly isiZulu) other than English. Epstein (1999: 28) is of the view that learners from these schools eventually exit the system with very weak English language skills and poorly developed capacities for further study or full participation in the economy.

The language policy of the schools in the study, remains for the most part unchanged from past practices. Languages in the three ex- DET schools are taught subtractively (the model introduced by the Bantu Education Act of 1953), where isiZulu is used as a LoLT in the early years and is replaced by English as LoLT thereafter. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2002: 3), the language that replaces mother-tongue becomes a “killer language” and English is the world’s most important killer language because it poses a serious threat to linguistic diversity.

In the presence of a progressive LiEP which provides positive and practical measures to elevate the nine South African languages that previously had no status, English is one of the eleven officially recognised languages, which by default maintains the highest status (Epstein, 1999: 27). Learners have indicated that English is the main language of learning and teaching in the African schools. It is essential to know English in the school environment in order to read textbooks and interact within the classroom, for it is the most widely used medium of instruction and nearly all written materials are provided in English. In one school in the study, the texts for the Foundation Phase learners are in English although the LoLT is isiZulu. The principal has stated that the reason for such a decision is that the teaching and learning materials in isiZulu are of a poor quality. Learners perceive that a “better” education is an education that is taught in English even if it difficult for them to understand the language. However, the use of English for the most part is confined to the classroom. While it is considered to be a language of access, it is not used freely in the community

and community members rarely come into contact with English mother-tongue/ home language speakers. This becomes one of the main reasons for limited language proficiency. Most respondents have, however, favoured mother-tongue and English as languages of teaching and learning; they agree no one language should be more important than the other and that their languages should be assisted by the government to develop to a status equivalent to other languages. However, this remains a preference while English continues to be sought after for obvious reasons.

### **5.2.7 Mother-tongue education: From apartheid to democracy**

In a review of mother-tongue education during the Bantu education era prior to 1976, Heugh (2000: 24-25) describes the “the first phase” as paradoxical: because of six to eight years of mother-tongue education, the matriculation (school-leaving) examination results of black learners were better than any results before or after. She (2000: 24) states:

*Despite the cognitively impoverished curriculum, eight years of mother-tongue instruction gave pupils the time to learn their own language through this language and to learn a second and third language sufficiently well to make the switch in medium in the ninth year. During the first phase of Bantu Education, 1953-76, the matriculation results improved, despite the poor curriculum...*

After the 1976 student uprising, the first phase approach was done away with and mother-tongue education was reduced to the first three or four years of schooling. Heugh (2000: 24-25) illustrates the drastic decline in matriculation pass rate for black learners in the ensuing 20 years. According to Alexander (2003: 16), this trend continues despite all attempts to alter it. Since the matric failure rate is the result of, amongst other things, the subtractive language medium policy which is itself due to what Alexander (2003: 9) calls “the static maintenance syndrome”, it is one of the most devastating legacies of the apartheid era, from which it will take decades to recover.

The subtractive language medium policy is further exacerbated by the situation where most Grade 1 learners from isiNdebele-speaking homes are taught in isiZulu, which is a dominant African language in Gauteng. Hence mother-tongue education is not implemented in its full right. Instruction through a language that learners do not speak has been called “submersion” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 21), because it is analogous to holding learners under water without teaching them how to swim. Given the context of the schools and the general lack of resources, both human and material, together with a lack of firm guidelines from provincial offices to implement the policy, schools have not been able to implement mother-tongue instruction and additive multilingualism as intended by the policy.

The ex- HOA<sup>102</sup> school in the study, in contrast, practises Afrikaans as LoLT from Grades 1-7 (as it has always done), and English as a subject. Alexander (2003: 16) observes in his review of the language policies of the past, with particular reference to mother-tongue instruction, that paradoxically, the only children who enjoy all the advantages of mother-tongue education from the cradle to the university and beyond are in fact home language speakers of English and Afrikaans. However, the LiEP continues in a sense to privilege this school. The languages of instruction have not changed in the new dispensation. The school does not have any plans to introduce an African language and cites resources as a problem. While other principals seem to endorse the view that resources is a problem, in my opinion this is not valid as the school governing body has the authority and resources to employ additional staff and in the context of this discussion, this could be an African language teacher .

In this instance it seems that policy falls into the trap of social meliorism, where the commitment to a vision of *what should be* clouds the ability to seriously consider *what is* in terms of school realities (Harley et al., 2000). This is evidenced by the responses (beliefs and understandings of LiEP) from teachers; yet in terms of action, no progress towards the goals of the policy has been made because of contextual and physical realities experienced by the schools.

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102 HOA refers to “House of Assembly”, the former white house of parliament in the apartheid era.

### 5.2.8 Teacher Preparation: Professionalising language policy

Plüddemann et al. (2004a: 16-17) offer a succinct historical account of teacher preparation in South Africa which assists us in tracing some issues around language practice in schools to the ways in which teachers received their training. There is a long tradition of mother-tongue based approaches in both historically white and black teacher training, accompanied by the compulsory study of the two official languages (Afrikaans and English) as subjects. Before apartheid, teacher education for whites and blacks was segregated and unequal, “with only white teacher education conceived of as professional practice” (Welch, 2002: 19). State control and provision of teacher education was largely limited to white teachers, while black teachers were trained in the liberal Christian tradition of the missionary institutions (Hartshorne, 1992: 231), and invariably through the medium of English, creating the so-called “mission elite” (Alexander, 1989: 29). The elite was highly educated and literate and produced the first literature in indigenous languages. Teacher education in the era of official bilingualism (1948–94) became integral to the apartheid state’s social engineering. The Eiselen Commission was set up in 1949 to extend state control over black education, including teacher education. Given the anti-English paranoia and hegemonic aspirations of an Afrikaner-dominant government and civil service, it is not surprising that the Commission was critical of the almost exclusive use of English as the medium of instruction in black teacher education colleges, and of the failure of the colleges to relate to the separate development ideal and “matters of local cultural development” (Hartshorne, 1992: 233). The Commission thus recommended that the (African) mother-tongue be used as a teaching medium for those school subjects taught through the mother-tongue in the primary school, as well as for courses of a general administrative nature (Hartshorne, 1992: 234-5). Afrikaans and English were to be taught as subjects.

In an effort to eliminate the influence of the English-speaking missionaries, the State closed down many urban-based colleges and relocated teacher training to the Bantustans, replaced English-speaking principals and teachers with Afrikaans-speaking ones. It also introduced Christian National Education and the authoritarian and paternalistic philosophy of fundamental pedagogics, and made Afrikaans a

compulsory subject for black teacher trainees. From 1972 black primary school teachers in training were required to pass three language subjects (home language, Afrikaans, English), and were to be taught some “content” subjects in Afrikaans, some in English, and the remainder in the language medium of the school in which they were to be employed i.e. a form of triple-medium education. In practice, however, English remained the dominant language of instruction in the primary school colleges (Hartshorne, 1992: 240). A similar default to English characterised the training of black high-school teachers, who were supposed to receive their instruction in English and Afrikaans on an equal basis. In short, therefore, English remained the dominant language of instruction in black teacher education, while Afrikaans became the dominant language of administration.

Until 1992 teachers were formally required to have the competence to teach through the medium of both official languages in order to qualify for the profession (NEPI, 1992b: 19). This requirement implicitly endorsed dual-medium education, although in practice, as we have seen, dual-medium schooling had been phased out in favour of single-medium institutions in order to safeguard perceived Afrikaner interests in the uneasy accommodation with English. In reality the bilingual proficiency requirement was never extended across the curriculum to content subjects; nor was the method of using two languages in the same classroom explicitly taught. That is to say, no teachers were formally trained for dual-medium education. Black aspirant teachers seeking admission to teacher colleges under the tricameral dispensation (from 1983) were disadvantaged in that many were not competent in Afrikaans, since the subject was either not taught at many Bantustan or ex-DET schools or was available only at second-language or third-language level. Furthermore, while the Afrikaans/English bilingual certificate was a prerequisite for teaching in white, coloured and Indian schools, it was not a requirement for teaching in ex-DET (black) schools, where English was the official medium from Standard 2 (Grade 4) up. This resulted in many teachers qualifying for service in the ex-DET while not complying with the National Criteria for teacher education qualifications (NEPI, 1992b: 25).

In the post-apartheid era of official multilingualism, it is yet another irony that teacher development has become increasingly unilingual. Despite numerous calls by language

NGOs and university-based academics (Young, 1995), there have been no attempts to revive a form of language certification for pre-service teachers, or to make promotion for in-service teachers dependent on teaching competence in two or more languages (which includes an African language).

From the foregoing it becomes clear that the disparities in teacher education provision have disadvantaged teachers, which has affected their teaching abilities and language practice in the classroom. Teachers in the study requested ongoing professional support programmes to assist with the implementation of the LiEP.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations offered in this section are based on the insights gained from the study (as discussed already). The main insights relate to the hegemony of English and the resultant marginalisation of the African languages in the public domain and in schools, as encountered by respondents on rural commercial farm schools.

Kamwangamalu (2000) advocates a market-oriented approach to mother-tongue education and this approach will be used as the overall recommendation which encompasses the other recommendations.

#### **5.3.1 A market-oriented approach to mother-tongue education**

The main argument made here is that mother-tongue education is a marketing problem. This argument is supported by studies on the economics of language planning (Cooper, 1989; Bourdieu, 1991; Coulmas, 1992). The view that language planning is a marketing problem is developed by Cooper (1989: 72), who describes the marketing process as “developing the right *product* backed by the right *promotion* and put in the right *place* at the right *price*.” Cooper is of the view that language planners must recognise, identify, or design products that the potential consumer will find attractive. Based on empirically determined consumer needs, these products are to be clearly defined and audiences targeted. *Promotion* of a communicative innovation such as language refers to efforts to induce potential users to adopt it, whether adoption is



viewed as awareness, positive evaluation, proficiency, or usage. *Place* refers to the provision of adequate channels of distribution and response so that a person motivated to buy a product must know where to find it. The *price* of a consumer product is viewed as the key to determining the product's appeal to the consumers. Bourdieu (1991) also views language planning or language management as a marketing problem. This is clear from his definition of status planning as an exercise in regulating the power relationship between languages and their respective users in the linguistic market place. For Bourdieu (1991: 66-67), "linguistic products are signs of wealth or capital, which receive their value only in relation to a market, characterised by a particular law of price formation". This means that "the market fixes the price for a linguistic product or capital, the nature, and therefore the objective value, of which the practical anticipation of this price helped to determine" (Bourdieu, 1991: 77). The more linguistic capital that speakers possess, Bourdieu (1991) argues, the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit of distinction.

