

**Grade Four Teachers' Language Attitudes and Lived  
Teaching Experiences in KwaZulu-Natal Schools,  
South Africa**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work. All the work that is not mine has been acknowledged through referencing and citation using APA 6th referencing style. This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Educational Psychology) in the College of Humanities, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

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## DEDICATION

*I dedicate this thesis to my late grandmother (Matilda Mwesi), grandfather (Ndukuzempi John Mwesi) and my mom (Catherine Makhosazana Mwesi) for their undying love and support, their sacrifice for nurturing me to be the person I am today. They have sacrificed everything from nothing to give me education. May your souls rest in peace and may God the almighty endow them with everlasting peace and joy in Him.*

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## **Abstract**

The language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in South African primary schools poses a threat to quality teaching and learning, more importantly, access to the curriculum knowledge by African learners, particularly at Grade Four level. The argument is that the use of African languages to teach African children enables the alignment of the learners' worldviews and African ways of knowing which allows them full access to knowledge. The purpose of this study is to explore Grade Four teachers' language attitudes and their lived experiences in managing the language transition taking place at Grade Four. In addition, the study aims to develop a teacher-language-attitude questionnaire and a Worldview Based Mother Tongue Educational Model that will enable the meeting of the minds of teachers and learners using the mother tongue. The researcher used a mixed methods approach to interrogate the phenomenon of study. To investigate teachers' attitudes the researcher used a survey, and explored their lived experiences in managing the language change at Grade Four level, using five focus group interviews. The sample for the survey constituted of 400 respondents and five focus groups consisting of 20 Grade Four teachers in total, selected from semi-rural and urban schools within the Pinetown and UMgungundlovu districts. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was used to analyse data from the survey and thematic analysis was employed to analyse data from the focus group discussions. The overall findings point out that the majority of Grade Four teachers are struggling to teach most African learners at Grade Four level using English as LoLT, and prefer the use of African languages as language of learning and teaching. The main conclusion of the study is that when the language of learning and teaching

is the mother tongue of both the teacher and the learner, it allows the meeting of their minds. In the process, teachers explain better and learners understand better. Hence, African learners in using their mother tongue as LoLT get full access to knowledge.

***Keywords:*** *language of learning and teaching; worldviews; language attitudes; African languages; access to knowledge*

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## Acronyms

<b>ANA</b>	Annual National Assessment
<b>BICS</b>	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
<b>CALP</b>	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
<b>CAPS</b>	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
<b>CPTD</b>	Continued Professional Teacher Development
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>EMIS</b>	Educational Management Information System
<b>ESL</b>	English Second Language
<b>FAL</b>	Second language
<b>FG</b>	Focus Group
<b>HOD</b>	Head of Departments
<b>IIAP</b>	Incremental Introduction of African Languages
<b>IPET</b>	Initial Professional Education of Teachers
<b>LAD</b>	Language Acquisition Device
<b>L1</b>	First Language
<b>L2</b>	Second Language
<b>LoLT</b>	Language of Learning and Teaching
<b>MTB-MLE</b>	Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education
<b>LiEP</b>	Language in Education Policy
<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
<b>PSU</b>	Primary Sampling Unit
<b>SASA</b>	South African Schools Act
<b>SGB</b>	School-Governing Bodies

<b>SSU</b>	Secondary Sampling Unit
<b>WB-MTEM</b>	Worldview Based Mother Tongue Education Model
<b>ZPD</b>	Zone of Proximal Development

# CHAPTER ONE

## CONTEXTUAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

### Introduction

Many countries of the world are multilingual (Webb, 1999; Canagarajah & Ashraf, 2013; Rogers, 2014; Mehmedbegovic, 2016; Mufwene, 2017), which means that different social and cultural groups, within a given territory, communicate using multiple languages. South Africa is one of these multilingual countries. The multiplicity of languages within a particular territory has a substantial impact on the country's language in education policy (Alexander, 2011; Ansah & Agyeman, 2015; Bubikova-Moan, 2017; Groff, 2017). The South African language in education policy promotes additive bilingualism ; that is, the teaching of mother tongue comes first, and it is followed by the introduction of an additional language (Sailors, Hoffman, Pearson, Beretvas, & Matthee, 2010). In South Africa, mother tongue instruction takes place from <sup>1</sup>Grade R to Grade Three. It is likely that at this level learners are at the early stages of mastering their mother tongue language. Moreover, the language in education policy does not give clear guideline on how additive bilingualism should be implemented in terms of the duration of mother tongue education and the transition to English as LoLT. At Grade Four, the majority of English second language learners make a transition to English as a dominant mode of instruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Grade R is a reception year. Learners in this grade are between the ages 5 years to 6 years.



Most language researchers in South Africa have indicated that English, as a language of learning and teaching, is a serious educational obstacle for the education of most English second language learners (Heugh, 2002; Figone, 2012; Plüddemann, 2015; Sibanda, 2017), more particularly at Grade Four and subsequent years of learning. At the heart of the problem is that the majority of Grade Four English second language (ESL) learners have not acquired the necessary English language proficiency to use it for learning. The above language obstacle is conceptualized within Cummins (1981) model as the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) are the prerequisite for effective language communication, while cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) is necessary for academic learning and abstract thought. BICS in this context refers to activities that are not cognitively demanding, for example, face-to-face conversation or written directions. CALP refers to activities that are cognitively challenging, for instance, demonstrations, projects where the learner plans, organises, predicts, analyses implements, synthesises, and evaluates the outcomes, making models and reading and writing in content areas.

Furthermore, Cummins (2001) illustrates that, while it takes English second language learners approximately two years to become competent in BICS, it takes them five to seven years to reach the same level as their first-language peers regarding CALP. In this study, Cummins' (1981) model is utilised in conjunction with sociocultural theory, in the sense that when learners have not developed the CALPS in the language of learning and teaching, it becomes difficult to use that language for learning and acquisition of skills. A detailed

discussion of sociocultural theory is provided in chapter 3. The main argument in this theory is that learning is a social activity, where language is central in skills development and knowledge construction. In the light of the above discussion international and national tests have revealed low literacy levels of learners in South African schools, which has led many the stakeholders in education to focus on literacy levels in terms of the BICS, CALPS and the centrality of language in education.

The Macro Indicator Trends in Schooling (Department of Basic Education, 2009) and Department of Basic Education (2011) noted failures within the system that are likely to relate to the language obstacle. The Report indicates that 9% of learners enrolled in schools in 2009 were repeating the grade they had been in, in the previous year. The latter statement indicates that the number of learners repeating their grade in South Africa is high.

Moreover, the poor performance of South African Grade Four learners on PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is evident in that they achieved the lowest mean scores compared to other participating countries (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, & Foy, 2007). The results of the pre-PIRLS 2011 (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012) new assessment prepared for countries that performed badly in the 2006 PIRLS, indicates, almost one out of three South African learners (29%) could not reach the low international benchmark. Most Grade Four learners (71%) reached the low international benchmark with 30% not able to attain more than the low

international benchmark. This indicates that the majority of South African learners have not acquired literacy skills required at their grade.

The report on the Annual National Assessments (ANA) of 2011 (Department of Basic Education, 2011) indicates that there is a strikingly low percentage of Grade Four to Six learners achieving a score at level 4 (70% and above) compared to a high proportion of learners achieving a score at level 3 and 4 (50 to 100%) in Grades 1-3. Thus, 63.8% Grade Four learners achieved level 1 (0-34%); 19.4% achieved level 2 (35-49%); 12.1% achieved level 3 (50-69%) and 4.8% achieved level 4 (70% and above). The significant drop in literacy performance at Grade Four, compared to Grades One to Three, implies that there are serious transitional challenges that need to be addressed. The drop in literacy in Grade Four coincides with the transition from mother tongue education, to the use of English as the dominant mode of learning and teaching.

In comparison, with English mother tongue speakers and English first language speakers no significant language shift occurs at Grade Four. Thus, English first language learners retain the language of learning and teaching used in the foundation phase through the schooling years. Such a situation has far reaching implications in education, in the sense that learner and teacher proficiency in the medium of learning and teaching largely determines academic success (Cummins, Mirza, & Stille, 2012). However, teachers' attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching have a bearing on the learners and on the learning outcomes. For example, Bertram (2014, p. 95) posits that the

perceptions and attitudes teachers have about the purpose of education inform the manner in which they teach within the classroom. Similarly, their language beliefs also might have some influence on the way in which they handle learners' language transition at Grade Four.

In line with the above discussion, it is imperative to note that teachers play a significant role in determining the degree of learners' academic success within the classroom. The latter is evident through teachers' motivational skills, attitude and expertise in a subject (Youn, 2016; Konig, Tachtsoglou, Lammerding, Strauss, Nold, & Rohde, 2017). Hence, teachers have the responsibility to take into consideration the learning needs of learners when they teach. In this study the researcher intended to explore Grade Four teachers' lived experiences in mitigating the transition from mother tongue education to English as language of learning and teaching (LoLT). In addition, the study also seeks to identify the attitudes teachers have towards the LoLT.

In addition, through exploring Grade Four teachers' lived experiences, the study is interested in the manner in which teachers accommodate learners' cultural and social resources in education, especially during the period of language transition at Grade Four. Cultural resourced in this context refer to the wealth of cultural knowledge learners bring to the classroom that is embedded in their cultural beliefs, and on their value systems. Social resources in this context refer to knowledge and skills that the society has identified as the basic requirements for survival in that environment. These social needs

might differ depending on the location of the school. Furthermore, it is likely that as learners change from mother tongue to English as LoLT their culture, which is embedded in their language, is affected. In this regard, it becomes a crucial factor to understand how teachers mediate learning, bearing in mind that learners within a sociocultural perspective are expected to be active participants in meaning construction (Vygotsky, 1962; Wertsch, 1994).

In addition, it is significant to understand what experiences are involved within the context of language change at Grade Four where teachers mediate learning using English as LoLT to teach the African child. In this regard, it is worth noting, Pithouse (2004) conceptualisation of teaching as an artistic experience, in the sense that, “teaching experiences that are deeply rewarding push us to engage in processes of self-discovery and awakening that can open new professional and personal paths and possibilities” (ibid, p.74). In this sense, ‘artistic experience’ (Dewey, 1934) are significant practises of everyday experiences. Without overlooking the learners’ experiences in the collaborative activity of learning, the study focusses mainly on teachers’ experiences. The reason is that the researcher intended to explore how teachers’ mediate learning in the context of language change. Hence, the sociocultural approach is the appropriate lens through which to explore teachers’ lived experiences during the period of learners’ transition from mother tongue to English as a LoLT.

Teaching methods used during the learning and teaching process play a vital role in shaping the experiences of all involved in educational programmes. They indicate how teachers scaffold knowledge and skills to facilitate deep learning within the classroom. Teaching methods can also indirectly point to the attitudes teachers have towards the learning process. To illustrate, a teacher who believes in indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) might be inclined to prepare activities that involve the knowledge and skills drawn from IKS, and implement teaching methods that will enhance the acquisition of that knowledge. In this sense, there is a possibility of the influence of attitudes in the choice of methods used and such methods will in turn have an impact on the interactions taking place during the learning and teaching process. Therefore, in line with the latter statement, another focus of the study is on Grade Four teachers' language attitudes and their lived experiences in managing the language transition. The aim was to explore how Grade Four teachers mitigate the language obstacles experienced by ESL learners as a result of the language change from mother tongue instruction to English LoLT.