In applying the ideas of Cooper, Bourdieu, and others to the South African context, Kamwangamalu (2000: 131) states that it is clear that the products, in this case the nine official African languages have been identified, and the places where these products can be found are common knowledge to most South Africans. One knows, for instance, that isiZulu is the major language in KwaZulu-Natal, and that isiXhosa and Sesotho are the demographically dominant languages in the Eastern Cape, the Free State and Gauteng provinces respectively. Given this natural geographical distribution of the official languages, language consumers would not have any problem locating the product they need. Kamwangamalu (2000) is of the view that what is missing in the current multilingual language policy, which policy-makers need to consider in efforts to implement the policy, is the *promotion* and *price* of the other official African languages (Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Setswana, isiNdebele, SiSwati, Sepedi). He notes that the linguistic products are also goods to which the market assigns a value, and that on a given linguistic market, some products are valued more highly than others. Despite what the Constitution says about the principle of language equity, language practices in education attest clearly to the fact that English is assigned more value than any other official language. Simply stated, it is one thing to have legislation in place that accords

recognition and equal status to all the official languages, but social equality in language policy does not necessarily result in equal outcomes, nor does it necessarily entail language promotion (Schiffman, 1992). Language consumers need to know what an African language adopted as a medium of learning would do for them in terms of upward social mobility. What payoff or reward would it generate? Would it, for instance, open up job opportunities and give consumers access to employment? The answer to this question, and not a constitutional principle or a multilingualism awareness campaign alone, will determine whether status planning for African languages in South Africa will fail or succeed (Kamwangamalu, 1997).

### **5.3.2 Deliberate promotion of mother-tongue education**

The previous section argued for a market-orientated approach to mother-tongue education. Marketing mother-tongue education can be done in several ways, as suggested in the following section.

#### **5.3.2.1 Agencies should be established to encourage language use**

Alexander (1989) suggests that bottom-up practices are a good foundation for strong programmes because they allow all stakeholders to contribute to raising the status of the mother-tongue in the community and classroom, but their efforts must be enabled by legislation at the official level, so that they meet somewhere in the middle. To this end, Alexander and others have formed a consortium called the Multilingualism Action Group (Heugh, 2003), which helps grassroots organisations lobby for more coherent language policy and practice in South African schools. Hornberger (1994: 82) agrees: “No matter what the goal, language/literacy development proceeds best if goals are pursued along several dimensions at once.” She states further that increasing numbers of mother-tongue readers and writers will inevitably lead to fuller social participation as well as facilitate progress in the implementation of mother-tongue schooling, especially in terms of available teachers and written materials.

### **5.3.2.2 An implementation plan and curriculum materials should be developed**

In many countries, the lack of government support in the form of thorough planning or adequate materials has hindered the achievement of language-teaching goals (Crystal, 1997: 6). The governments of multilingual nations must do more than simply recognise multilingualism in their constitutions. There must be a clear message supported by adequate resources that promoting all official languages is a priority. A well-structured implementation plan, giving clear, unambiguous guidelines as to how the policy will be implemented, must be evident. This will avert the confusion of which African languages are to be offered at the different schools as alluded to by the principal of Wesdorp (cf Section 4.4.1.5).

In a supportive environment, resources must be devoted to helping people have access to the language and to learn it, through the media, libraries, schools and institutes of higher education. Relevant books, tapes, computers, telecommunication systems and all kinds of teaching materials must be increasingly available. In the context of this study, good, quality resources in isiZulu especially at the Foundation Phase level are urgently needed. As mentioned, one principal in the study stated that his school uses English materials in the Foundation Phase because the quality of the books in isiZulu was not good. Mechanisms should be put in place to monitor the quality of materials produced by publishers.

### **5.3.2.3 Teachers should be trained**

The implications for the improvement of teaching and learning both in linguistically diverse and linguistically homogeneous classrooms and schools are clearly numerous, and the challenges enormous if the aims and objectives of the LiEP are to be realised. Given the uneven provision of teacher education in the apartheid era and the resultant poor quality of teaching and learning in black schools generally and more specifically in the rural commercial farm schools, initial and continuous professional teacher education will have to deal with aspects of teacher preparation in general and language education in particular. The promotion of multilingualism is crucial to the enterprise of facilitating multilingual learning. Both conceptual/content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are necessary for effective teaching. These attributes need to be integrated,

so that teachers can confidently apply conceptual knowledge-in-practice. It is clear that all teachers need to enhance their skills for the delivery of the curriculum and educational policies. A large majority needs to strengthen its subject knowledge base, pedagogical content knowledge, teaching skills and skills required to manage learning in diverse classrooms. The link between language and learning must be promoted, including the use of African languages. Programmes to promote language use in education must be supported, and all teachers should have the opportunity of learning an African language (DoE, 2006). The teaching of language education should be such that communicative competence is achieved equally in both English and African languages. This means that a coherent set of language requirements for teachers teaching in public schools needs to be developed following the repeal of the old language requirements for teachers (E/e, A/a, E/A, E/a, A/e etc).<sup>103</sup> Teacher education courses will need to be aligned with these requirements (Plüddemann et al., 2000: 62). In the context of a multilingual language policy, and a majority African languages school population, teacher training should enable all teachers to teach competently through the medium of two languages (an African language and English).

In partnership with the relevant provincial education authorities, continuous professional teacher education providers should offer courses in which the links between multilingualism with the NCS is systematically explored. Various key stakeholders should be identified for this training.

Bold political support should be given to the use of these languages as media of learning, and the certified knowledge of an African language must become one of the requirements for access to employment. To accomplish these goals, money will have to be spent. But, as Tollefson (1991) cautions, only when the language achieves a full range of functions and no stigma is attached to its use, has it “arrived”. African languages have yet to take their first step toward achieving this goal.

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<sup>103</sup> These symbols represent teacher competence in language with the symbol in upper case representing language competence at first language level and the symbol in lower case representing language competence in second language level e.g. E/a means that the teacher is able to speak English at first language level; and at second language level. The symbols A/E means that both English and Afrikaans are spoken at first language level.

#### 5.3.2 4 Mother-tongue education should be revitalised

Since education plays such an important role in employment and in gaining access to political power, mother-tongue education, or its denial, is one of the most important issues in language policy and language education (Tollefson, 1991). Therefore, there is an urgent need for policy-makers to rethink their language-in-education policies with a view to revitalising mother-tongue education for the betterment of the masses.

Hornberger (1998: 444) asserts that language policies with a *language-as-a resource* orientation do have an impact on efforts aimed at promoting the vitality and revitalisation of endangered languages. Mother-tongue education is the best way to reach a large number of people and integrate them into the national or democratic process. However, for the masses to accept mother-tongue education as an alternative to education in a foreign language, the government must vest mother-tongue education with the kind of prestige and material gains associated with education in a foreign language. This policy has worked for Afrikaans in South Africa. There is no reason why, with committed resources, community support, and a strong governmental will, that this approach should not work for African languages in South Africa or in other contexts. The success of mother-tongue education will depend on many variables including the availability of human and financial resources, people's attitudes, which in turn are dependent on the reward attached to mother-tongue education, and the political will to make mother-tongue education marketing succeed.

On a practical level the following recommendations are made for application at classroom, school, district and provincial levels. These are small but decisive steps towards achieving the goal of implementing the LiEP (1997) in the rural commercial farm schools.

- **At classroom level**

For teachers, the biggest challenge would be to shift their beliefs and attitudes towards the African languages, and to use these as resources across the curriculum and throughout schooling. African languages should come to be seen as viable codes for learning at all levels.

Teachers in multilingual classrooms should create forms of language awareness appropriate to their situation. Doing an informal survey of the languages learners

speak, and finding space to use the different languages, would only be the first steps in affirming them, and thereby their speakers. (Plüddemann et al., 2000: 59) An important start would be to use isiNdebele, the language of the majority in the three of the schools in the study, in an informal way.

Teachers in linguistically diverse classrooms such as Wesdorp in the study should also be encouraged to explore the grouping of their learners in linguistically sensitive ways that encourage co-operative learning via peer interpreting. It is important that African language speaking children not be stigmatised by being put into their “own” groups throughout the school day. Furthermore, teachers in such classrooms should enlist parents and other volunteers as teaching assistants wherever possible, particularly in order to bridge intractable language-related communication problems.

- **At school level**

The suggestions made at classroom level will only become viable once a school develops its own language plan in keeping with the LiEP, and finds ways of monitoring its realisation and supporting teachers in doing so. School management through the governing body plays a pivotal role in this regard, and will have to convince parents of the merits of using the home languages as vehicles of learning (plus transition to English). An adapted version of additional recommendations for schools to consider as espoused by Plüddemann et al. (2000: 60) is particularly appropriate. They include the following:

- Organise training for peer interpreters in schools where teachers and learners do not have a language in common.
- Appoint language volunteers, e.g. retired teachers, principals or parents.
- Share resources with schools in the vicinity by clustering, which could lead to an exchange or sharing of teaching materials and other expertise.
- Appoint first language speakers of isiZulu and English languages as class teachers in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase respectively.
- Introduce family literacy classes or courses in isiZulu, isiNdebele and English.

- **At district level**

All district officials offering support to the teachers on the rural commercial farm schools should be competent users of the relevant African language. This means that district officials would need to be trained in the two languages offered at the schools if they are to make a difference to the support they offer schools.

- **At provincial level**

Advising teachers and schools is an essential activity of professional support and guidance. All provinces should introduce guidelines on the implementation of the LiEP and support these with professional development courses which address the unique contexts which reside in the different schools. Advisors should be able to translate the knowledge available from research, local experience, official directives and the like into a form that will benefit schools and their teachers (UNESCO, 2005: 178).

### **5.3.2.5 Language surveys should be used**

Language surveys in multilingual societies have a dual function: they provide information crucial to informed language planning and raise awareness of the dominant and dominated languages and their speakers and of language matters in general (Plüddemann et al., 2004 b). Population censuses often neglect language issues. As we have seen, recent population censuses (1996; 2001) in South Africa have added little understanding to actual patterns of language use and linguistic diversity in a multilingual society.

In the light of the limitations of census data, focused language surveys have an important role to play, particularly in a multilingual society in the process of social transformation. The South African Constitution of 1996, the Language-in-Education Policy for public schools (DoE, 1997) and other policies which recommend mother-tongue education and fostering multilingualism should be retained and developed as core language values. All expressly commit the State to promoting multilingualism. It is self-evident that the successful realisation and monitoring of these policies will depend on an updated and multifaceted database that is informed by focused language surveys, amongst other sources of information.

### **5.3.3 Access to quality English language teaching and learning should be provided**

Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 have argued for the marketing the African languages vigorously in order to move them beyond being a written law to practice, where there is instrumental value which opens up opportunities for the masses in South Africa. However, access to quality English language use (although alluded to in section 5.3.2.3.) is also necessary, since three of the schools in this study offer English as LoLT from Grade 4 on and the fourth offers it as a subject. The data from the language preference survey indicated that overall most respondents preferred mother-tongue and English as languages of teaching and learning. In the context of this study, all teachers and learners are English (additional) language speakers. Given the unequal provision in teacher education and the resultant poor quality of training received by most African teachers (Section 4.2.1.5), teachers need support in the form of ongoing professional development training to be able to teach English effectively. These professional development courses should have a two-fold thrust, namely, to equip teachers linguistically so that they become English language proficient and second, to assist them to mediate the curriculum effectively and creatively so that learners move beyond the basic interpersonal communication to cognitive academic language proficiency. Increased proficiency in English language skills will create an enabling environment for access to further education and ensure that learners become fully bilingual.

In reviewing the rise of Afrikaans, the next section offers practical hints on how the status of languages can be uplifted and sustained.

### **5.4 Finally: A lesson learnt from the rise of Afrikaans in South Africa**

In examining the works of Malherbe (1977), Giliomee (2003) and Kamwangamalu (2000), the following recommendation is offered as a way forward and is useful for researchers to note.



South Africa has had the experience of marketing mother-tongue education (Afrikaans). Afrikaans, labelled a kitchen language some fifty years ago, rose to compete with English in the highest domains of language use, including education. The Afrikaners who were in power at the time managed to promote Afrikaans to its present status in South Africa. This was done through incentives and rewards for top achievers in the language. For instance, in order to encourage learners to become bilingual in English and Afrikaans, the governments of the then Transvaal and Natal awarded monetary grants. These were known as Bilingual Merit Grants in the Transvaal and Bilingual Bonuses in Natal. Malherbe (1977) reports that these grants went to learners who attained a certain percentage of marks in each of the official languages. Attached to these grants was the condition that such learners, on completion of high school, had to go to a training college in order to become teachers. The teachers who displayed exceptional proficiency in the use of both official languages as media of instruction, were each given a monetary grant (Malherbe, 1977). Incentives for promoting mother-tongue education in African languages should be done aggressively both in education and in other sectors. Certified knowledge of these languages should become one of the criteria for access to employment. Only if African languages have status in the broader social, political, and economic context, will people want to be educated in them (Eastman, 1990).

## **5.5 Summary**

In its exploration of community language and preference and use, this thesis has argued that isiNdebele is the mother-tongue/ home language of most of the respondents in the three African language speaking communities and Afrikaans in the fourth. However, isiZulu is more widely used and isiNdebele is marginalised in use at work for parents and school for learners. isiZulu is a language taught at school in the three African language-speaking communities. There is therefore a mismatch between home language and LoLT for learners in the Foundation Phase. English is the LoLT and the language used most widely in public places and this hinders meaningful communication among respondents.

This thesis has shown, with respect to teachers' beliefs and understandings of LiEP (1997), that the schools' theories of action (espoused views of LiEP(1997) ) are inconsistent with the theories-of-use. The theory that actually governs their actions is the theory-in-use, which is not compatible with the espoused theory (Argyris and Schön, 1974: 6-7), in that while they believe additive multilingualism and mother-tongue education to be crucial to quality education, the lack of direction from authorities and insufficient resources prevent them from implementing the policy effectively.

I have therefore argued in this thesis for a market-orientated approach to mother-tongue education and have recommended the establishment of agencies to promote mother-tongue education; the development of appropriate resources; training of teachers; political support for the revitalisation of African languages and the use of language surveys to assess language needs in communities.

In addition, since English is the LoLT in three of the four schools and a subject in the fourth school, it is recommended that access to quality learning and teaching of English be provided. This will entail ongoing professional development training and support for teachers to improve their skills and abilities to communicate in English on different levels and teach English creatively and effectively in their classrooms.

Finally, in arguing for the promotion of mother-tongue education together with access to quality English teaching, I am effectively recommending additive bilingualism. In commenting on the development of bilingual/ biliterate learners, Hornberger's (cited in Hornberger, 1998: 447) view provides an apt conclusion to the above recommendations. She states that:

*...the more the contexts of learning allow bilingual/biliterate learners to draw on all points of the continua of biliteracy, the greater are the chances of their full biliterate development. That is, the contexts of their learning must allow learners to draw on oral-to-literate, monolingual-to-bilingual, and micro-macro contexts; to use productive and receptive, oral and written, and L1 and L2 skills; and to receive both simultaneous and successive exposures, with attention to both similar and dissimilar aspects of language structure, and to convergent and divergent aspects of language scripts.*

## **5.6 General conclusion**

The final summary captures the main arguments in the study throughout the chapters. The aim of this thesis was to explore rural commercial farm community language preference and use and its implications for language policy and practice in schools. It therefore began with an introductory discussion of language policy developments in the apartheid era which led to an unequal treatment of languages in South Africa where English and Afrikaans dominated all sectors in society. This resulted in the marginalisation of African languages. The study then focused on the introduction of the LiEP in July 1997, which was a fundamental and almost radical break from the state-driven language policy of the apartheid government, to one that recognises cultural diversity as a national asset, and the development and promotion of eleven official languages and hence multilingualism. The latter gave individuals the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (DoE, 1997a: 2-3). This discussion served as an introduction to the research programme, the problem investigated, the aims, the setting, context and research procedures.

A lengthy discussion on the history of language policy development in South Africa emphasised subsequently that the past response to the language diversity in South Africa has been a policy of state bilingualism that largely ignored the needs of the speakers of African and other languages in favour of English and Afrikaans only. The discussion noted that language planning in education occurred in a context of educational segregation on ethnolinguistic lines to the point of dividing white educational systems into English and Afrikaans mediums and African language speakers into ten tribal groups. This discussion set the scene to understand the dynamics involved in making the shift to language planning in a democracy.

The review of studies in language policy implementation in South Africa pointed to the perceived high status of English with the resultant marginalisation of Afrikaans and the African languages, and the absence of school language policies that align with the intentions of the LiEP. It also drew attention to multilingualism as a resource and the elaborate and complex patterns of the broader communicative competence of

multilingual children as opposed to monolingual children. The presentation of the political, economic and sociolinguistic obstacles in implementing the language policy set the stage for understanding and interrogating some of the challenges facing rural communities in implementing the language policy.

In arguing for the context, the view that geographical locations as well as the culture of rural places have a powerful influence on teaching and learning; and shape the actions of teachers, including the ways in which they “localise” mandates to address the problem, was posited. Furthermore it was argued that while the constitutional mandate recognises that all learners have a right to quality education, rural education has been a low priority area for government action and therefore warrants ongoing research. This study adds to the existing knowledge of rurality and its challenges, more especially language policy implementation.

Critical theory was deemed relevant as a methodology to drive this study, as it addresses social justice issues and language implementation in South Africa. The perceived high status of English and marginalisation of the African languages warranted this paradigm. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to answer the questions relating to language preference and use via a multi-method approach which was deemed appropriate to answer the critical questions posed in this study.

The findings of this study related to three categories:

- the language preference and use questionnaire conducted with parents, learners and teachers;
- the teacher questionnaire and interviews conducted with selected teachers;
- principal and SGB interviews.

The findings from the language preference and use questionnaire showed that the four rural communities in which language preference was explored, exhibited commitment to their home languages and languages of communication. This is evident in their views on the public language policy, language of teaching and learning and choice of

language in media. However, the use of English dominates in public interactions especially in government offices and school situations. While a tolerant attitude by most African respondents, where their languages are not used, has been demonstrated; feelings of frustration and resistance to non-accommodation of languages mostly from the Afrikaans-speaking community occurred. The findings showed that the use of isiZulu dominates and that isiNdebele, the mother-tongue/ home language of most respondents in the three African language-speaking communities, is marginalised.

The responses to the *questionnaire and interviews* relating to the teacher understandings and beliefs on the LiEP were analysed according to Ruiz's (1984) model, which views language from three theoretical positions, namely, language-as-a problem, language-as-a right and language-as-a resource. The evidence from data under the position language-as-a-problem showed that the old understandings of language were centred on the fact that only English and Afrikaans were official languages, that the African languages were marginalised and that respondents viewed the LiEP in relation to the larger agenda of reconstruction and development. The evidence from findings under the position language-as-a-right, showed that information on the LiEP was available and accessible to teachers, and that teachers believed that the LiEP promoted multilingualism and gave the African languages equal status to English and Afrikaans. The teachers also confirmed that they understood the democratic rights of parents via the SGB to formulate the school language policy and that every school should have a school language policy. The findings under the position language-as-a resource, illustrated that teachers teach a variety of Learning Areas and are themselves an important resource in language teaching; that they understood that there was a need for the introduction of the new policy from which teachers and learners would benefit, and that teachers required training and support in implementing the policy. What emerges from this is the presence of a willingness among teachers to make the policy work but teacher support from the education authorities is crucial to successful implementation.

Further to Ruiz's submission another category of analysis, namely the implementation challenges, was discussed. Among the many challenges outlined in Section 4.3.4, teachers indicated that no intensive interrogation of the policy in workshop situations

was conducted, which had implications for the choice and management of languages for teaching and learning and the provision of human and material resources.