### **Problem Statement**

Researchers have posited that the foundation phase is the most critical period in children's literacy development (Brunner, 2010; Sibanda, 2014; Sibanda & Baxen, 2016; Sibanda, 2017). For example, Sibanda (2017) argues for learners' attainment of the necessary linguistic skills in the home language as the basis for the development of a second language and its future use as LoLT and deliberate teaching for transfer in the foundation phase. However, Lebeso and

Mtapuri (2014, p. 85) observed that “the teaching of literacy in the home language is so superficial that there is no sound basis for learners to build on either to develop their language further or to transfer skills to English.”

The problem is, first, that most Grade Three learners in the Annual National Assessment (2011) performed poorly in the reading comprehension they took in their home languages. In this regard, the poor performance of learners in reading in their home language affects reading in the second language. The latter statement is based on the idea that learners need to master basic reading skills in the home language to be able to transfer these skills to the second language (Edele & Stanat, 2016). Hence, poor reading skills in Home language contributes to greater difficulty in reading English. Secondly, the results of the PIRLS and pre-PIRLS 2011 indicate a considerable further drop in literacy at Grade Four (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012). The decline in literacy coincides with the language transition occurring at Grade Four level for most ESL learners. Hence, it is likely that the majority of English second language learners in most South African schools at Grade Four have not reached the required English proficiency to use it as LoLT. For example, Sibanda (2017, p.4) states, “There is no basis to suggest that African-language speaking learners would have developed BICS in the Second language by the time they get to Grade Four.”

It is arguable that learners are not ready for the language transition at Grade Four. These learners begin Grade Four with limited English vocabulary,

resulting in serious communication challenges and low level of literacy skills. In this regard, English as LoLT becomes a barrier to learning and education. Language as a barrier to learning is highlighted by the Department of Basic Education (2011) through the argument brought forward by Webb (2003) supported by Alexander (2004), that there is a need for a shift from an English LoLT to a mother tongue-based education system. The reason for this change is that teaching learners in the language that they are not proficient in, results in minimal participation in classroom discussion; learners perform below par, experience feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem; high rates of failure and repetition are the usual outcomes, and learners are prone to dropping out from school.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The intent of this parallel convergence mixed methods study was to determine teachers' language attitudes towards the LoLT (English) as a tool to teach African learners and how teachers use LoLT to assist learners get access to knowledge that is transmitted through the curriculum. In addition, the study intended to explore teachers' lived experiences and interpretations related to the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four as they ensure that deep learning and sound teaching occur within the classroom. Moreover, the study aimed at developing a shorter version of Bekker's (2004) Language attitude questionnaire, which was the only available tool to South African researchers to explore language attitudes. Finally, it intended to develop a mother tongue based education model that will attempt to provide a framework



that will address the language problem existing within the South Africa education system to teach the African learners.

### **Objectives**

- To explore Grade Four teachers' attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching during the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four, in English second language schools,
- To explore Grade Four teachers' lived experiences and interpretations of managing the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four.
- To investigate the influence of age, qualification, subject taught and teaching experience on the language attitudes of Grade Four teachers.

### **The research questions**

- What are Grade Four teachers' attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching during the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four, in English second language schools?
- How do Grade Four teachers interpret their lived experiences in managing the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four?
- How do age, qualification, subject taught and teaching experience influence language attitudes of Grade Four teachers.

### **Hypothesis**

- Grade Four teachers prefer English as LoLT to teach African learners, teachers are well equipped to manage the language transition and demographic factors do not influence teachers' language attitudes.

## **Synopsis of the methodology**

The study employed a convergence parallel mixed methods research design, consisting of two parts. Part 1 used an objective, Likert-type questionnaire to collect quantitative data on the teachers' attitudes towards the LoLT. Part 2 used focus groups to gather qualitative information on the teachers' lived experiences and interpretations of the transition from Grade Three to Grade Four. In other words, quantitative data collection and analysis took place alongside qualitative data gathering and analysis. The researcher compared the results from the two approaches to achieve the overall findings of the study.

## **Assumptions**

The main assumption is that English second language learners, having spent four years in schooling from Grade R to Grade Three, are ready to make the transition from IsiZulu mother tongue education to English LoLT, but most importantly, Grade Four teachers are well equipped to manage the transition. The importance of the latter statement is that the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), in line with the Language in Education Policy (LiEP), acknowledge mother tongue as the basis for the acquisition of the second language.

The researcher anticipated that Grade Four teachers have adequate training in teaching methodologies using a second language. Teacher training, in this case,

is crucial since it determines how teachers are prepared or ready to manage language transition at Grade Four. Furthermore, learning is assumed to be a social activity, where a learner interacts with his/her environment during knowledge construction. Hence, teachers, parents, and peers are important knowledgeable others playing a significant role in the child's education. All the stakeholders in a learners' education are assumed to be well equipped with the necessary language skills to assist a Grade Four learner in making the language transition.

### **Scope and delimitations**

The study covers Pinetown and UMgungundlovu districts. The Pinetown district is located at EThekweni municipality and covers the northern part of this municipality. It consists of four circuits: Hammersdale, KwaMashu, Phoenix, and UMhlathuzana. Together these circuits are subdivided into 16 wards. The schools situated in this district comprise rural, semi-rural and urban schools. The location of UMgungundlovu district is at UMgungundlovu municipality and the district consist of three circuits: Camperdown, Midlands, and Vulindlela. The circuits together are subdivided into 20 wards. The school types in this district include rural, semi-rural, and urban schools. The study focuses on the attitudes and live experiences, of Grade Four teachers regardless of races, about how they manage the transition from IsiZulu mother-tongue education to English LoLT. The study covers the period between 2013 and 2016 when the Curriculum Statement and Assessment Policy (CAPS) was, as it still is, a working document in the South African education system.

The study is limited to teachers teaching English second language learners one or more subjects subject at Grade Four level within Pinetown and UMgungundlovu district. It does not include other districts in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The sampling process shaped this delimitation. The study does not cover all teachers teaching other grades as well as teachers teaching learners whose home language is either English or Afrikaans since such learners do not experience any language transition at Grade Four. They continue to be taught in their mother tongue until they complete the schooling system grades (i.e. Grade 12). Hence, the challenge of having to make a transition from mother tongue to English or Afrikaans as LoLT does not apply to them.

### **Significance of the study**

The study will contribute will contribute to our understanding of a major obstacle that affects South African education, its economy and the social needs of the society. Quality education is a necessity to alleviate the problem of poverty and job creation in communities and contribute to positive social change. The issue of language in education has been a thorny issue in education, globally and nationally in South Africa. More specifically, the South African context has a unique character regarding the history of language development from the apartheid education system before 1994 to the democratic dispensation during the post-apartheid era. English has retained its hegemony post the democratic era in South Africa (Figone, 2012; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2017), despite the current government's attempts through

the Constitution and the language in education policy to provide equity to all languages within the education system. Parents, teachers, and stakeholders in education still regard English as the key commercial language and a tool to get better jobs, without considering the pedagogical benefits that learners, teachers, parents and the country can get in using LoLT that is familiar to learners in educating the South African learner (De Klerk, 2002).

The study highlights the importance of the effective use of LoLT to promote quality education for all learners. The study may also help to uncover critical areas of teachers' language beliefs and methods used to promote language teaching. The knowledge produced in this study might contribute towards facilitating the provision of quality education for all. Further, the knowledge might assist the education system to produce employable and functional citizens that can participate meaningfully in the economy of the country and have the expertise to compete in the global economy.

Moreover, the findings of the study may assist in addressing the social wastage that comes about because of the failure of the education system (Legotlo, Maaga, & Sebege, 2002). The latter is an unintended outcome that has been widely documented as resulting from ineffective implementation of the language in education policy (Madiba & Mabiletja, 2008; Pluddemann, 2013). This generally results in high failure rates further up the educational ladder, school dropouts and poverty. There is an association between LoLT and failure rates in most South African school. The underlying reasons are that the

majority of learners are English second language speakers (English is not their mother tongue) and have low proficiency levels in LoLT. It is also important to note that addressing the literacy issues through the exploration of how LoLT influences learners' academic success and the manner in which teachers manage language transition in the early years of schooling will contribute towards finding a solution to the issues mentioned above.

### **Definition of key concepts**

- **Zone of Proximal Development**

“It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978).

- **Semiotic mediation**

It refers to the mediational function of language and other symbolic systems. Language as one of the cultural tools plays a major role in humanity's increasing control over nature's productive forces and the way in which human existence is transformed.

- **Internalisation**

Is conceived as the representational activity, a process that co-occurs in social practice and the human brain/mind (Steiner-John & Mahn, 1996). It refers to

the transformation of social activities into inner/mental activities within the individual.

- Inner speech

In the early years, the child gets instructions or converses with the capable others to regulate behaviour during outer speech. Eventually, the outer speech that was verbal is internalized and become silent, and is referred to as inner speech. The child uses inner speech to direct his/her behaviour. Vygotsky (1987) referred to the internalization of external speech as the development of thought.

- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language. It does not require much thought but only the use of words for basic communication.

- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

CALP refers to learners' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school

- The home language

The home language is the language that provides for proficiency in the basic interpersonal communication skills required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum. Emphasis is on the teaching of the listening, speaking, reading and writing

skills at this language level. This level also provides learners with a literary, aesthetic and imaginative ability that will give them the capacity to recreate, imagine, and empower their understandings of the world they live in.

- The second language (English)

This refers to a language that is not a mother tongue, but is used for communicative functions in society, that is, as a medium of learning and teaching in education. The curriculum should provide strong support for those learners who will use their second language (English) as a language of learning and teaching. It also assumes that learners do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school. The focus in the first few years of school is on developing learners' ability to understand and speak the language – basic interpersonal communication skills.

- The second language (L2):

The term refers to a language learned at school for formal educational purposes, and should not be confused with learners' second or other languages learned informally outside of school (Omoniyi, 2014).

### **Thesis outline**

The thesis has seven chapters arranged in sequential order:

**Chapter 1** presents the introduction to the study, the purpose of the study, research objectives and the research questions, the theoretical foundation of the



study, the assumption, scope and delimitation, limitations and the arrangements of chapters. Hence, the chapter provided the background to the study, leading to the following chapter that discusses the empirical review of the literature.

**Chapter 2** discusses the literature related to multilingualism, the language-in-education policy of South Africa, and debates on mother tongue education, second language acquisition and teachers' language attitudes with the view to provide the context of the study and point to the gaps that exist in literature with regard to the research topic of this study.

**Chapter 3** presents and discusses the study's theoretical frameworks, namely Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning and the theory of planned behaviour. It then sets out their relevance to the study as lenses to analyse the findings.

**Chapter 4** deals with the methodological approach of the study. The chapter begins by situating the study within a post-positivist paradigm, noting that there are elements of positivism in the use of quantitative survey, and within constructivist paradigms, and then moves on to discuss the mixed-methods research design employed. Further, the chapter discusses the convergent parallel research design and its application in the study. Moreover, it describes the research field and the quantitative and qualitative sampling procedures used in the study. Data collection methods and the data analysis procedure for both qualitative and quantitative data are discussed. Finally, the chapter presents ethical considerations for the study.

**Chapter 5** reports on the findings from the survey on Grade Four teachers' attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching, and focus group discussions on their lived experiences in managing language the transition from Grade Three to Grade Four. It also provides a discussion of the themes that emerged from both quantitative and qualitative data.

**Chapter 6** presents analysis and synthesis of the research findings from both quantitative and qualitative data in relation to the two themes, that is, African language preference as the language of learning and teaching and the challenges of African languages in education. It also discusses how the findings answer the research questions.