The findings from interviews, conducted with the principals and the chairpersons of the SGB were analysed in order to establish aspects of school organisation and school language policy. The findings showed that there were changes to school language policies of three of the schools after 1994 in that Afrikaans as a subject was dropped. The fourth school had not changed its policy; and principals of the four schools did not see any need to change the policy in the near future. With regard to mother-tongue instruction, it was found that a subtractive model operates in three schools and mother-tongue remains the LoLT until Grade 7 in the fourth school. All four communities were satisfied with the school language policies and principals did not have any plans to implement additive multilingualism. The interviews with the SGBs showed that the community was consulted in deciding on the school language policy and that they understood the LiEP generally.

Finally, in terms of language preference and policy implementation in a rural community, I began this study with the assumption that the African languages would be used exclusively among the African language speaking respondents, and Afrikaans among the Afrikaans-speaking respondents. However, it was found that while the African languages and Afrikaans are vibrant and very much in use in home and community interactions, English dominates in public interactions. This is the case because public services are not located on the farms and the respondents travel to the nearest town to secure these services, where English and to a diminished extent Afrikaans, are more widely spoken. In contrast, at SGB level meetings were conducted mainly in isiZulu at the three African language-speaking communities with some English translations at two of the schools where the principals did not speak African languages. These meetings were conducted at the schools on the farm; hence the community language was used more widely.

When reviewing the language use at school level, it was found that while language teaching should centre on the learner's linguistic abilities and values as well as the

provincial and national imperatives that impact directly or indirectly on the interpretation and implementation of the official language policy (see Figure 2.3, Section 2.5), this is clearly not the case. In the context of this study, the linguistic strength that the learner brings to school, namely the isiNdebele language, is sidelined in the teaching situation as the LoLT in three of the schools is isiZulu. isiZulu is the second or third language of the learner but is taught and assessed at home (first) language level. No plans are in place to allow these learners the opportunity to learn isiNdebele in any phase in the curriculum. This is no different to the situation in urban schools where English is the LoLT and those African language speaking learners who are admitted are taught in English from Grade 1. The same situation prevails in the Wesdorp School in this study, where the eight African language speaking learners are taught in Afrikaans as LoLT and English as a subject.

It was found that language use in public situations in the rural community is not significantly different to that which occurs in urban situations. The language use in school situations is the same as that which occurs in other African and Afrikaans language speaking schools in urban or township schools.

It is evident that while there is a will and commitment to multilingualism in policy, a mismatch exists in actual practice especially in education. Firm guidelines, support and monitoring from provincial offices are essential in order to bring about the desired change in curriculum delivery in rural commercial farm schools.

It is fitting to end this chapter with advice from Plüddemann et al. (2004b: 25):

*Only if the leadership is seen to take pride in all of South Africa's languages, only if the schools value every child's mother-tongue as a unique asset, and offer multilingual options; and only if the people are rewarded for their knowledge of a variety of languages in terms of jobs and status can language practice in South Africa eventually reflect language policy.*

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Language Use / Preference

No.: ____
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**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**  
(ADAPTED FROM PANSALB, DECEMBER 2000)

NAME OF RESPONDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT: Mark only one-

TEACHER	1	PARENT	2	LEARNER	3
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NAME OF INTERVIEWER: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

ALL RESPONDENTS ANSWER SECTIONS A-B and E-F.

IN ADDITION, PARENTS AND TEACHERS ANSWER SECTION C, AND LEARNERS ANSWER SECTION D.

**SECTION A: GENERAL**

QUESTIONS	Afrikaans	English	Sesotho	Setswana	Sepedi	SiSwati	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Khoe (Khol)	San	Sign	Languages of European origin	Other African language	Oriental / Indian language	Other: Specify				
	1. What Language do you mainly speak at home? (Live alone: What Language(s) do you mainly speak with your immediate family?)	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
2. Is the Language which you mainly use at home mixed with another language or not? Answer: <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NO</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> If YES, what Language is mixed with your home language?	YES	1	NO	2																		
YES	1																					
NO	2																					
3. What language did you and your parents mainly use when you were a child?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18				
4. If you were thinking about a problem and perhaps talking or muttering to yourself, as all people do, in what Language would you think and talk to yourself?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18				
5. What Language do you speak most easily and fluently?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18				



**SECTION B: LANGUAGE USE AND PREFERENCES IN PUBLIC SITUATIONS**

**INTERVIEWER:** I am going to mention a number of different situations in everyday life. Could you tell me about the Languages which are used, what language you would like to use, and how you feel about the Language used in the situations.

QUESTIONS		Afrikaans	English	Sesotho	Setswana	Sepedi	SiSwati	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Khoe (Khoi)	San	Sign	Languages of European origin	Other African language	Oriental / Indian language	Other: Specify
1.	Nearest Post Office:																		
	1.1 What Language do you mainly use to speak to the staff behind the counters?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	1.2 What Language do the Post Office staff mainly speak to you in?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
2.	Nearest Police Station:																		
	2.1 What Language do you mainly use to speak to the staff behind the counters?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	2.2 What Language do the Police Station staff mainly speak to you in?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	2.3 If you made a statement at a Police Station since 1996:																		
	2.3.1 In what Language was your statement made / taken?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	2.3.2 In what Language was your statement written?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
3.	Recent visits to Clinics, Hospitals or Doctor's Consulting Rooms:																		
	3.1 What Language are you mainly addressed in?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	3.2 What Language do you mainly use?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
4.	Visits to Government Departments, Municipal or Magistrate's Offices over past two years:																		
	4.1 What Language do you mainly use to speak to the staff behind the counters?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	4.2 What Language do the staff mainly speak to you in?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

QUESTIONS		Afrikaans	English	Sesotho	Setswana	Sepedi	SiSwati	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Khoe (Khoi)	San	Sign	Languages of European origin	Other African language	Oriental / Indian language	Other: Specify
5.	Attendance of Religious Services on a regular basis:																		
	What Language was mainly used in the service?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
6.	Supermarkets and shops that you visit most regularly:																		
	12.1 What Language are you mainly addressed in?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	12.2 What Language do you mainly use?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

Appendix A: Language use/preference

QUESTIONS		Afrikaans	English	Sesotho	Setswana	Sepedi	SiSwati	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Khoe (Khoi)	San	Sign	Languages of European origin	Other African language	Oriental / Indian language	Other: Specify
7.	Banks you visit in general:																		
	13.1 What Language are you mainly addressed in?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	13.2 What Language do you mainly use?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8.	If your home Language was not used in public situations, which of the following describes your feelings about the Language used in Supermarkets, Shops, Religious Services, Hospitals, Police Stations, Post Offices or Banks?																		
	<i>I like using the Language</i>	1																	
	<i>I do not mind the situation</i>	2																	
	<i>I would prefer to use my own Language but do not feel strongly about it</i>	3																	
	<i>I would prefer to be spoken to in my own Language and feel frustrated that another Language is used</i>	4																	
	<i>I insist on speaking my own Language even though I am answered in another</i>	5																	
	<i>Other feeling: Specify</i> _____																		

QUESTIONS		Afrikaans	English	Sesotho	Setswana	Sepedi	SiSwati	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Khoe (Khoi)	San	Sign	Languages of European origin	Other African language	Oriental / Indian language	Other: Specify
9.	Been interviewed for work over the past two years:																		
	16.1 Were you able to use your own Language? Answer:																		
	YES	1																	
	NO	2																	
	16.2 If you were not able to use your own Language, how did you feel?																		
	<i>Not disadvantaged – I managed quite easily</i>	1																	
	<i>Slightly disadvantaged – it would have been better to use my own Language</i>	2																	
	<i>Seriously disadvantaged – I should have been able to use my own Language</i>	3																	
	<i>Other feeling: Specify</i> _____																		

**SECTION C: WORK SITUATION: TO BE ANSWERED BY PARENTS AND TEACHERS**

**INTERVIEWER: Ask this section only for respondents working full-time or part-time.**

QUESTIONS		Afrikaans	English	Sesotho	Setswana	Sepedi	SiSwati	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Khoe (Khoi)	San	Sign	Languages of European origin	Other African languages	Oriental / Indian languages	Other: Specify
	At work:																		
1.	What Language do you mainly speak at work?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
2.	What Language do you mainly use when speaking to people more senior than you?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

**SECTION D: SCHOOL SITUATION – ONLY TO BE ANSWERED BY LEARNERS**

QUESTIONS		Afrikaans	English	Sesotho	Setswana	Sepedi	SiSwati	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Khoe (Khoi)	San	Sign	Languages of European origin	Other African languages	Oriental / Indian languages	Other: Specify	
1.	For subjects other than Language subjects, what is the Language of instruction – what Language do the teachers normally use in the class?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
2.	Do your teachers use other Languages as well? Answer:																			
	YES																			1
	NO																			2
3.	If YES, what other Languages do they use?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	

**SECTION E: PUBLIC LANGUAGE POLICY**

1. Think about the policies which have been adopted in recent years which affect Languages spoken by South Africans. As regards your own home language, which of the following would best describe the way you feel?

I feel satisfied about the way my Language is treated.	1
Because of practical difficulties when there are many Languages, I feel that my Language is treated as well as I could expect.	2
All things considered, I am fairly dissatisfied about the way my Home Language is treated.	3
I am very dissatisfied about the way my home Language is treated.	4

2. In general, who makes the most important as regards the public use of Languages? You may mention as many groups as you like.

Government	1
Business	2
Advertising	3
Media	4
Speakers of the Languages	5
Other	6

3. Think about the situation of Language of instruction in public schools. Which of the following would come closest to the way you feel? You may choose more than one item if you wish.

Mother-tongue instruction and good teaching of another official Language should be available.	1
Learners should have the opportunity to learn both their mother-tongue and English equally well.	2
Learners should learn through both English and their mother-tongue.	3
It is more important that learners learn in English than in other Languages.	4
Other.	5

4. If learners at school are learning English and their home Languages, do you think that they should also learn any other South African Languages?

YES	1
NO	2

5.1 These days most ministers in government, councillors in municipalities and officials make statements or speeches in English.

FIRST: Do you understand what they are saying?