**Chapter 7** presents and discuss the Worldview mother tongue based model. It also provides conclusion for the entire thesis and make recommendations in line with the findings of the study.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter introduced the entire study by providing the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, objective, research questions, hypothesis, synopsis of methodology, assumptions, scope and delimitations, significance of the study, definition of key concepts and the thesis outline. The next chapter discusses literature underpinning the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE LITERATURE UNDERPINNING THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter adds on the background of the study provided in the previous chapter by explicating literature related to the phenomenon of study. In this chapter, the researcher argues that, in the African continent, more particularly nationally in South Africa, the hegemony of English in education is curtailing the use of indigenous languages as languages of learning and teaching. Importantly, the language transition is neglected in most African countries and this lack has an adverse impact on education. The following topics are covered in this chapter: the hegemony of English in education, multilingualism, language policy provision, literacy; South African schooling, Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), second language teaching methods, teacher education in South Africa, language attitudes in education, parental involvement in education and the conclusion.

#### **The hegemony of English in the African continent**

The language debate in education systems has been a matter of a long-standing consideration internationally and in South Africa (Heugh, 2005; Foley, 2009; Alexander, 2011; Figone, 2012). Most research on language in education centres on the hegemony of English in education around the globe. Language

policies have taken a stance against the domination of English language and have protected linguistic human rights of the indigenous and minority people, internationally and on the African continent. For example, these linguistic rights are enshrined in International Law and stated in the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people (United Nations, 2010). More specifically, Article 13 states that indigenous populations have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literature to further generations and to designate and retain their names for communities, places, and persons.

Furthermore, Article 14 emphasises that indigenous populations have the right to establish and control their education systems and institutions by providing education in their language, in a manner that is appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. However, it is evident that English is one of the most dominant languages in education in most countries of the world. Skutnabb-Kangas and MacCarty (2008), at the Symposium on Linguistic Rights, UN Geneva, pointed out the elimination of indigenous languages and the use of particular languages as killer languages. These are often dominant languages, taught in most cases in ways that are subtractive of or eliminating other languages. Subtractive teaching refers to the use of methods that subtract indigenous language from the child's repertoire, instead of adding to it. In other words, these methods do not promote the value that mother tongue teaching brings to education. In this sense, subtractive teaching destroys the basis for all knowledge, self-esteem, and confidence embedded in the mother tongue and promotes English as the dominant language. Hence, indigenous and minority

languages are assimilated by the dominant languages. I will select a few African countries that experienced the hegemony of English because of colonialism, to show the neglect of the transition issues in language of teaching and learning. These countries are Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and South Africa. The next section expands on the issues pertaining to the language of teaching and learning in these countries.

### **Ethiopian context**

Most of the relevant literature in Ethiopia has dedicated its focus to language policy formulation (Seidel & Moritz, 2007; Woldemariam & Lanza, 2014; Pflapsen, Benson, Chabbott, & Van Ginkel, 2015) and has paid less attention to concrete issues occurring within the classroom, such as teachers' lived experiences in teaching language and their attitude towards the language of learning and teaching. For instance, Bongale (2009) states that language policy in Ethiopia, which has been in place since 1994, accords high practical status to the mother tongue as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), especially in the primary level. There are three essential languages in Ethiopia, that is, Amharic, Oromia, and Tigrinya, of which Amharic play the role of lingua franca of the country. The latter literature does not give any account of teachers' experiences in using Amharic, Oromia, and Tigrinya to teach in primary schools within the Ethiopian context, nor of how they manage the switch from mother tongue to English medium of instruction.

Further, Bongale (2009) further elaborates that English is highly prized as a language that offers access to higher education and international opportunity (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Pennycook, 2017). In Ethiopia, Amharic is highly recognised as a national language. All three (Amharic, Oromia, and Tigrinya) languages according to this argument have a special and significant role in the Ethiopian education system. In this context, there is scanty literature in Ethiopia that talks to how teachers manage the language transition from mother tongue to English. Hence, most available literature focuses on policy and on government's attempts to address the situation by opting for a trilingual (multilingual) language policy, based on the mother tongue, Amharic, as a national language and English as an international language.

However, there is scanty literature that addresses teachers' attitudes and live experiences in teaching in the context of Ethiopia. For instance, Salteh and Sadeghi (2015) investigated what the English language writing teachers say and what they actual do in practice and found out that instances of mismatch were conspicuous. In line with the latter findings, Melketo (2012), in a study conducted at Walaita Sodo University, Ethiopia, found that teachers' classroom practice do not always match their beliefs. A closer analysis of these studies indicates that most of them are within the university context. None of these focussed on the primary school environment and on the period of transition from mother tongue instruction to English medium of instruction. Bongale (2009) alludes to the fact that English is highly prized as the language that offers access to university education and the job market.

It is interesting to note some of the studies, such as Stoddart (1986), focused on learners' experiences. These studies formed the basis for the development of the new language policy in Ethiopia. Stoddart (1986) found that learners had insufficient English to understand what their teachers said or what is written in their textbooks, let alone the ability to use sufficient English to participate actively in speaking and writing. Bachore (2015), in a study of the status and challenges of English in Ethiopia, found out that there are serious problems with English language proficiency for both teachers and learners in most subject areas, which confirms the findings of the following study. Dansamo (1981) investigated the problems related to the use of English as a LOLT in the junior schools of Ethiopia and found out that the main reason for learners' failure in the secondary schools is the inability to study through the medium of English and because of problems with English. Further, this study does not indicate how the teachers mediate learning during the period where learners are struggling with English, nor does it establish how the teachers feel about the language of instruction. Hence, the majority of the studies focus on how government endeavours to solve the language problem in education by opting for trilingualism in their language policy.

Moreover, (Skutnabb-Kangas & Mccathy, 2008) indicates that research studies done in Ethiopia indicate a vast improvement in educational output in this country as a result of the new language policy that allowed for mother tongue education in the first eight years of schooling and a strong teaching of the

second language as a subject. This article also falls short in giving us the information on how mother tongue has led to the improvement of the education; for example, in clarify what the role of teachers was in this process. In the following paragraph, the researcher will compare the Ethiopian condition to the situation in Zimbabwe.

### **Zimbabwean context**

The case of Zimbabwe slightly differs from the Ethiopian situation in the sense that most researchers have argued in favour of the use of indigenous languages as languages of teaching and learning (Thondhlana, 2002; Magwa, 2015). Some of the literature discusses the issue of how teachers teach using English as the medium of instruction. For example, Shizha (2012, p. 876), in a study exploring the effect of teaching science using a second language (English) in Zimbabwe, indicated as follows:

*Some teachers frustrate and silence learners' voices by preferring to use English-only discourse in their teaching. When it comes to using an indigenous language (Shona) as the only medium of instruction educational policies, attitudes of teachers and administrators were found to be barriers to the proposition. It is evident that there was a great concern by teachers and parents that after third grade, when learners have to switch to English, the children's low level of proficiency in English would make learning difficult and detract from whatever they would have learned so far in their mother tongue.*



Shizha (2012) does not touch on the issues related to how teachers navigate and mediate language transition. In this regard, an exploration of teachers' lived experience, their language attitudes and the interactions occurring within the classroom could have provided a better approach to the formulation of a trilingual language policy in Zimbabwe. This situation resulted in Zimbabwe having three national languages (Shona, Ndebele, and English) all of which enjoy prominence under Zimbabwe's current Educational Act (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987). The next paragraph looks at the situation in Tanzania as one of the African countries that could be regarded as advance in the quest of promoting African indigenous language in education.

### **Tanzanian context**

Tanzania is a multilingual country with 150 spoken ethnic languages. The country has achieved significant progress in language development. It has reached a level where most citizens speak one indigenous language, Kiswahili, as a unifying language. However, the level of dominance exerted by English in the country's education system is high (Tibategeza & Du Plessis, 2012; Mohr & Ochieng, 2017). Tibategeza and Du Plessis (2012) report that the country has adopted additive bilingual education where Kiswahili is the only language of education at the primary school level and English the only language of instruction at secondary and tertiary level. In this situation, a reader would expect to know about the lived experiences of teachers in the use of

Kiswahili and English, how English became a dominant language and what teachers' attitudes are towards the use of these languages in education.

Further, Tibategeza and Du Plessis (ibid, p.185) point out, "contrary to the initial idea of additive bilingual education, implementation has given rise to a subtractive system of bilingual education" where English is dominant over Kiswahili. In this regard, there is a gap in knowledge on how teachers mediate the language transition. In this regard, researchers continue to argue for the use of Kiswahili as the language of learning and teaching in Tanzania.

### **South African context**

South African, like most African countries that experienced colonialism by the British, retained English as an official national language and language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in education. Despite the good intentions of the language-in education policy to promote additive bi/multilingualism, the hegemony of English is evident. Researchers, for example (Scrase, 2004; Figone, 2012) report that some parents of ESL learners prefer their learners to be taught in English even in the early years. This situation is similar to that of Nigeria in the seminal 1966 Ife project [see Fafunwa (1974)].The preference of English over African is influenced by the history of the South African education system where the indigenous languages were regarded as inferior,

and English seen as the language of power and a gateway to better education and economic empowerment (United Nations, 2010).

In line with most African and international countries, South African research on language in education has produced scanty literature on teachers' language attitudes where most ESL learners experience the language change from mother tongue teaching to English medium of instruction. The focus of most language research in South Africa is on language planning and implementation (Cluver, 1992; Webb, 1996; Alexander, 1997; Kamwangamalu, 2000; Bianco, 2010; Makalela & McCabe, 2013; Kamwangamalu, 2016). In most these studies, there is no mention of teachers' lived experiences in every day interaction with learners nor a discussion of how they feel about the language of instruction as determined by the language policy. A number of research studies also focus on multilingualism within the South African context (Desai, 2001; Ndlangamandla, 2010; Kerfoot & Simon-Vandenberg, 2015; Makalela, 2015). For example, the study by Ndlangamandla (2010), conducted in two segregated co-educational <sup>2</sup> former model C high schools in Johannesburg, argues that declarations about a major language shift among users of African languages are incorrect since he found evidence of multilingualism patterns, and maintenance of African languages among urban African languages speakers.

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<sup>2</sup> Model C schools were public schools that were reserved for Whites during the apartheid era. They are now open to all South African citizens

In addition, some of the research focuses on mother tongue education and its role in the child's academic achievements (Banda, 2000; Maake, 2015; Ndlovu, 2015). The only available study on managing the language transition in South Africa was conducted by Makina (2015) with three Grade Four teachers; it explored the accommodating strategies used by the teachers. This study does not though investigate teachers' attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching. Hence, there is clear evidence in the above discussion that no study within the South African context has been done on how Grade Four teachers mitigate the transition from mother tongue to English medium of instruction with a focus on teachers' lived experiences and teacher attitudes toward the language of learning and teaching. This study intends to bridge this gap in knowledge. Thus, it is imperative to indicate factors and issues that influence the context under which teachers' lived experiences and attitudes emerge. These are multilingualism, language policy provision, literacy in South African primary schools, mother tongue education, second language teaching methods, teacher education in South Africa, language attitudes in education and parental involvement in education. These issues are the core trending factors in this education system and are central in the discussion below.