Fully	1
As much as I need to	2
Often do not understand what they are saying	3
Very seldom understand what they are saying	4
Other – Specify:	5

5.2 SECOND: Do you feel that they should make more use of Languages other than English?

Yes, regularly	1
Yes, from time to time	2
Using other Languages is unnecessary	3
Other – Specify:	4

SECTION F: EXTENT OF MULTILINGUALISM

	QUESTIONS	Afrikaans	English	Sesotho	Setswana	Sepedi	SiSwati	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Khoe (Khoi)	San	Sign	Languages of European origin	Other African language	Oriental / Indian language	Other: Specify	
1.	What Languages do you understand if spoken? (that is, understand the Language well enough to follow a story on radio or television)	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
2.	What Languages do you speak well enough to for example, explain a problem you have, to someone in a shop or to an official?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
3.	Think of the Language you know best: Can you write it well enough to write a letter to a shop or an employer?																			
	<i>Very well</i>																			1
	<i>Fairly well</i>																			2
	<i>A little</i>																			3
	<i>Cannot write</i>																			4
4.	Which Languages can you read in well enough to understand things which are printed in newspaper articles?	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	

## APPENDIX B: Teacher Questionnaire

**PREFACE: The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about teachers' knowledge and understanding of the Language- in-Education Policy and how it enables teacher professionalism.**  
**The information you supply will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only.**

### PART A

#### TEACHER/ EDUCATOR INFORMATION

PLEASE FILL IN OR CROSS (X) THE APPROPRIATE OPTION

**1. Designation of educator**

Teacher level 1	Head of Department	Deputy principal	Principal	Other (specify)

**2. Main teaching subject/ Learning area**

Maths/ Science/Tech	Life Orientation	Languages/Arts & Culture	EMS/	Social Sciences/	Foundation Phase

**3. Age**

Under 25	25-29	30-34	35-40	40-49	50-59

**4. Teaching experience in years**

0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20

**5. Gender**

Male	Female

**6. Formal qualifications (completed)**

2 year diploma only	3 year diploma only	Degree only	Degree and diploma	More than one degree	Other (specify)

**7. Type of school**

Primary	Secondary	Combined

**8. Description of the school**

Urban	Rural	Not sure

**PART B**

The “Language-in-Education” Policy came into effect in 1997.

The questions below inquire about the information available to you about the Language-in-Education Policy.

PLEASE FILL IN OR CROSS (X) THE APPROPRIATE OPTION.

1. Are you aware of the policy document on Language-in-Education?

Yes	No

2. Was the document made available to all educators in your school?

Yes	No

3. If yes, please state how?

Workshop	Circular	Conference	Other (specify)

4. Do you have a personal copy of this policy document on Language-in-Education?

Yes	No

5. How did you first become aware of the policy on Language-in-Education?

I read the policy document	
I was told by the Head of Department	
I was told by the principal	
I was invited to a workshop	
It was discussed at a staff meeting	
Other (specify)	

6. Does your school have a school language policy?

Yes	No

**PART C**

**PART C RELATES TO THE LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY**

	Yes	No	Not sure
1. It is easy to understand			
2. It provides clear guidelines for implementation			
3. It allows for flexible implementation			



**PART D**

**What are your views about each of the following statements with regard to the policy?**

**PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. The policy must be viewed in relation to our larger agenda of reconstruction and development					
2. The policy provides the pedagogical basis for our education and training system					
3. One of the principal aims of the policy is to promote multilingualism					
4. The policy is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and region					
5. The policy assumes that the learning of more than one language should be the general principle in our society					
6. The home language of the learner is to be maintained while providing access to acquisition of additional languages					
7. The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual					
8. The policy aims to develop and promote all 11 official languages.					
9. Every school should have a school language policy					
10. The SGB will determine the language policy of the school and stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism					
11. The parent exercises the minor learner's language rights on behalf of the minor learner					
12. Teachers have no problems implementing the Language- in- Education policy					
13. The Language-in-Education Policy creates anxiety and stress amongst educators, including myself					
14. All schools shall offer at least one approved language as a subject in Grade1 and Grade 2					
15. All schools shall offer at least two approved languages, of which at least one shall be an official language, from Grade 3 onwards					

**PART E**

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY THE LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY HAS BEEN INTRODUCED IN OUR SCHOOLS?**

Please write clearly.

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**PART F**

**WHAT OLD UNDERSTANDINGS AND BELIEFS DID YOU HAVE TO CHANGE WITH REGARD TO LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION?**

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**PART G**

**WHAT NEW UNDERSTANDINGS AND BELIEFS DID YOU ACQUIRE WITH REGARD TO THE LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY?**

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### PART H

**WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES BEING EXPERIENCED IN ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY IN SCHOOLS?**

Please write clearly.

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### PART I

**HOW CAN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY BE ENHANCED?**

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(Adapted from Hariparsad: 2004)

## **APPENDIX C: Teacher's Semi-Structured Interview Schedule**

1. What is your understanding of the Language-in-Education Policy?
2. Why do you think there was a need for a Language-in-Education Policy?
3. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy?
4. How does the policy position you, in other words, what do you see as your role?
5. How does this policy serve as a vital instrument in shaping your educational practice?
6. How do you see the relationship between the Language-in-Education Policy and the National Curriculum Statement?
7. What old beliefs and understandings did you have to change as a result of the Language –in-Education policy?
8. What new beliefs and understandings did you have to acquire as a result of the Language-in-Education policy?
9. What do you see as major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of the Language-in-Education Policy?
10. What do you see as major constraints or limitations for the successful implementation of the Language-in-Education Policy?
11. What are your suggestions for the effective understandings of this policy?
12. What are your suggestions for the effective implementation of this policy?

## APPENDIX D: Principal's Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. State the number of years you have served as a principal?

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2. What are the school's admission procedures with regard to language of learners and learner enrolment figures?

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3. What are the school's Languages policies of the past/future with regard to: the medium of instruction? Have there been any changes since 1994? If yes describe changes and reasons for these changes and persons responsible for making these changes. If no, explain reasons

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4. What are your views of mother-tongue as LoLT/subject in the curriculum?

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5. What languages are offered in your school?

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6. What are your views on the Implementation design of new policy and efforts to implement the new policy?

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7. What organizational issues/resource (staff, teaching material, etc.) have arisen since the implementation of the new policy?

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8. Does your school offer any language support programmes for teachers/learners?

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9. What is the community's attitude towards medium of instruction, languages offered?

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10. How are teachers supported to teach Language in your school?

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11. What is your vision for promoting multilingualism in your school?

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## APPENDIX E: School Governing Body Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. Status

Teacher representative	
Chairman	
Secretary	
Member	
Other	

2. Frequency of meetings

Once a term	
Once every two terms	
More than once a term	

3. Language/s of Meetings

English	
isiZulu	
isiNdebele	
Other	

4. Are parents/ members permitted to speak or write in their mother-tongue at your meetings?

Yes	
No	

If Yes, How do you negotiate meaning, at such meetings?

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5. Are you familiar with the broad Language-in-Education Policy of the Department of Education?

Yes	
No	

6. If Yes, What are your thoughts on the language policy in the context of this school?

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7. To your knowledge, does this school have a school language policy?

Yes	
No	

8. If yes, was the policy developed in consultation with the parents and the community?

Yes	
No	

Comment:

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9. Is the SGB hoping to propose such a policy in the future?

Yes	
No	

10. Have there been any requests for additive programmes to develop the language proficiency of learners?

Yes	
No	

Comment:

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11. If Yes, describe such programmes (language, formal/informal; timetable/management of such programmes)

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## APPENDIX F: Contextual information on the school

The observation checklist will be used in order to collect contextual information on the school for the purpose of compiling the school profile and providing the reader with a thick description of the schools in the study.

**To be completed by the researcher/principal in the school**

### PLEASE FILL IN OR PLACE A TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN

#### 1. Type of building

1. Building designed as school	
2. Prefab	
3. Teacher training college	
4. Other (specify)	

#### 2. School building

1. Number of blocks	
2. Number of storeys	

#### 3. Condition of school and furniture

	Type of structure: Specify (e.g., brick wall, tile roof, etc)	No maintenance needed	Need maintenance	Need maintenance & structural repair	Beyond repair
1. Roof					
2. Windows					
3. Doors					
4. Walls					
5. Furniture					
6. Floors					
7. Toilets					
8. Ceilings	Fitted	Not fitted			
9. Other (specify)					

#### 4. Number of toilets for staff

1. Male staff	
2. Female staff	
3. Out of order	



**5. Number of toilets for learners**

1. Males	
2. Females	
3. Out of order	

**6. Power and energy supply**

1. Wired & supplied with electricity	
2. Wired but not supplied with electricity	
3. Not wired and/or & no electricity available	
4. Generators	
5. Other (specify)	

**7. Overall condition of building**

Very weak (not suitable for occupation)	Weak (structure needs attention)	Needs paint & minor repairs	Good condition	Excellent, no foreseeable repairs

**8. Safety**

1. Building is completely fenced with security at the entrance	
2. Building is completely fenced without security at the entrance	
3. Building has been fenced but fence is damaged	
4. No fence	
5. Other (specify)	

**9. Office space**

	Adequate	Inadequate	None	Estimated shortfall number
1. Offices for management				
2. Offices for admin staff				

**10. Access roads**

	Good condition	Poor condition
1. Tar road		
2. Gravel road		

**11. Please provide a general description of the overall surroundings**

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**(Adapted from Hariparsad: 2004)**

## **APPENDIX G: Transcripts of selected interviews**

### **INTERVIEW ONE**

I am at Entabeni Primary School, speaking to the principal Mr Behari.

Good morning Mr Behari. Thank you for allowing me to talk to you this morning. I have a few questions for you on the Language-in-Education Policy which I hope will not take up too much of your time.

**Can you please tell me the number of years you served as principal?**

Yes 11 yrs.

**Can you tell me a little about your admission procedures and learner enrolment at your school especially with regard to the language of the learners?**

We accept all children that apply for admission to the school. I think what we have to note is that this is a very small school with one unit per grade from grade 1 to grade 7. So its not where we can offer diverse languages where we got for example two Grade 1's where we can offer different kinds of languages and so on. Also the other important thing we have to note is that the DoE in their human resource provision don't take into account especially in our cases where we have small schools, curriculum needs. The entire process of human resource provision is based on the total number of learners enrolled at the school. So they don't even cater for separate class units for example teacher for Grade 1 or teachers for Grade 2 or teacher for Grade 3. Then we end up with the situation of multi-grade classrooms. In the light of multi-grade classrooms and so on we need to cater then for diverse language groups and so on then it will be even much more difficult. Also another thing is we are a small school. When we get enrolment we wouldn't get 40 children enrolling for example isiNdebele. So at the end of the day when we look at all the learners at different learners enrolled at the school it is very difficult to get one homogenous group of 40 learners that we can put into classroom and say this is a isiNdebele language group. However, what we should indicate is that the 2 languages we offer is English and

isiZulu and those languages are in fact are the wishes of the parents that they are for exams. Most parents have the knowledge and parents are informed on admission that those are the languages we are able to offer.

**Coming back to the admission procedures if you get children that come from a home language that is different to that offered at your school is there any stipulation in your policy that you will admit or exclude these learners?**

There is no stipulation in our policy that would exclude learners based on any home languages or any discrimination regarding language whatsoever.

**Could you tell me a little bit about the language policies of the past in this school before 1994?**

Well prior to 1994, we offered 3 languages at this school namely, English, isiZulu and Afrikaans. With the changes in curriculum now especially with the introduction of Curriculum 2005 there wasn't a need for us to do 3 languages. Through discussions with SGB and broader parent committee it was decided that the school would choose English and isiZulu as the 2 languages that will be done, focusing mainly on isiZulu in Grades 1 and 2 and then introducing English more formally in Grade 3. We do some English in Grades 1 and 2 but no assessments are done. We focus on trying to consolidate isiZulu in Grades 1 and 2.

**In the past you offered English, isiZulu and Afrikaans. Could you tell me why you dropped Afrikaans and not any of the other 2 languages?**

I think the choice comes from the parent body and the community. The feeling was among the parents that if there is a need to choose from among the languages where 2 languages were needed, then they would choose English and isiZulu. isiZulu is the language of communication in the immediate surrounding in which we work. It is the general language of communication that's around here. English is the language of job opportunities and is more prevalent in this society. I think parents want the children to learn English. They also see it as the language of opportunity and it's the language of economics.

**Can you explain a little bit about being at a farm school and also about the language of opportunity that you have mentioned?**

Ja. I think because there is a migration of people moving away from rural to informal settlements and so on we find that they are clearly not exposed to English and find that English is the language that is more dominant elsewhere. I think that in our particular situation we do cater for many children that come from the informal areas as well. They are the children of parents that have grown up on the farm area but have moved to the informal settlements after leaving the jobs on the farm. Clearly they find that English is encountered more in their daily lives than probably others.

**Do you see any changes taking place in the future with regard to your language policy at this school?**

I don't. I really don't see any changes taking place simply based on the fact that we are not expecting large numbers of enrolments taking place. Noting that there is migration of people from the farm areas, we find that the enrolment is quite low. Therefore we would not expect a high enrolment.

**Could you tell me why parents in this area have opted for isiZulu as the African language in this school rather than isiNdebele, their home language?**

I think there is within this area that isiNdebele is strong and also I think the second language that comes into play is Tsonga and there is a scattering of other languages as well. When people meet from all the different language backgrounds there is one common language that is spoken and that is isiZulu. And I think what is the motivating factor for parents is that isiZulu is the common language in terms of the African languages in the area and that is why they want their children to learn isiZulu. We also find that within the high schools in the surrounding area isiNdebele is not the language that is offered at the high school as well. And that essentially is the reason why isiZulu is chosen by the parents.

**Do you think there is any particular reason why isiNdebele does not have the same status as isiZulu?**

I don't know whether I am qualified to make a judgement on that but clearly anecdotal and just an opinion on that matter the use of isiNdebele is not widespread. If you go to other provinces and other areas you will find that it is not very predominant. I think that within that context also that one would look at what I said previously about opportunity and so on. isiNdebele is noted as a geographical language. Therefore I think parents would not want to in any way disadvantage their children from the opportunities that exist should they be equipped with isiZulu.

**The majority of your Grade1 learners come from isiNdebele home language backgrounds. They speak isiNdebele in their homes and when they come to school they learn to read and write in isiZulu. How do you view that and what do you think some of the challenges that the teachers and learners find with regard to that?**

Yes I think it is a challenge where the educators are concerned more especially with the fact that they have to teach learners of isiNdebele to learn a new language. But I think history has shown us that over past years that if you want to introduce a new language you got to do it at a very early stage and doing this in Grade 1 is the best time to actually do that. It is easier to grasp to get to know a new language at an early age rather than a later age. So I think this is not something we must look at negatively or look at it as traumatic. If there is an openness and a willingness then children are able to learn isiZulu easily. Teachers obviously will have difficulty but I think history has shown us that over a period of time it does work. But I am not saying that its smooth sailing.

**What do think about the fact that at Grade 4 level the learners in Foundation Level are switching to English as LoLT and isiZulu becomes one of the subjects instead of LoLT? What are your views about this transition for teachers and learners?**

I think it is a difficult thing that the children and the teachers go through but I think we must also look at it in terms of the fact that like I said parents want their children to be able to speak in English and again it is important for us to introduce it at a very early age. Hence, the system we have is that we introduce English in Grade 1 and Grade 2 at a much more informal level and formalize it more in Grade 3 and try to bring it in as a language of learning and teaching in Grade 4. What I think is more difficult besides introducing English in Grade 4 is that learners do not speak English at home.

**In the apartheid era mother-tongue instruction was viewed negatively and in this current democracy the emphasis is on mother-tongue education. What do you think are the views of your community with regard to mother-tongue education for the learners?**

I think mother-tongue is important for the parents in the community. But I think what they also want is to function within the broader community. I think issues of poverty, issues of unemployment these are things people grapple with. In a scenario where learners get to a mother-tongue isiNdebele Primary School and high school and then go out into the big world – out there are very few institutions that I know that would offer you any kind of degrees and so on in isiNdebele. There are very few job opportunities that one would get where you have isiNdebele being the predominant language. So I think where the mother-tongue is important, the languages that the parents have chosen are languages so that they can live a life according to their wishes.

**What languages do you offer in your school?**

English and isiZulu.

**What do you think about the Language-in-Education policy, its design and its intentions?**

I think the policy is there to support the constitution of the country and to allow freedom of choice when it comes to languages. And I think within our community there has been the freedom of choice. isiZulu has been chosen. I think we should not be in any way deciding for parents on what languages should be taught. So I think the whole language policy and the issue of choice is very important and that we should allow the parents to choose whatever language they wish.

**Are you saying that parents' choice is important but at the same time you also saying that isiZulu has a higher status than isiNdebele?**

I think what I am saying is that isiZulu is the predominant language. What I am saying is that we meet 2 people currently outside the shop. One may be staying on the farm on this side where they are predominantly Tsonga speaking and across the road people there are traditionally from a long period of time isiNdebele. They need to communicate in isiZulu which is a common language. And so I am not going to make any judgements regarding the status of the languages. As a last statement at a practical level which is more pragmatic approach towards languages, I would say that isiZulu is more pragmatic choice possibly rather than to give status to any and of the languages.

**In view of the policy all languages are equal in status so would you consider that isiNdebele and isiZulu are equal in status?**

Definitely, it would be equal in status. Yes.

**So if the languages are equal in status are we not in a sense then privileging one over the other by having formal teaching and learning in one and not in the other?**

Well, if there is equal status and if we are supposed to be granting each and every child the opportunity of learning in their mother-tongue, then I think staff provisioning and all those things have to come in. On a pragmatic or practical level, I think the cost



factor in providing learners with their choice of their home language instruction in every school across the board in South Africa is virtually impossible. Having said that I must indicate that the question that comes in that we are supposing that the child speaking isiNdebele at home the parents will be choosing isiNdebele. I think we mustn't make that mistake. The parents might just decide to choose another language. I think broader into the bigger South African context. Look at learners moving away from township schools to town schools where no mother-tongue instruction is done that's all I think you will find that research will show that predominantly in town schools the language spoken are English and Afrikaans where predominantly the children have an African language background. So I think broader context where parents are choosing languages according to what they think the future is and so on.

**Coming back to the issue of English and Afrikaans why do you think that the town schools are still offering English and Afrikaans?**

I haven't been in a town school for a very long time now. I don't think I can give you scientific reasons for that but precisely those were the languages that the schools have offered and they haven't moved from those languages.

**What is your vision for multilingualism for your school?**

We do offer English and isiZulu. I think those are the languages we see moving forward as the school moves on. Yes. I think what we are also trying to see and what the parents have been trying to tell us over the years is that they would like to see the children even stronger in English more especially with the fact that children go to neighbouring high schools. The languages in which they write the matric exams in these particular schools is English and the languages in which they write the other learning areas like mathematic, social sciences and so on is also English. So the parents are looking forward to strengthening English more than anything else. So from our side we are trying to strengthen English as well.

Mr Behari, thank you for your time. I really appreciate the time you have taken to answer the questions around the language policy. Thank you.

## **INTERVIEW TWO**

I am in the principal's office at Nottinghill Primary School speaking with the principal Mr Rathilall. Thank you, Mr Rathilall for allowing me to interview you today. Perhaps we can start off by asking you about your own language history.

### **What is your language background?**

Basically English is my background. I speak English at home, but I don't have a problem with Afrikaans as well. I am quite fluent because the community I come from has a lot of Afrikaans. And obviously we did Afrikaans as a second language in school. I am quite okay with isiZulu as well, and a bit of Sesotho.

### **The Language-in-Education Policy came into effect in 1997. How did you get to know about this policy?**

Basically all the circulars and documents we receive at school and well sometimes in the media you know you just read, you know there is an over view of policy and stuff but all information comes to school via circulars and even the gazettes that come from the government and all policy documents.

### **Were the teachers in this school informed about the policy?**

Yes definitely

### **How were they informed?**

Well basically all the circulars are read and whatever needs to be discussed with the staff is discussed at staff meetings. Other policy documents are brought to the attention of the educators and available for them in the office to read and they are well aware of it.