## **Multilingualism**

### **Multilingualism: Global context**

Literature reveals that there is evidence of the influence of multilingualism on language policies and the rise of English as the language of preference at the expense of vernacular languages (Bolton & Ng, 2014). For example, Cavallaro and Serwe (2010) reported a decline in the use of traditional languages amongst young Malayalam. Further, (Krizsan & Erkkila, 2014), in a study of Brussels based civil servants and lobbyists, found that although multilingualism appears in various social contexts, all of them are dominated by English and multilingualism plays a less significant role in the social and working lives of the Brussels based civil servant. This is consistent with the growth of the new globalized economy that had a significant impact on what is language and how it is used. Language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become the centre both as a process and a product of work in the new globalized economy (Heller, 2010; Heller & McLaughlin, 2017). For instance, the call centre sells information in words, which at a later stage can result in money exchange. The point is that, “language has become a commodity that can be sold and is central to the new global economy” (ibid, 2010, p. 350). In this regard, Climent-Ferrando (2016, p. 4) argues that:

*While the official EU political rhetoric continues to portray linguistic diversity one of European’s greatest assets, the actual policies on multilingualism point at an increasing commodification*

*of languages conceptualized and represented as a set of limited, marketable communicative skills that can be advertised, bought and sold.*

In the light of the above discussion, it is likely that commodification of language within the globalized economy could influence educational policies of most countries including African nations. Globally, education systems have positioned themselves as the main tool to prepare or socialize citizens for their roles in the society and equip them with skills to participate in the economy of a country. It is a possibility that dominant languages such in English in the global economy are likely to exert more influence on language policy development and receive high preference as the language of instruction within education systems of the majority of the countries of the world.

Most African countries find themselves in a compromising situation where the maintenance of African languages is a necessity for the participation in the economy, which is essential for economic growth and development. Participation in the globalized economy though involves the mastery of the dominant language(s). However, it is evident from research that multilingualism using African languages in Africa has survived the test of times where colonial languages coupled with the new global economy threatened their existence. For example, Prah (2010, p. 177) points out that, “the resilience of African languages and culture in the face of tremendous pressure appears to be holding.” Hence, it is arguable that the strength of the

surviving multilingualism in Africa relies on the fact that people in the African continent are in reality multilingual (Prah & Brock-Utne, 2009), in the sense that they speak some African languages. However, this is not reflected in most language-in-education policy in African countries.

The languages used for learning and teaching in most countries are colonial languages (see 2.2 above) which African countries inherited from their colonizers. In most cases, these languages are not likely to facilitate the deep learning (Lehti-Eklund, 2013) and acquisition of skills that could allow the citizens to fully participate in the economy of their countries and globally. In this regard, multilingualism in education has some benefits to increasing people's participation in the economy. For example, Adesemowo (2017, p. 11) posits that "benefits can be seen in the learners being able to relate to a concept in their language and culture rather than just memorizing a concept or terminology they do not understand." Such a situation enables learners to participate actively in knowledge construction during the learning process.

It is significant to note that the use of foreign languages to teach African learners is likely to complicate the learning process. Further, in a study conducted in Arusha district at Tanzania by Kirui, Osman, and Naisujaki (2017, p. 113), "teachers agree that they face challenges in the use of English as the language of instruction" and prefer the use of African languages for learning and teaching. Hence, the continued use of English as a medium of teaching in the continent of Africa is likely to create difficulties for the

achievement of quality education for all in most countries (Phillipson, 1996; Mazrui, 1997).

### **Multilingualism: South African context**

Each community is multilingual in its particular way (Aronin, 2015). South Africa, like most of the countries in the world, is a multilingual country. Eleven official languages are enshrined in the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Multilingualism in South Africa is unique due to the influence of the country's political history where the apartheid government enforced bilingualism of English and Afrikaans at the expense of African languages. The influence of missionary education that favoured the interest of the oppressed group, over time, led to English came to be seen by the liberation movements as the language of liberation while Afrikaans, which was closely aligned with the apartheid policy and the apartheid regime, was regarded by the liberation movements as the language of the ruling party. As a result, Afrikaans was considered as the language of oppression. These language tendencies carried over to the post-apartheid era. Most African speaking population preferred English to their indigenous languages in education. Further, the global influence of English on the international market economy plays a prominent role in the choice of English as an official language.

During the new democratic dispensation, the language in education policy (LIEP) brought back the use of African languages as languages of instruction in education through its principle of additive multilingualism, meaning that



other languages are added to a speaker's linguistic repertoire while the mother tongue is developed. The latter statement alludes to the country's language in education policy, which promotes mother tongue education and learning of an additional language and additive bilingualism. However, the policy implications and practice in the current post-colonial era in South African education system do not match. The multilingualism that learners bring to school is not drawn on or strengthened in classroom practice. Most school-language policies promote the use of English only, thereby exhibiting a move towards monolingualism. Such a situation hurts most at Grade Four where the majority of African language speaking learners are forced by school policies to change the language of instruction from the mother tongue to English medium of instruction.

### **Language policy provision**

In this section, I present the international studies on policy that have a great influence on the language debate around the globe.

### **International perspective**

Internationally, there is evidence of the link between dominant languages in the global economy and the official languages preferred in most languages policies of the world countries (Coleman, 2006; Tikly, 2016; Heller & McLaughlin, 2017). Commodification of language (see 2.3.1) also seems to

exert some pressure in the choice of the language of learning and education. The reason for the latter statement is that the countries of the world recognize education as the tool to prepare citizens for roles in society and participation in the national and global economy.

In the light of the above discussion, minority or ethnic languages (Gouleta, 2012) are likely to be shifted to the background by most countries' language policies in favour of the prominent languages in the global market economy. For example, Canada, a country where 450 languages and dialects are spoken, endorsed a language policy base on English and French as official languages in all government sectors and education (Cartwright & Williams, 1982). In the East Asian countries the emphasis placed on English as preferred language for effective global engagement (Wang, 2015) has resulted in the Chinese dialects being on the verge of vanishing (Wee, 2010). Such a situation has exerted a challenge to language policy makers in term of the promotion of national standards and foreign languages in a context characterized by linguistic diversity (Gao, 2016).

In most African countries, there are similar trends of colonial languages dominating in language policies. Such situation could result from the economic interests of the countries and the globalization of market economy. For example, in Nigeria, English is the dominant language in education. The Nigeria government places a high premium on English education (Olajide, 2010). However, Nigeria is also vigorously promoting the use of indigenous

languages in education [see Olajide (2007)]. A similar case is evident in Tanzania; though it has reached a high level of using Kiswahili as a national language, the language policy provision continues to place high preference for English language as the language of education (Mohr & Ochieng, 2017). Further, the Zimbabwean language policy give preference for English language as the language of education (Nhongo, 2013). The dominance, of colonial languages in most African education system has resulted in African languages shifting to the background and becoming underdeveloped. Most researchers in Africa (Prah, 2010; Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014) currently argue for the integration of African languages in education to address issues of equity and access for all learners.

### **South African context: Language policy provision**

In the next section, I present the South African policies that impact on the language issue in this country.

### **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa**

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) promotes additive multilingualism by making provisions for 11 official languages, all of which enjoy equal status in all sectors of the society. It also stipulates the right of all citizens to be educated in the language of their choice. The pronouncement of the language rights in

the constitution of South Africa has far-reaching implications for their implementation. Development and intellectualization of all official languages is required in all levels of education for the implementation of these rights, from the foundation phase, the intermediate phase and FET phase to tertiary level. This will facilitate effectively the use of all official languages as tools to impart knowledge. More particularly, section 6 (b) of the founding provisions of the Constitution prioritizes the need to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages as a form of redress. The last statement demands commitment and political will from the government to ensure the effective implementation of this principle. In such a situation, there is a possibility of a dire need for the government to dedicate sufficient support regarding funding and programmes to address the situation mentioned above.

### **Language in education policy**

South African education has a unique history that has influenced and shaped the current language in education policy. Similar, to the situation in most African countries, English language dominates the education system of South Africa (Heugh, 2005; Foley, 2009; Alexander, 2011; Figone, 2012). The unique nature of language development started before 1994, during the apartheid era. The government of the time promoted separate development, with an attempt to promote Afrikaans and English as the languages of learning and teaching in schools. The government of the day tried to introduce Afrikaans as the language of learning to teach African children. This attempt

ended after the Soweto uprising by learners who marched against the use of Afrikaans as the language of teaching and learning. When the democratic government took over in 1994, it formulated a Language in Education Policy (LiEP) based on democratic values, especially equality and freedom of expression, and by promoting multilingualism in education. One of the major roles of the Language in Education Policy was to develop and encourage the use of African languages in education (Kamwangamalu, 2000). The policy accommodated the last statement within the principle of additive multilingualism. In this case, the policy propagates the maintenance of the mother tongue and a strong teaching of an additional language.

However, Prinsloo (2007) further points to the gap between the Language in Education Policy and its implementation within the schools. The Department of Education recognizes the benefits derived from mother-tongue education and commits itself to an additive approach to bilingualism by explicitly maintaining the home languages and providing access to the effective acquisition of additional language. However, contrary to the last statement, implementation and practice within the schools reveal the opposite.

Despite the good intentions of the Language in Education Policy, the application and its practice remain the challenge (Madiba & Mabiletja, 2008; Pluddemann, 2013). The wealth of language knowledge that the African child brings into the classroom is ignored in favour of English as the language of instruction (Probyn, 2017). The majority of African language speaking learners

in South Africa use their home language in the early years of schooling from Grade R to Grade Three. At Grade Four the language of learning changes to English (Sibanda, 2017). Such a situation contradicts the language policy intentions of ‘additive bilingualism,’ which aims at retaining the mother tongue as the language of instruction and adds the second language with the support of robust teaching methods in the second language (FAL). It is arguable that additive bilingualism as pronounced in the policy does not provide for the occurrence of the language transition that begins at Grade Four for most ESL learners. The policy states that “from Grade Three (Standard 1) onwards all learners shall be offered their language of learning and teaching in a home language and at least one additional approved language as subjects.”

The change in the language of learning and teaching from mother tongue to English instruction could imply a direct violation of the policy stipulation on additive multilingualism and the promotion of African languages in education. In fact, observed differences between policy prescription and practices in schools are a cause of concern in education. The non-implementation of the LiEP in South African schools is likely to result in subtractive bilingualism, where the English language dominates the education system as the language of learning and teaching at the expense of African indigenous languages. Consequently, such a situation could limit access to the curriculum for the majority of ESL learners and could affect most teachers’ lived experiences and their attitudes toward the language of learning and teaching. The Department of Basic Education addressed the situation by introducing the Incremental

Introduction of African Languages in South African Schools Policy discussed in the following subsection.

### **The incremental introduction of African languages in South African schools (IIAL)**

The legislative foundation of this policy has its basis in the Constitution of South Africa, in Section 6 of the South African Schools Act and Section 4 of the National Education Policy of 1997, with its emphasis on the promotion of African languages. The objective of the IIAL is to promote proficiency in the previously marginalised African languages and to improve understanding and social cohesion within the diverse South African society (Department of Basic Education, 2017). There is scanty literature around this new language policy. The main reason for its inclusion in this review is that it deals with the most relevant issue of the promotion of African languages in education that has been the case of long standing debate. It is also important in providing further policy direction on the use of African languages in education. Such direction which could be influential in shaping the attitudes of teachers toward that language of learning and teaching. In line with the LiEP, the IIAL policy promotes multilingualism and works in conjunction with the South African Schools Act, which is discussed below, in determining the language of learning and teaching within schools in South African context.