**Did an implementation plan accompany the policy?**

Not necessarily an implementation plan but obviously as a role player including the SGB, educators and we all got together and we decided on the language policy of the school and when I arrived at the school, there was a policy set, we just improved on it over the years.

**What are your personal views about the LIEP?**

You see if I look at where I am at the moment, from my experience, and just forgetting about the policy as such, while I favour mother-tongue for learners, in our school the law is English, but I know learners will do better if they use their mother-tongue.

**When did the school decide that English should be the LoLT?**

When I arrived here, it was already the LoLT and whenever we consulted on the issue all the role players were happy that it remained that way.

**What are your views then on mother-tongue instruction?**

I actually favour mother-tongue instruction. I am a strong believer of it, I believe- most of the learners in underdeveloped areas, rural areas especially the mother-tongue benefits, definitely.

**In view of what you are saying about mother-tongue instruction, are there any plans to promote mother-tongue instruction in this school?**

No, no plans in this school in fact our plans are basically we are promoting English more than anything. We try to, you know, use bridging programmes, where we get the learners to improve their English. So we are really doing nothing much as isiZulu is the first language at school, but other than that we promote English quite a bit.

**Is isiZulu the first language?**

Yes we offer it at first language and the additional language is English, but the LoLT from Grade 4 to Grade to 7 is English.

**What is the LoLT in the Foundation Phase?**

That is isiZulu

**What is the language profile of most of your learners in this school?**

Well you see, the community, is a isiNdebele speaking but we've got 209 learners in school and I must say there is a big spread of many languages: some Sotho speaking, most isiNdebele speaking, some isiZulu speaking, some Pedi speaking.

**Why was the decision made to include isiZulu as one of your languages instead of isiNdebele?**

When I arrived at the school they were doing isiZulu and I don't know who made that decision, but whenever we consulted on the policy again, the people, the role players were happy with isiZulu. I believe that isiNdebele is very close to isiZulu and for whatever reason I wouldn't be able to comment on that when I arrived here, it was isiZulu and its been like that since.

**Are there any plans for the future in terms of increasing the number of languages at the school or to have isiNdebele as one of the languages in the school?**

No. No plans whatsoever. In fact, in terms of language we are on a campaign promoting English as far as possible because like we say the learners especially grades 4 to 7 they do have difficulty basically in all aspects of English, reading, listening, speaking, so we are trying to improve that and we are promoting that and we also believe that because the law from grade 4 to 7 is English, if their English improves then obviously you know they will perform better in the class.

**One of the aspects of the Language-in-Education Policy speaks to the concept of, additive multilingualism where the child's home language is maintained throughout learning and teaching while other languages are added. What is your view about that?**

In our situation, with reference to our school, it's going to be virtually impossible, because like I said, you've got to teach them from basically all 11 languages because I know the background of some of the learners here. Everybody speaks different languages. So you know it's going to be very difficult to cater for them in our school. You know, with multi-grade classrooms it is quite a problem at our school.

**What do you see as a bigger challenge in terms of implementing multilingualism and the language policy?**

I must say at this stage I don't see us implementing multilingualism. The way we are progressing I am quiet happy with it in terms of the two languages, its-until we can master the second language at which language our learners are still not at the level we want them to be and we are satisfied that learners are now like fluent in English then we can start considering a third language. Until then I have a strong opinion that we should not even consider a third language at our school, until we can do better with a second language.

isiZulu is the first language that learners are all comfortable with it, irrespective of the background, but I strongly believe that and we are working on a programme like I said English to bridge the gap and you know to make the learners fluent.

**What is the community's attitude towards the LoLT and the languages offered at the school?**

The community is very happy. At our parents' meetings they express their satisfaction. In fact they are also happy in some ways their children are learning to speak English, write English and read English. They don't have a problem with the mother-tongue at home, you know, it would seem that they are all comfortable with their mother-tongue in their forms of communication and our learners come from communities where they

are not exposed to reading or any form of media, you know that type of thing, there is no form of media. They are comfortable at home with the way that they speak and they seem to be successful in that. And when the learners are at school besides what the normal curriculum offers I think when they see the learners improving the level of English then they are satisfied, they believe that they would be able to compete, to be competitive in the outside world maybe just walk into the bank or into post office they can communicate with people.

**What are your views about the design of the new policy and your efforts to implement the policy?**

I'd be very honest, I haven't really looked deeply into it. Roughly I got an idea of what it is, you know, I understand a bit of it from the outside. It talks about multilingualism. I'm in favour of it. because even with us when we got to various places, different provinces, its good for learners. Except at this point I talk on behalf of our school and alone its not possible at our school at the moment. I cant see it working in the next two or three years, the multilingualism thing.

**Do you have language support programmes at your school?**

No, no nothing really in fact our own programme for English we try to bridge the gap where we do spelling test and dictations by promoting the reading. We do all those things, its an the internal thing to promote a culture of learning English. We get as far as possible for learners to read, because they haven't been learning English, and sentence construction is very poor up to grade 7. So it is our policy to improve it.

**How are teachers supported to teach through the language of teaching and learning?**

Basically we don't even have a management or anything really or support structures; we've got a school based support team that looks at all aspects of teaching and learning at the school. The educators will attend workshops that are being offered by the district, department workshops. We've got one teacher basically teaching English, grade 4 to 7 so we don't really have meetings. So it's me as the supervisor who

advises, guides, and recommends. So that is the only form of support that there is in our school and obviously the facilitator from the district, gives some support.

**What is your vision of promoting multilingualism at your school?**

We don't have a vision as such. I just look at it like the future like I am saying, I will be happy the day I can tell you our learners are competent enough in English, where they can read, write and talk English properly. Once we overcome that, it becomes a community issue I think. You know it's not just me or my vision, I'll be happy when I see that isiZulu and English, they are doing well with that two there, We can throw it to the community and say let's now look at a third language, you know of which there are different communities, different cultures, you know and then open it up to the community and say we are now looking at promoting a third language at school, but I will only do that when I feel that we have reached that stage, have overcome that English barrier.

Mr Rathilall, thank you very much I really appreciate your time in answering my questions.

### **INTERVIEW THREE**

I am speaking to Zanele at Entabeni Primary School. Zanele, thank you for allowing me to talk to you this morning. I am going to ask you a few questions on your personal views on the Language-in-Education Policy.

#### **What is your understanding of the Language-in-Education Policy?**

The Language-in-Education Policy means that all languages have to be recognizable (recognized) in education as well as in the classroom and teaching situation.

#### **Do you think there was a need for the introduction of such a policy in this country?**

There was a great need because all the languages were not catered for. Only few were recognisable (recognized). The policy makes everybody comfortable by using his or her own language in teaching.

#### **How do you think that policy is going to work in your school?**

It will work in the manner that all the languages will be introduced in the classroom even if they are not all teaching and learning languages but will be used to explain to the learners in their own language, their home language in order to understand better.

#### **So are you saying that although the LoLT is isiZulu, you as a teacher will make use of perhaps isiNdebele or Tsonga to help the children make meaning of their learning?**

Yes to help the children to understand we have to be flexible in the use all the languages. You can use any language so that they will be able to grasp what is being taught.



**What do you think are the main goals of the policy?**

The main goal of the policy is to let all the languages be recognizable and be equal as the government or the democratic country allows it. With all languages being equal as we have 11 official languages in South Africa, we will cater for them all.

**Why has your school chosen isiZulu and English and not isiNdebele as and language subject or LoLT since most of your learners are from isiNdebele homes?**

The parents most of them are speaking isiZulu irrespective of their mother-tongue even in their homes. So they decided that isiZulu because it is a commonly used language in the area the learners must be taught in isiZulu.

**What are the challenges you think the Grade 1 teachers and learners have because the learners come from isiNdebele homes they have to be taught through the medium of isiZulu and the teachers are not all isiZulu first language speakers themselves?**

I think it's easier for all the learners because they are still young and flexible and even in their homes they speak isiZulu no matter they are Ndebele. isiZulu is the language the learners are exposed to and the educators, most of our educators in our school are trained in isiZulu. Not a problem for them isiZulu.

**So are you saying that all your educators have trained in isiZulu at universities or colleges and that all their teaching and learning was done in isiZulu?**

Especially most of the Foundation Phase teachers have trained in isiZulu and as well as other learning areas. They know it very well, isiZulu.

**Do you see a relationship between the LiEP and the NCS?**

I think there is no difference. They work hand in hand because the NCS also states that there must be all the languages in our school. Now the language policy stresses that we have to use all the languages in our teaching.

**What old beliefs and understandings did you have to change as a result of the Language-in-Education Policy?**

There is a lot for example like when you are teaching let's say Natural Sciences. In the old belief because it was in English we weren't allowed to diverge to explain the English in isiZulu or isiNdebele. It was strictly English. Now it is easier because of the policy I have got the right to diverge or to code switch to the language that I have to use for learner's sake.

**What new beliefs and understandings did you acquire as a result of the language policy?**

To learn many languages to be flexible as we can and we have to learn many languages as we can based on our government's and country's policy of multilingualism and a democracy. So we have to prepare for the world as we can.

**What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of the policy?**

I see this country becoming at last a rainbow nation as they are planning to be and most especially becoming on our side because in the olden days when I was at school it was difficult to study because I have had to memorise Afrikaans not knowing what the meaning of Afrikaans or for even other learning area if I don't understand the term it was difficult for me to have even the dictionary. I had to memorise. The learning was meaningless. It was just memory. But now everything is clear.

**What are the opportunities you think that this policy has brought so that it can be implemented successfully?**

The flexibility and the languages as well as the meaningfulness of education. For the success it won't be easily or recognizable. It will take longer period. But at the end of the day we'll see our country, most of the people will be educated. Rather than now

most of the people are illiterate because of those type of languages because it was difficult to learn in those days.

**What do you see as the major limitation of constraints or problems?**

For now we are finding out that at our schools we have few numbers of the learners of a certain language so its difficult for the educators maybe to start the class for that specific languages because of financial constraints, manpower and so forth but all in all if we could switch things could almost work well although there are those limitations.