## **South African Schools Act, 1996**

The national language policy in South Africa provides the national Minister of Education with powers to give directives on the language planning. The South African Schools Act, 1996 (SASA) extends those powers in determining the language of learning and teaching in the school to the School Governing Bodies (SGBs). Section 6 (b) stipulated the latter as follows:

*[The] Governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution, this Act and any applicable provincial law.*

However, research indicates that School Governing Bodies are not functioning well and are failing to execute their roles as prescribed by the South African Schools Act (1996) due to the nature of the function that requires specialized skill and knowledge (Xaba, 2011; Serero, 2016). For example, the responsibility to determine the language of learning and teaching in the school requires specialized knowledge and relevant skills in educational pedagogies, psycholinguistics and linguistics and other related fields. Further, some studies indicate that the model where the language of learning and teaching is determined by parents, which is used in South Africa, has failed to take account of the diversity at a local level (Van Wyk, 2007). In such a situation it is likely that the gap pointed by researchers above between the functions prescribed by



the South African Schools Act and the skills and knowledge governing bodies possess could be regarded as one of the causes for non-implementation of the language in education policy. In a sense, that most members of the SGBs, more particularly at the rural areas, do not have the necessary expertise to analyse the language needs of learners from a pedagogical point of view and expertise relate to such areas as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, ideology and language rights within the Constitution and language policy pronouncements.

In addition to the Language in Education Policy provisions, it is worth noting the literacy levels of learners' population at primary school level, more particularly Grade Four where language transition occurs. This is the area of focus for this study in terms of how teachers manage this transition with the special focus on their lived experiences and language attitudes at this level. The discussion on literacy in primary schools within the South African context forms an integral part of the next subsection.

### **Mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE)**

Most researchers articulate the benefits of Mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) as an asset in developing functional citizens who can participate meaningfully in the global economy. For example, Cabansag (2016), in a study that examined the implementation of MTB-MLE as a

pedagogical approach in the Philippines, found that it enabled the learners to express ideas better, building self-confidence and better retention, and promoting a more friendly environment. In Nepal, Pradhan (2017), in a study that analysed school textbooks along with classroom instruction and everyday practice in mother tongue schooling, argues for the introduction of mother tongue, pointing out that it is an “effective pedagogy and legitimate knowledge” (ibid, p. 381). Further, in Thailand the use of MTB-MLE programmes is reported to promote social cohesion and effective participation of learners in the learning process.

The African continent is characterised by many indigenous languages spoken in communities. It is interesting to note that despite the latter statement the use of foreign international languages as official languages and languages of learning and teaching (LoLT) in education is a dominant feature in most African countries (Quane & Glanz, 2005). However, most researchers argue for the use of Mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE). They promote education models that include the mother tongue of their learners as more likely to result in greater academic achievement (Graham, 2010; Bachore, 2014; Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014; Machombo, 2017). Similarly, Quane and Glanz (2005) point out that the mother tongue and the respective culture are key sources of identification and self-confidence. Hence, the use of the mother tongue, bilingual literacy education and culturally adapted curricula in schools values the knowledge and communicative practices of the individual’s community.

Mother tongue based multilingual education in South African context is one of the issues that are intensively debated among policy makers, parents, and other stakeholders in education (Kamwangamalu, 2004; Heugh, 2005; Prah & Brock-Utne, 2009; Webb, Lafon, & Philips 2010; Mkhize & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014). Most of the language research in South Africa focuses on the multiple issues around language-in-education, such as policy implementation (Heugh, 2005), debates around the medium of instruction and the hegemony of English in South African education (Lebese & Mtapuri, 2014), the introduction of mother tongue education in higher education (Madiba, 2010; Ndimande-Hlongwa, Balfour, Mkhize, & Engelbrecht, 2010). There is no literature within the South African context that has focused on Grade Four teachers' attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and their lived experiences in teaching ESL learners during the period of language transition at Grade Four.

The scanty literature that has dealt with language at the Grade Three and Four interface, such as Sibanda (2017), has focused on the challenges related to limited teaching and learning that occurs when English is used as language of instruction within the classroom and that, when English is frequently used, the home language seems to stagnate. This article does not discuss the lived experiences of teachers and their language attitudes at this level. Hence, the latter discussion points to the possibility of a gap in knowledge which this study intends to fill.

## **Teacher education in South Africa**

The Department of Basic Education (2007) in the National Policy Framework for teacher training and development in South Africa sets out the qualification for the basic initial professional education of teachers (IPET) as the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree and makes allowance for further progression until the doctoral degree in education. It also provides for continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) on the basis that “both conceptual and content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are necessary for effective teaching together with the teacher’s willingness and ability to reflect on practice and learn from the learners’ own experiences of being taught” (ibid,16).

The policy design equips teachers with the skills to meet the needs of a democratic South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To achieve the latter, the policy draws on the principles described in the Norms and Standards for Educators (Education, 2000), which define the roles of a competent teacher. For example, a teacher must be a specialist in teaching and learning, a scholar and lifelong learners, an expert in the assessment and a curriculum developer. The intention of the policy studies is was to indicate that in the context of South Africa teachers need training in second language acquisition and learning in a second language. Moreover, teacher education programmes do not run smoothly due to “continual revisiting, reviewing, recapping and changing the curriculum. It has become increasingly challenging for teacher education programmes to

prepare pre-service teachers to become critically reflective practitioners”  
(Esau, 2013, p. 1).

### **Language attitudes in education**

The relationship between attitudes and behaviour as understood in this study is complex. Attitudes refers to a set of emotions, beliefs and behaviours towards a particular object, person, thing or event (Kendra, 2015). Although attitudes do have an influence on behaviour (Walther, Weil, & Dusing, 2011), it has been discovered by social psychologists that attitudes and behaviour are not always perfectly aligned. People sometimes behave according to their attitudes, depending on certain conditions, or they may change behaviour due to cognitive dissonance (psychological distress due to conflicting thoughts or beliefs) and match them with their beliefs.

Language attitude has become popular in the study of second language acquisition internationally. One of the basic reason for this move is the growing numbers of immigrants in most European and other countries of the world and the rise of English as the dominant language in education (Lasagabaster, 2015). Immigrants in these contexts use a second language in their academic studies. Hence, such situations attracted researchers to research how mother tongue could be infused into education as a language of instruction and what the influence of second language is in the education of the minority groups and immigrant population (Leung, Davison, & Mohan, 2014). In the following sub

section, I discuss the lessons learnt from other studies, both internationally and nationally in South Africa, on teachers' language attitudes.

### **Lesson learnt from other studies on language attitudes**

Most research conducted in countries where English is the dominant language reveals that teachers and learners show positive attitudes towards the use of English as the language of learning and teaching, though they recognize the cultural values embedded in a language. However, these studies do not focus on how the transition from mother tongue to English is managed, nor do they explore teachers' lived experiences during the phase of language change. To elaborate I would like to consider the following studies as prime examples.

In Iran, Rezaeifard and Chalak (2017) conducted a study with teachers and learners on the impact of linguistic imperialism in the Iranian ELT context. He found out that majority of teachers and learners showed a positive attitude toward English even though they acknowledge that language items were culturally loaded. He argues that this is an indication of the linguistic and cultural imperialism of the English language within the Iranian teaching and learning context. The lesson learnt in this study is that, in order to understand language attitudes exhibited by teachers, we need to explore underlying factors that might manifest themselves through these attitudes, or understand that people behave according to their attitudes, depending on certain conditions.

Further, the study conducted by Ahn (2014) in two Korean regions, of Busan Gyeongnam and Seoul Gyeonggi, exploring the attitudes of English teachers, found out that the majority of participants showed a positive attitude towards <sup>3</sup>Korean English (KoE) with regard to cognitive components and conflicting attitudes in the behavioural element. The lesson from this study is that people may change their behaviour due to cognitive dissonance.

Within the African continent, there is scanty literature on teachers' language attitudes and lived experiences in managing the language transition from mother tongue instruction to English medium of instruction. One of the available studies on this phenomenon, conducted by Ssentanda (2014) in Uganda, revealed that most teachers have mixed feelings about mother tongue education and some are straightforward against it. Moreover, the study indicated that the Ugandan pre-primary education system complicates the successful implementation of the language-in-education policy.

After a considerable search, I have noted a paucity of literature on teachers' language attitudes within the South African context. The scanty literature that is available on attitudes deals with teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (Makoelle, 2014) and not on the lived experiences of teachers in managing the language transition from mother tongue to English medium of instruction. Some of the studies done in South Africa explored language attitudes of learners in higher education (Bekker, 2004;2009; Kamwangamalu

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<sup>3</sup> Korean English (KoE) refer to an English dialect spoken in Korea and influenced by Korean accent.

& Tovaes, 2016). For example, the study conducted by Bekker (2004) produced the language attitude survey to test the attitudes of African-speaking learners towards the use of African languages as languages of instruction at tertiary level. Hence, I adopted and adjusted this questionnaire, and use it in a different context to investigate teachers' language attitudes towards the language of instruction at primary school level.

It is significant to note that literature (Kim, Hutchison, & Winsler, 2015; Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, Palmer, Heiman, Schwerdtfeger, & Choi, 2017; Steele, Slater, Zamarro, Miller, Li, Burkhauser, & Bacon, 2017) reveals that most countries such as United States and European countries used immersion language programmes to manage the language transition. I have also after a considerable search noted a paucity in the literature regarding the management of language transition in early grades within the African context. A study conducted by Ssentanda (2014) on how this transition is managed from mother tongue to English within the Ugandan context provides evidence on the scant literature that exist on this topic. A gap exists in literature within the South African context on how teachers mediate the transition from mother tongue instruction to the English medium of instruction in relation to their lived experiences and attitudes towards LoLT. The next section concludes this chapter.

## **Conclusion**



There is strong evidence from the literature that points to a gap in South African language literature in terms of managing the transition from Grade Three to Grade Four where language change occurs and in terms of teachers' attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching (English). The next chapter deal with the theoretical orientation of the study as the lens to explore the phenomenon of study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter extends the argument presented in Chapter 2 on the neglect of language transition within African countries. The researcher argues in this section that, in order to manage the language transition properly, one needs to take into account the sociocultural context of the learner. Hence, the main theoretical framework of the study is sociocultural theory, assisted by the theory of planned behaviour, which is used to investigate the attitudes of teachers towards the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). These theories are relevant in the sense that together they will provide lenses to interrogate teachers' and learners cultural values in line with the mother tongue they bring into the classroom and what language attitudes teachers have that might influence their practice. The following sections discuss in depth the two theories; first, it provides what may be considered a detailed account of sociocultural theory and secondly the theory of planned behaviour.

## **Sociocultural theory**

Learning is described within sociocultural theory as a social process, through which human intelligence develops (Wertsch, 1985). In this sense, learning is a social process in which the learner acquires the knowledge and skills that originate in society and culture. The acquisition of skills occurs through interaction between the learner and the social environment or culture. To illustrate, let us use as an example the knowledge and skills involved in fishing. This knowledge could already exist in another environment or culture. It might also been used for centuries by the inhabitants of that environment for survival. In this regard, fishing techniques and skills could differ amongst societies depending on the cultures inherent in societies. The youth experience exposure to fishing activities organised within the culture when they are socialised within society. Hence, through interactions between the youth and skilled anglers and the cultural equipment for fishing, learning takes place [new skills and knowledge are acquired] (Akpan, 2015). Hence, the learning process follows similar steps and procedures within the classroom. The crucial factor to consider at this point is how learning takes places as described within sociocultural theory. The next paragraph elaborates on this factor.

In this context, learning is a social collaborative activity. The two-way character of learning refers to the interaction occurring between the capable others (teachers, peers and parents) and the learner within the educational social context. Instructions play a vital role in facilitating smooth and effective

acquisition of skills and knowledge. Language is a central factor that drives the learning process through which instructions the knowledgeable others give instruction. The learner actively engage with verbal instructions through communication and task performance. For example, teaching a child how to ride a bicycle follows a number of sequenced procedures. Firstly the capable other in bicycle riding could model how to ride and verbally explain the procedure. Then the learner will perform the modelled behaviour and follow instructions in order to acquire the skills for riding a bicycle. In this process, the capable other scaffolds the skills and knowledge by allowing the learner to perform tasks that are manageable at the time, until the acquisition of complex skills and knowledge is achieved. A similar situation occurs during the performance of learning tasks within the classroom. Drawing from sociocultural theory (Liang, 2013), learning process follows an outward-in approach, where knowledge that was an external entity in the learner's environment become an internal entity residing in the mind of an individual. In this regard learning first occur between people and then within the individual.

Further, this study uses Wertsch (1990) approach to Vygotsky's work, to interrogate the centrality of language in learning, the role of the teachers in education and how they mediate the language transition from IsiZulu mother tongue to English medium of instruction at Grade Four. Wertsch's (1990) approach emphasises three basic themes: namely, the biological orientation, the general genetic law of cultural development and the tools and signs.

## **The biological orientation**

Vygotsky insisted on using genetic analysis when examining human mental functioning. His theory is concerned with the ontogenetic development of human beings (Wertsch & Sohmer, 1995). He recognized the biological orientation of the mind and argued that it is necessary but not sufficient to justify human higher mental functions. According to Wertsch (1991, p. 19), this approach is motivated by the assumption that “it is possible to understand many aspects of mental functioning only if one understands their origins and the transitions they have undergone”. Langford (2005) understands the concept of biological development in Vygotsky’s theory as having two phases of development.

### **Phase 1: 1928 to 1931**

During this stage, Vygotsky’s notion of biological orientation focussed on three stages: instinct, associative learning and natural thought. Instinct refers to the tendency to react in an automatic innate manner to specific stimuli; associative learning, which involves conditioning, is influenced by Pavlov’s theory (conditioned reflexes: at this stage, there is no goal-oriented action, things just happen); natural thought: refers to elementary mental functioning. The belief was that it was a particular domain for the apes. Vygotsky adopted this idea from Kohler and Wolfgang’s (1925) work with apes. The main

driving force in development at the biological level is practical action, which is yet unallied to language and only influenced by consciousness in a preliminary way (Vygotsky, 1930, 1931) cited<sup>4</sup>in Langford (2005).

## **Phase 2: 1932 to 1934**

During this phase, Vygotsky focused more on the social context as the basis for higher mental development, which is mediated by tools and cultural artefacts. Language, in this case, is the primary artefact that facilitates the development of higher mental functioning. According to Langford (2005), during this period the main influence of biology in the child's development is to determine the level of dependency and independence. Hence, the perception was that humans are the most dependent beings during the early years of life (infancy), compared to other species that are born independent and can survive without the support of adult species. The main concern, in this case, is the role of the social context in the child's development and the biological orientation as the foundation of development. Each stage of development now begins with a social situation of development as determined by the state of the individual's level of dependence and independence.

The study focuses on the latest development of Vygotsky's concept of biological orientation (Engeström, Miettinen, & Punamäki, 1999), the reason

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<sup>4</sup> The original reading is written in Russian and the researcher used Langford (2005) as the secondary source that interprets the original version.

being that this concept allows the exploration of the interactions taking place between the teacher and the learners within the learning process, where the teacher mediates the language transition so as to develop learners' higher mental functioning. In this regard, the learner at Grade Four is assumed to be biologically ready (physically and mentally) to cope with the learning tasks at this level. The assumption in this case is that teachers are aware of and are capable of developing learning activities that match the learners' developmental stage. More importantly, the concept of biological orientation enables the understanding of the relationship between biological factors and social factors in developing learners' higher mental function, as Vygotsky (1978, p. 90) argued, writing that "learning awakens a variety of internal developmental process that is able to operate only when the child is interacting with his/her environments and with peers...". The expression of the latter statement is evident in Vygotsky's general genetic law of cultural development (Wertsch, 1985).

### **General genetic law of cultural development**

Vygotsky's general genetic law of cultural development claims that: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice. First on the social level and later, on the individual level; first between people [interpsychological] and then inside the child [interpsychological]" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). The social plane is the external environment of the individual in which he or she interacts with capable others and other social objects. The

internal plane refers to the individual's psychological potential, referred to as the inner mental ability of the person. Between these two levels, mediation takes place. This is the process where the individual interacts with the environment in knowledge construction and acquisition of skills with the assistance of capable others. One of the critical questions is how the movement goes from the social to individual level; the argument is that it takes place through mediation.

Similarly, this study is interested in the manner in which teachers assist African learners in the internalization of English within the classroom context. These learners in their daily social context converse in IsiZulu with other learners, teachers, and family and with peers during play. The exploration of how teachers mediate learning using English as the LoLT to teach second language learners is directed by the study's research question, namely, how do Grade Four teachers interpret their lived experiences in managing the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four? The next section expands the notion of the social context.

### **Social context/plane**



Wertsch (1991, p. 8) contends, “human beings are viewed as coming into contact with, and creating, their surrounding as well as themselves through the action in which they engage”. In this regard, learning is a collaborative action between the learner and his/her social environment. Researchers also allude to the latter notion that successful learning cannot be an individual and unmediated or unassisted effort, but a collaborative process. In the context of this study, the social context involves the entire environment surrounding the learner, with a special focus on learning that takes place at home and at school.

Family context plays a critical role in the child’s learning process. When learners are well cared for and loved within the family, they develop confidence and high self-esteem (Schofield & Beek, 2005; Soenens, Deci, & Vansteenkiste, 2017). Hence, this situation provides the foundation for future learning. With regard to the phenomenon under study, it is vital to note that when the Grade Four learner brings homework from school to home, the expectation is that he/she will be assisted by competent others within the family. In other words, the mediation of the language transition continues from school to home. Most importantly, the issue of the language use at home and school brings up the question of whether the family members can read and understand the language of learning and teaching [English] to be in a position to assist the learner to do homework. If they cannot read and understand English, it means they cannot assist the learner with homework and reading. Hence, they cannot mediate the language transition from IsiZulu to English, and in this sense they are not capable others.

Another issue is the availability of space and time to study and do homework. In most poverty-stricken families, it is common that people live in small houses, which do not even have enough rooms for them to sleep. In addition, they have other family duties to fulfil. For example, girls have to assist with cleaning, cooking and other duties after school. Boys have also to do other duties such as looking after the cattle in rural areas and other household duties because they cannot afford to hire and pay someone to do the job. For example, a Grade Four learner reported that, when he wakes up in the morning, he folds the blankets and the grass mats and he has a bath. He herds the cattle to the pasture, comes back, and eats. He then begins to get ready for school (Human Sciences Research Council & Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). Hence, learners are too busy with household chores to study effectively. It becomes very serious in a situation where the learner is the head of the family due to deceased parents and other family members. In contrast, learners from a background with rich and educated parents have a different socioeconomic environment, that is, more space and time to study and do homework, and enough support.

Moreover, the availability of books at home for the learners to read constitutes another important aspect of the social context in the learner's reading skills. If books in English are available and the members of the family can read and assist the learner in reading, the learner gets exposure to the language. The mediation of English language skills by capable others within the family is

likely to improve proficiency in the target language. It is imperative to note that exposure to and the availability of books in any language increases the likelihood of improved reading skills and love of literature (Worthy & Broaddus, 2001).

In contrast, non-availability of books and inadequate assistance from family members with the learning of English language is likely to perpetuate illiteracy and hinder the development of language skills. The learner in this context gets exposure in one linguistic community, an IsiZulu speaking community, yet the expectation is that they should learn in English at school. This is an indication of the gap between the schooling environment and linguistic community in which the child is immersed (Ogbu, 1992). Hence, social context has a profound influence on how the language transition at school is mediated at Grade Four to develop higher mental functions. It is important to note that the study is interested in how teachers mediate the language transition at this level. In order to understand this, it is relevant to explore the entire social context of the child's learning. The home context and school context at Grade Four occur simultaneously and support each other to ensure the successful development of higher mental functioning which is mediated through the use of the language, in this case English.

The classroom context is where interactions between teachers and learners take place. These interactions occur using language. The question of which language is used and how it is used is an important factor to consider. In this

regard, related issues such as the competency and proficiency of the teachers in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) assumed to have an influence on how teachers mediate the language transition from IsiZulu mother tongue to English as LoLT. In addition, the competence of learners in the LoLT determines how meaningful their participation is in learning activities.

Furthermore, the availability of resources as well as the classroom organization and condition, constitute an important element to ensure that learning takes place. These are an element of the learners' classroom context that is needed for the development of learners' higher mental functioning. If language is the central cultural factor in the development of higher mental functions, it points to the crucial matter of using English to teach African-speaking learners. Hence, teachers' lived experiences in mediating this transition is an important issue that this study intends to interrogate. Moll (1990) elaborates that teachers direct learners' attention to word meaning, definitions and the systematic relationships among them that constitute an organised system of knowledge. In this sense, teachers assist learners to acquire knowledge and skills through the medium of a language.

The curriculum is another aspect that is of paramount importance in the social context of Grade Four learners within this study. The curriculum forms the basis of interactions taking place in the learning process; it determines the learning activities and their teaching methods. More particularly, the issue is how the curriculum provides for the meaningful transition towards English

medium of instruction. It is within the curriculum that scaffolding of knowledge is determined (Bennison, 2015), that is, how learning is paced within a set period to ensure that learners can cope with learning tasks. The latter statement points out that teaching as determined by the curriculum should, “create possibilities for development, through the kind of active participation that characterizes collaboration, that should be socially negotiated and that should entail transfer of control to the learner” (Daniels, Cole, & Wertsch, 2007, p. 319).

It is also important to note that the time allocated by the curriculum to complete tasks also influences the success and the failure of a learning programme. Overall, the main issue, in this case, is whether the curriculum provides a conducive social environment that is in line with the cultural orientations of learners, relevant tasks, appropriate time allocations and teaching methodologies that facilitate mediation during the transition.

Vygotsky (1987) further clarifies that collaboration, direction, demonstrations and lead questions, and the introduction of basic elements of a task’s solution, assist learners in the learning process. In this regard, the general genetic law of development is relevant because it enables us to understand the interactions that occur between the learners and their social and cultural environments. This interaction occurs within the zone of proximal development (classroom) and correlates with the home context. Hence, learning is not a one sided activity; it is a reciprocal process where the cultured others model and coach the

behaviour until the learners progresses through the zone of actual development. Thus, the learner progresses through the ZPD when social activity is transformed into internal psychological activity through the process of internalization. In this manner, the social action becomes an innate activity existing within the individual plane.

Culture is also an important element of the child's social context; it provides the belief systems, norms, and values (Rogoff, 2003). Culture created by people in turn shapes the thinking of the very same people. Culture involves the ways of knowing, that is, how people understand their own worlds (Morrow, 2009). This concept is very crucial in education, more importantly with the choice of the LoLT, because it determines the cultural aspects promoted within the education system. In this regard, the culture that learners bring to school is very crucial to their development since it forms the basis of their ways of knowing, that is, how learners view their world in relation to their culture and language. Hence, the transition from IsiZulu mother tongue instruction to English medium of instruction at Grade Four does not only affect the change of language but also changes the learner's ways of knowing, since culture is embedded in language (Mgqwashu, 2014). The section that follows elaborated on the idea of the internal or intra-psychological (individual) plane.

### **The individual level/plane**

The individual plane in the context of this study entails the psychological processes that occur within the person. Most importantly, the level of proficiency in the English language determines the ability of the learner to use it as the language of teaching and learning. In this sense, the focus is on whether a learner has developed enough language skills in English to use it as a tool communication in the learning process.