**What are your suggestions for the effective implementation and understanding of the policy?**

The understanding of the policy to me I understand it very well and also in the application, I apply it in my daily life and specifically in the school situation mainly. For I think if we can implement it the way the policy states everything is fine.

**What kind of support do you need in implementing this policy?**

The support I need is just the community itself. They must know that by using one language doesn't mean that there is discrimination. They have to understand that the government has to use all the languages because others also have got that problem of not understanding why we are using the language which we are using at our schools. It may be they can get that explanation that things cannot work well overnight. It does take time until we get a curriculum where we can use mainly our home language.

**Could you tell me what are your views about multilingualism?**

I think in the classroom situation I think that multilingualism we can use it by explaining to learners who get a problem. All in all if we can expect that the policy can be implemented fully by curriculum being in my home language each and every individual home language, I think it would be difficult because you have to look

broader. In financial constraints the government cannot maybe get all the resources to publish all our languages for teaching and learning.

**Why do you think learners need to learn English?**

English is a international language. It's not only for South African people. So it is wise for us also to adopt English so that we'll be globally linked.

**Do you think that any African language can be used as a global language?**

I don't support the policy because my Zulu for example is not there in America, it's not there in France. For if I learn everything in isiZulu, I'll have a problem in linking with the standard of the world.

**So do you prefer English over and above Zulu or would your prefer to have both the languages treated equally?**

I think it's good when they are taught equally because my home language will be the best in my country. I can promote also if I am going to other countries because I'll have that full knowledge of it but English must be there.

Thank you, Zanele, for your time.

## **INTERVIEW FOUR**

I am talking to Thembi from Nottinghill Primary School. Good morning, Thembi. Thank you for allowing me to ask a few questions.

### **What is your understanding of the Language-in-Education Policy?**

I think it allows learners to be taught in their mother-tongue.

### **What do you think about mother-tongue instruction?**

I think it's good because learners will grasp things easily if they use their mother-tongue.

### **What are your views about teaching English?**

Teaching English is okay. I think English is an international language because if you don't know English you can't fit in the society.

### **Was there a need for the Language-in-Education Policy?**

Yes there was a need because it becomes easier for the learners if they are taught in that language.

### **What do you think is the main goal of this policy?**

I think it was to help learners in order to succeed easily when they are being taught.

### **How do you see the relationship between the Language-in-Education Policy and the NCS?**

I think they work hand in hand but the problem is when it comes to the smaller grades like Grade 4 it becomes difficult for them to grasp things and there are many Learning Areas there. Because they are from the Foundation Phase where they did 3 Learning

Areas but when they go to Grade 4 they introduced to a new language and learning areas are many there. So there's a problem there.

**How do you think we can overcome that kind of problem?**

I think its good to introduce this mother-tongue teaching.

**What old beliefs and understanding did you have to change when this new policy was introduced?**

That children can only be taught in English. They cannot be taught in their mother-tongue. That's what we believed.

**What are the new understandings did you acquire with the introduction of this policy?**

I think it helps a lot because learners will now be able to be acquainted to different languages and including their mother-tongue they will be able to grasp things when they are being taught.

**What major possibilities and opportunities you see for the successful implementation of this policy?**

I think they will produce learners that will succeed in life because they won't have the burden of being taught in English only.

**What do you see as the major limitations, problems or constraints to the successful implementation of this policy?**

I think the constraints are that if the child is only taught in that language it will be difficult to grasp things in English. He must be taught both in English and in his mother-tongue.

**What suggestions do you have for the effective implementation and understanding of the policy?**

I think it must be introduced from Grade1 up to Grade 7 in other words it must be taught from G1 to G7 but not forgetting that English must also be taught.

**How do you think we can do this? What kind of support you think teachers need for this?**

I think they need to have more teachers. In the case of our school its going to be very difficult to implement because we are understaffed. So if they must employ more teachers so that teachers can teach in English and others can teach in the children's mother-tongue.

Thank you, Thembi for your time.

## **INTERVIEW FIVE**

I am speaking to Ann from Wesdorp Primary School

Thank you for allowing us to talk to you this morning.

### **What is your understanding of the Language-in-Education Policy?**

Like I understand it is that every child has the right to learn in his own language.

### **Why do you think there is a need for an education policy?**

I think because of our cultural diversity. We got a lot of cultures in our country and sometimes there are more of one culture in an area than another so we must always make room for those that differ from you. They also have the right even if there's 2 or 3 in a class the right to learn at his best in his own language.

### **In your opinion what are the main goals of the policy?**

I think the main goals is to better every child learning so that children with other languages that can't learn in their own languages.

### **How does this policy position you, in other words how do you see, what is your role in implementing this policy?**

I think my role first as an educator is to help the child to learn in his way in his language and it is not always possible because only English and Afrikaans speaking and really wish I could speak another language as well so that I could help him.

### **How does this policy serve as an instrument in shaping your practice as a teacher?**

When I first read the policy it got me thinking further. I have been thinking is there another way that I could teach



**Is there a relationship between the Language-in-Education Policy and the NCS?**

Yes. There is definitely a relationship because now NCS is in this way that every child can learn in his way. There is more than one way to teach a child.

**What new beliefs and understanding did you acquire as a result of the Language-in-Education policy?**

I didn't. I am a teacher for 20 yrs and I always believed that a child that is learning in its mother-tongue and that's the best way to learn.

**What do you see as major possibilities or opportunities for a successful implementation of the Language-in- Education policy?**

I think that it's possible if our teachers could maybe learn the basics of another language or that we teach English and Afrikaans and as a 3<sup>rd</sup> language that these children know.

**What do you think are the major constraints or limitations for the implementation of the policy?**

I think we as teachers are not equipped to do that here. You are equipped to teach children in your own language and maybe one extra but not 3, definitely not.

**What other suggestions do you have for an effective understanding and implementation of the policy?**

I think we must have workshops on this policy. I'm not sure everyone is aware of the policy. I am aware because I worked through it through our school language policy but I think that I have to have workshops and make my people aware of the urgency to maybe equip themselves with another language, the basic knowledge of another language. I think if you work with children everyday you immediately know that this is the basics if you can teach the child in his own language. Especially in the

Foundation Phase and even in the Intermediate Phase it is best for them to learn in the mother-tongue.

Thank you.

## **INTERVIEW SIX**

We are here at Entabeni Farm to interview David who is the governing body chairperson for Entabeni Primary School.

**David, could you tell me how long you have been on the governing body?**

Maybe 2 or 3 years now.

**Are you the chairperson?**

Yes.

**How often does the governing body have their meetings?**

Once a term.

**In what language are the meetings conducted?**

It's conducted in English and isiZulu.

**Are parents and members in the governing body permitted to speak and write in their mother-tongue at your meetings?**

Ja, actually we meet, actually we meet with the Zulu parents all the time and we can understand what they are talking about.

**What language is used in your governing body meetings?**

Zulu and English.

**If you use isiZulu how you do negotiate meaning to non isiZulu speakers?**

Somebody can translate it for them, so that they can understand what we are talking about.

**Are you familiar with the broad language and education policy of the department of education?**

Yes

**What are your thoughts of the implementation language policy with regards to your school?**

I think its okay because we taught isiZulu and English and actually like me I am Ndebele so I can understand what they are talking about, everything isiZulu I can understand.

**Does your school then have a school language policy?**

Yes.

**Was the policy developed in conjunction with the parents and the community?**

Yes.

**What is the general feeling about isiZulu and English in the community?**

It was okay.

**Have their been any request from the learners and from the community, for the learning of other languages?**

I think the most is the isiNdebele.

**What is the home language of the children?**

The most is isiNdebele.

**If isiNdebele is the most why has the governing body decided on English and isiZulu and not English and isiNdebele as LoLT?**

isiZulu is an easy language you can learn the children. You can understand what you can learn.

**How many languages do you speak?**

Me. I can speak English, Afrikaans, Zulu and isiNdebele.

**So you speak four languages?**

Four languages.

**Would you like your children learn four languages?**

I like you must learn more languages.

**Are you thinking of proposing that the school introduce other languages?**

I like isiNdebele, you can learn it.

**If isiNdebele is the home language of most of the children, why do you think the parents have not requested for isiNdebele programmes or for isiNdebele to be one of the languages of learning and teaching at Entabeni?**

It will be just like these languages isiZulu and English. In Entabeni now you can change it to improve you learn isiNdebele but you must first talk about the community

and the parents wish, I must testing, must vote how many parents want their language isiNdebele.

**Why do you think the parents prefer their children to learn isiZulu and English?**

There's isiZulu can-is easy language to and English is an easy language to understand each other. Every time you know, cos, we never using isiNdebele.

**In terms of culture is there a difference between isiZulu and isiNdebele?**

Little bit it is different, but not so much.

**Do children learn isiNdebele at home?**

Ja, they can talk isiNdebele at home. They can learn isiNdebele at home.

**Being an isiNdebele speaking person did you learn isiNdebele at your school?**

No.

**Would you like your children to learn isiNdebele at school?**

Yes, at school isiNdebele.

**What do you think we have to do if we have to get your child to learn isiNdebele at school? What do you think we need in terms of resources?**

I think, I think we can improve ourselves to make it learn everybody, every Ndebele must talk isiNdebele.

**Do you think the teachers can teach isiNdebele?**

If that teacher is got a certificate of isiNdebele, they can teach isiNdebele.

**Supposing there is no teacher in Entabeni with that qualification, what will we have to do if we have to start teaching isiNdebele at, at school?**

We must try to get that qualification, a teacher than can teach another teacher how isiNdebele is working.

Thank you, David.

## APPENDIX H: Letter – Ethical Clearance



UMnyango WezeMfundo  
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto  
Departement van Onderwys

Date:	15 November 2005
Name of Researcher:	Jennifer Joshua
Address of Researcher:	25 Jasmin
	Timbavati Street
	Moreleta Park
Telephone Number:	(012) 9974862
Fax Number:	(012) 3244484
Research Topic:	A study of the implementation of the Language-in-Education Policy in rural schools
Number and type of schools:	30 Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Gauteng North

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

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

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

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



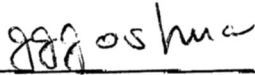
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort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

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

Kind regards,



ALBERT CHANEE  
ACTING DIVISIONAL MANAGER: OFSTED

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	21 November 2005