It is worth noting that between the social context and the individual context is the process of mediation of action which is done through the cultural artefacts of which language is the most important (Vygotsky, 1978). Interactions in the social context transform into the internal psychological process (thinking, voluntary attention and logical memory) through the process of internalization. In this manner, the learner is able to perform the activity in which he/she was involved in a social and cultural context before, without the assistance of competent others. The action is then goal-oriented, involving thought, voluntary attention, and logical memory. Hence, the latter higher mental functions exist within the individual plane and have their origin in the social and cultural context. Such a notion is clearly elaborated in Rogoff's (2003) argument that in the sociocultural perspective, culture is not an entity that influences the individual. Instead, people contribute to the creation of cultural processes and cultural processes contribute to the creation of people. To achieve the latter effectively, people need appropriate tools and signs that are in line with their worldviews. The following section expands on this idea.

## **Tools and signs**

Human activity can only be understood regarding both the social and individual planes by taking into consideration the tools and sign that mediate it. In the context of this study tools refers to all learning resources available for the Grade Four learner to achieve the learning outcomes at this level. These include resources such as libraries, spaces for learning such as classrooms, learning and teaching materials, expertise of teachers (the quality of service they render), time allocation, culture of the school, the curriculum, management and organization of the school and the language of learning and teaching. These cultural artefacts all form part of the learner's sociocultural context where learning takes place. Language is the most pervasive and powerful cultural artefact used by humans (Centerio-Cortes, 2003). In this context, language is the most important sign used by Grade Four teachers and learners to communicate knowledge and contribute to the development of higher mental functioning of these learners.

Vygotsky (1962), in this regard, argues that language serves as a conceptual organiser, a primary medium through which thinking occurs. Hence, the focus of this study is on how language is used to facilitate the learning process and the development of learners' higher mental functioning. This process follows an interactive procedure from the zone of proximal development, semiotic mediation, internalisation, scaffolding and the zone of actual development. These concepts occur simultaneously and interchangeably during the learning



and teaching process. Such concepts are relevant to interrogate the lived experiences of Grade Four teachers in mediating the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four in South African schools. An elaboration on these concepts is the core aim of the discussion provided in the sections that follows. The effective use of tools and signs within the zone of proximal development is crucial. Hence, the next section provides what may be considered a detailed account of this idea.

### **The zone of proximal development (ZPD)**

The term ‘zone’, as used in sociocultural theory, refers to the social system, social context (Moll, 1990) and the environment where the child learns and develops cognitively. The zone of proximal development (ZPD), as noted by Valsiner and Van der Veer (2000), has given rise to many ‘interesting interpretations’, many of which has been subjected to criticism (Chaiklin, 2003). I will in this study limit my discussion within the original definition by Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) that:

*The ZPD is a distance between a child’s actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and their higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers.*

In other words, the zone of proximal development is the 'zone' between what the learners can do by himself/herself without the assistance of knowledgeable others and the potential the learner has to achieve a higher level of development with the assistance of capable others. This concept allows us to interrogate the Grade Four learners' zone of proximal development that is most importantly mediated in particular by teachers within the classroom. Similarly, the concept 'zone of proximal development' operationally is used in this study to mean 'the intensity or the level of difficulty in a task which demands the performer to collaborate with skilled and knowledgeable person to complete the undertaking using a language'. In this sense the intensity of learning activity, foster interaction between the learner and the teacher using a language. The context in which ZPD is use in this study is different from the original context Vygotsky (1978) use in where the focus was on the learners and the learning process. In this case the focus in on the teachers and how they experience the teaching process.

The majority of English second language learners at this level in South African schools are arguably at the zone of proximal development in two ways. First, with regard to subject matter [determined by the curriculum] and secondly with regard to the medium of mediation [instruction] as they are required to have a high level of literacy if they are to use the language as a tool for mediation. This means that the learner needs assistance with the content in all subjects and help to understand the language of instruction so that he/she can gain access to the curriculum. Hence, during this stage, semiotic mediation is of paramount importance. It indicates the climax of classroom interaction where the teachers

gives verbal instructions and the learners learn through verbal communication (Lee & Ng, 2009). The next section expands on this notion.

## **Semiotic mediation**

Central to the study is the quest to explore how teachers mediate learning during the period of language transition from mother tongue to English as LoLT at Grade Four level in South African schools. Vygotsky's conceptualization of mediation provides a lens to understand how teachers assist learners to acquire knowledge and skills using English as LoLT. Mediation refers to the support given by capable others to the learner during the learning process. In Vygotsky's (1987) terms, mediation is the process whereby the child interacts with the members of the family and society and is assisted by the knowledgeable peers and adults within the social plane to develop higher mental activities through the use of language.

Considering the core issue of the language switch in this study, it is vital to note that Grade Four learners are at the zone of proximal development, meaning that learners they cannot perform tasks by themselves as has been discussed in the subsection above, they need assistance from competent others, in particular, the teachers. This concept is crucial in understanding the role and the experiences of teachers in managing the language transition at this level of schooling.

Moreover, family members, peers and community members form part of the competent others involved in the child's development or learning. This implies that the mediation of the language transition depends not only on the teachers' involvement but on the entire set up of the child's social context. In particular, the home environment plays a significant role. The learners will bring school homework [homework] for the parents and other family members to assist the child. Successful mediation, in this case, might depend on whether the family members are proficient in English to mediate the completion of the task. It involves reading and explaining task instructions to the learners.

The availability of English reading material at home is another important aspect of learning. It exposes the learner and enables him/her to interact with the target language. Furthermore, learners' peers are assumed to be the knowledgeable others that can assist the Grade Four learner to acquire proficiency in the target language. The latter involves peers, such as Grade Four, Five and Six learners, in the child's social plane. Sociocultural theory enables this study to interrogate deeper the social and cultural issues relating to Grade Four language transition in South African primary schools. The process closely linked to mediation is internalization of the knowledge and skills, which indicates the occurrence of learning. This latter can be effectively achieved if the knowledgeable others scaffold knowledge to the learners. A detailed account of the idea follows in the next section.

## **Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is the support given during the learning process and is aligned to the needs of learners to help them achieve their learning goals (Sawyer, 2006). The teacher plans the learning activities and organise how to scaffold knowledge to enable learners to development cognitively. According to sociocultural theory, scaffolding takes place within the zone of proximal development. In this process the learner receives tasks in smaller chunks of activities that are manageable, one at a time.

In Cazden's (1983) terms, scaffolding represents the cooperative interactions between adults (teachers) and a child (learners) that enable the child to do something beyond his/her independent efforts. Scaffolding in this sense facilitates the process of mediation and internalization to ensure that learning and mental development occurs. 'Scaffolding' as a term does not originate in Vygotsky's works. Wood, Brunner, and Ross (1976) first used it to refer to elements of the task that are initially beyond the learners' capacity. This permits the child to concentrate upon and complete only those items that are within his range of competence. In this regard, scaffolding means organising learning activities depending on learners' abilities and increasing them gradually in difficulty to reach complex activities. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) further clarify the concept 'scaffolding' by naming certain processes that aid effective scaffolding.

These are:

- Gaining and maintaining the learners' interest in the tasks
- Making the task simple
- Emphasizing certain aspects that will help with the solution
- Controlling the level of the child's frustration
- Demonstrating the function.

The point above forms the basis and guidelines towards scaffolding learners' activities with the intention to assist them to cope and complete learning activities. Hence, Mcleod (2010) argues that scaffolding (assistance) is most useful when the support matches the needs of the learners. Research done by Baradoran and Sarfarazi (2011) on scaffolding confirms the argument mentioned above, as it indicated that the subjects who had the opportunity to receive scaffolding outperformed the subjects with the lack of scaffolding. Hence, support that addresses learners' needs ensures learners' success in performing academic tasks. Correspondingly, deficiency in guided learning experiences and social interactions impedes learning and development (Wertsch, 1991). This idea points to the effectiveness of scaffolded instruction in the child's learning process. The latter is possible if teachers have positive attitudes and possess content knowledge of the subject, and the opposite might occur when attitudes are negative.

## **Internalization**

Hypothetically, internalization is between the zone of proximal development, and the zone of actual development. Kozulin (1990) defines internalization as the process through which the cultural artefacts, such as language, take on a psychological function. Let us consider, for example, the talk or conversation between the competent problem solver and the learner interacting to solve a mathematics problem of  $2 - 2$ . Two stones are the tools used to solve the problem. The two stones exist in the social or “intermental” plane that is external to the child. The competent other mediates the solution to the problem by instructing the learner to touch and remove the stone, saying that, “I have two stones. If these two stones are taken away, I remain with nothing and this is equal to 0”.

At the initial stage, the above activity is merely talk, which exists at the external plane between the child and the competent problem solver. It is during mediation that internalization and execution occurs at the internal or psychological realm, to direct the problem-solving activity. The latter implies that the child will transform the external talk into the thought process as thought. The thought is now a psychological entity that is capable of controlling the behaviour of the learner when confronted with a similar problem situation. In this regard, internalization takes place. This process allows the child to move from the zone of proximal development to the zone of actual development. Correspondingly, as mentioned above, Grade Four

learners are at the zone of proximal development in two ways; that is, with regard to the content and the language of mediation. The child at the zone of actual development can solve the problem without the assistance of competent others. The child knows that taking away 2 from 2 results in 0 (nothing). The learner understands the concept of 'nothingness' in relation to the sign '0'. Thus, he/she has transformed a social activity into a psychological entity with the help of language as a mediating cultural tool. The latter is rooted in the effective use of the language of instruction by the competent others and in particular the learners who are developing mentally in this process. Hence, learning in this regard has taken place, meaning that higher mental activities have developed.

Consequently, it is arguable that internalization accounts for the organic connection between social communication and mental activity and is the mechanism through which we gain control over our thought processes (Donato, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Hence, changing the language of mediation [instruction] at Grade Four level complicates the internalization of knowledge and skills and hinders the learning process. Consequently, this could be a determining factor whether the learner reached the zone of actual development. Thus, when internalization is achieved the learner is able to perform tasks without the assistance of the knowledgeable others, within the zone of actual development. This is elaborated in the following section.



## **The zone of actual development**

The term 'zone', as used in sociocultural theory, refers to the social system, social context (Moll, 1990) and the environment where the child learns and develops cognitively. He further alludes to the fact that we should think of 'zone' as a characteristic of the child engaged in collaborative activity within the particular social environment. The concept 'actual development' refers to the situation where the child has internalized the mediated skill or knowledge and can perform it without the assistance of knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987).

Actual development refers to what the child can achieve by himself /herself without being assisted by adults or capable others. In the context of this study, actual development in relation to the language of learning and teaching refers to the idea that Grade Four learners can use English effectively during the learning process without the assistance of competent others. Are the learners able to converse amongst themselves and develop ideas using English? If this is not the case, it means Grade Four learners have not reach the zone of actual developmental in terms of the language of instruction. This situation could result in learning difficulties and affect all other learning activities. Teachers as facilitators in the process of learning should assist the learners by scaffolding the content knowledge and skills. Lastly, the effective implementation or non-implementation of all the above sociocultural concepts in the learning and

teaching process of the learners can have a profound implication on education.

The following section expands on this idea.

### **The implications of sociocultural theory for education**

Sociocultural theory regards learning as a social activity. Learners collaboratively acquire the acquisition of meanings and skills. Activities such as group discussion, debates, and symposiums all have their origin in a theory that encourages active learning and collaborative learning. Hence, the learner is an active participant in the learning process. Learning emerges not through interaction but in interaction. Interaction became a meaningful and fruitful exercise with the language that the participants in an activity understand and have well mastered. Conversely, the hindrance of a learning process occurs if learners do not understand the communication tools. This case means that both teachers and learners are active participants in the learning process. Learners learn new skills and interact with other learners through a language whereas teachers mediate and scaffold knowledge within the learning process using a language.

Fahim and Haghani (2012) further elaborate on the idea mentioned above when they state that social interaction handles the development of higher order functions, mediated by language. In other words, the internal cognitive process cannot account for the developmental process by themselves. The internal process, in this case, refers to biological orientations of mental process, the left

hemisphere of the brain being involved in language learning and communication. Hence, the child's learning environment depends entirely on the existence of social factors. Most importantly for this study, this relates to how the use of the language of instruction influences the sociocultural context of the learners to facilitate the development of higher mental functioning within the child at Grade Four level.

To conclude, sociocultural theory is the appropriate lens to view the lived experiences of Grade Four teachers in managing the language transition. The study is also interested in investigating the attitudes of Grade Four teachers towards the language of learning and teaching. Hence, I have adopted the theory of planned behaviour as a lens to investigate teachers' language attitudes. The next section provides a detailed account of this theory.

### **The theory of planned behaviour**

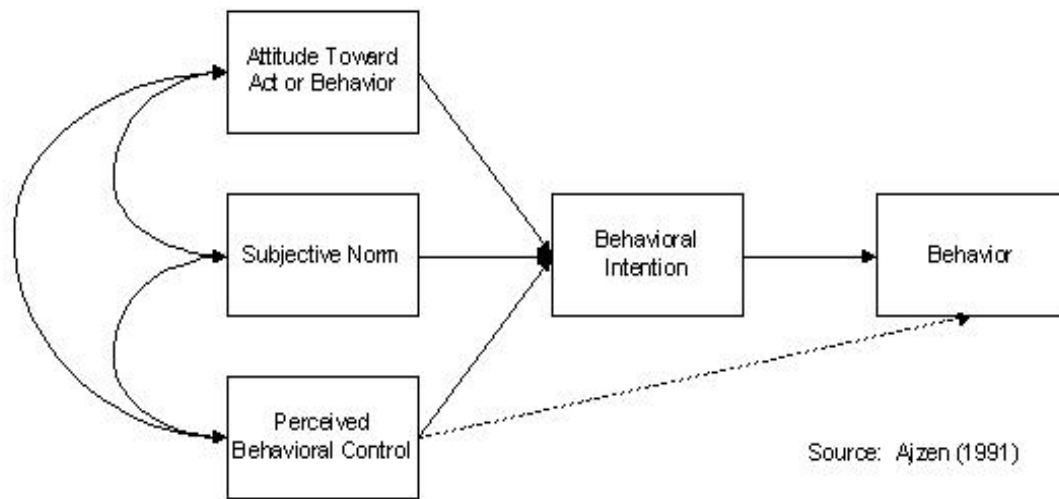
In order to understand more deeply the experiences of teachers during the mediation of language transition at Grade Four level, it is important to explore the attitudes they have to the language of learning and teaching. The reason is that such attitudes have an influence on their behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 2002) that might have an important impact on how they use the language during [teaching] interactions with learners. The relationship between attitudes and behaviour is complex. Attitudes refers to a set of emotions, beliefs and behaviours towards a particular object, person, thing or event (Kendra, 2015).

Although attitudes do have influence on behaviour (Walther et al., 2011), it has been discovered by social psychologists that attitudes and behaviour are not always perfectly aligned, as reported above.

Teachers in this regard are the knowledgeable others in the learners' social context and are well equipped to manage the transition and to assist learners to develop higher mental functions through mediation by language. Evidence as to the attitudes towards the use of African languages and English, whether positive or negative, provide clarity about how they feel about the use of the language of instruction, which is part of their experiences. Hence, in using the theory of planned behaviour, the study intends to address the second research question: what attitudes do teachers have towards the language of learning and teaching at Grade Four level?

This is a quantitative component of the study, in which I am interested in exploring the teachers' attitudes towards LoLT at Grade Four and how demographic factors such as age, qualification, experience and subject taught on influence these attitudes. The next section deals with the major concepts in the theory that I used as a lens in exploring teachers' attitudes. First, I will present the theory model by Ajzen (1991) [Figure 3.1] followed by the discussion of the concepts in relation to teachers language attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching (LoLT).

**Figure 3.1 Theory of Planned Behaviours**



The main assumption of the theory of planned behaviour is that individual behaviour is driven by behavioural intentions, where behavioural intentions are a function of an individual's attitude toward the behaviour, the subjective norms surrounding the performance of the behaviour, and the individual's perception of the ease with which the behaviour can be performed [behavioural control] (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). It is imperative to note that central to the theory is the concept of intention, which Ajzen (1991) defines as determined by attitudes towards behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Further, the behavioural intention can find its expression in the behaviour intended if the person is in a position to decide freely to perform or not to engage in a behavioural action. A critical observation of Ajzen (1991) model in this study revealed an inconsistency where the perceived behavioural control linked directly to behaviour box. This could mean that behaviour could be directly performed once perceived without intention. Hence, contradiction

the notion that 'intention' is central to this theory. The next section expands on the relationship between the intention and its determinant: attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.

### **Intentions and attitude towards behaviour**

Primarily, it is important to allude to the general rule which Ajzen (1991, p. 181) presents, that, "the stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the more likely should be its performance". This rule point to the motivational character of intentions. For example, if a person have a strong motivation or intent to perform the action, the possibility for the action's performance is high. Within the context of the study the action that I explored are the behaviours of teachers in managing language transitions from mother tongue to English. In this case, the intentions should indicate the extent to which teachers are willing to manage the language transition or signpost how much effort they could put in the latter process. However, the intention whether they will or not perform the behaviour depends largely on the attitude they have towards the language of learning and teaching.

To elaborate, attitudes refers to a person's evaluation and response to a particular behaviour. The assumption in this regard is that attitudes have components that work closely together; these are the beliefs and the corresponding positive and negative judgement about the characteristics of a

behaviour or an object (Ajzen, 2005). In this sense, the theory provides a lens to understand the beliefs of the teachers about the language of learning and teaching (English) and whether their judgement in the use of this language to teach African-speaking learners at Grade Four is positive or negative. The strength of the intention also depends on the level of the influence exerted by the subjective norms, as discussed in the next section.

### **Intentions and subjective norms**

Subjective norms in this study refer to cultural values, belief systems and norms held by the teachers, parents, stakeholders in education and the society at large. They are the perceived social pressures to perform or not to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 2001). In this case, the behaviour in question is the management of the transition from mother tongue to English medium of instruction. For example, if the community and all the stakeholders in the school governance believe strongly that English is the language of economy and a key towards getting better life, this will exert some pressure on teachers to maintain and ensure change toward the desired language. I will later in the discussion of the analysis refer to subjective norms as the worldviews rooted within the cultural values and norms that reside within the individuals' minds. The theory also enables an understanding of the subjective norms, that is, how Grade Four teachers feel about the social pressure to use English as the language of instruction (subjective norms). In addition, the strength of the intention further increases or decreases with regard to the perceived ease or

difficulty of performing the behaviour. The next section expands on this notion.

### **Intentions and perceived behavioural control**

Perceived behavioural control refers to how the individual thinks about his or her ability in performing the behaviour. It relates to the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. This is to a large extent influenced by the individual's past experience as well as the anticipated impediments and obstacles (Ajzen, 1991). In this regard, the behaviour of Grade Four teachers in mediating the language transition from mother tongue instruction to English instruction can be predicted effectively through a careful analysis of how teachers perceive their past experiences related to the behaviour intended. Do they see themselves as capable or do they see obstacles that will prevent them to perform the behaviour? This approach could provide useful a lens in exploring the language attitudes of the teachers with the intention to predict the possibility of the behaviour is being performed.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a theoretical base within sociocultural theory and the theory of planned behaviour as lenses to understand the language attitudes of the teachers and their lived experience in managing the language transition



at Grade Four level. The use of sociocultural theory to explore the teaching process is unique to this study, in the sense that the theory originally focussed on learners' learning process. A very unique combination of sociocultural theory and Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour is used to navigate the language attitudes of teachers and how they mitigate teaching English non-mother tongue learners using English as the medium of instruction. The next chapter discusses the methodological design of the study.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **THE EXPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGIES**

### **Introduction**

This chapter proceeds from the theoretical presentation in the previous chapter by presenting the research methodology implemented in this study. The following sections are covered in this chapter: research paradigms, the study design (a mixed methods, convergence parallel design), research strategy, data collection and data analysis processes, reliability and validity, ethical considerations and the chapter's conclusion.

### **Research paradigm**

A paradigm is defined by Mertens (2003;2010) as a conceptual model of a person's worldview, complete with the assumptions that are associated with that view. Kuhn (1970) provides three definitions of a paradigm. Firstly, he defines a paradigm as an epistemological stance, which emphasises realism and constructivism as unique belief systems that influence how research questions are asked and answered within one worldview. However, this definition confines the idea of the paradigm within one view, that of the researchers who work within realism and constructivism. I elaborate on the

constructivist paradigm later in this chapter. The second definition that Kuhn (1970) offers is broader as it applies to almost all categories of paradigms that have been identified by researchers. Here, Kuhn defines paradigms as shared beliefs among members of a discipline area who share a consensus about which research questions are most meaningful and which scientific research methods are most appropriate in answering the questions. The third definition of a paradigm that Kuhn (1970) gives is that a paradigm serves as an exemplar for how research is done in a given specialisation. Considering the history of research over the last thirty years, three major traditional paradigms are evident; the post positivist, constructivist and critical paradigms. The researcher will briefly discuss all of them below but this study used the positivist position to engage with Grade Four teachers' attitudes and employed a constructivist paradigm to explore the lived experiences of these teachers

### **Postpositivist paradigm**

Post positivist paradigm researchers hold the assumption that there is only one truth out there that needs to be discovered (Philips & Burbules, 2000). It is mostly used in the natural and health sciences. The most prominent classical proponents of this paradigm are Karl Menger, Otto Neurath, Rudolf Carnap, Phillip Frank, and Herbert Feigl. The popular researchers (Fisher, 1992; Ayer, 1996; Phillips, 2007; Rorty, 2007; Popper, 2008; Henderson, 2011) working within this paradigm believe in objectivity and value-free research. Objectivity refers to the fact that a researcher is neutral and has no influence on the

phenomenon observed in the sense that there is no attachment or involvement with the participant who is often view as a respondent. The units of analysis exist 'out there', independent of the researcher.

Researchers who work within this paradigm hold a determinist philosophy in which the causes determine the outcomes. The research phenomena within this paradigm are subjects or cases to be studied to gather objective data that leads to the truth. This paradigm is linked to quantitative research approaches and the associated data collection methods such as experiments, questionnaires, surveys and statistical analysis. However, this paradigm was in the early 1980s challenged by constructivist researchers on the ground that it has overlooked the importance of socially constructed reality as a significant aspect in knowledge construction.

### **Constructivist paradigm**

The constructivism paradigm argues that there is no singular and objective reality out there, but rather that actors in a conversation construct reality, and hence reality is multiple and subject to change. Therefore, researchers are regarded as co-participants, as they participate in the construction of knowledge. In other words, the researcher co-constructs knowledge with the participants and in this way the investigator's power is challenged, while the participants are empowered. The social sciences recognise the complexity of

human beings by arguing that we cannot confine ourselves with the definition of one absolute truth. The classical proponents of this paradigm are: Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Brunner, Ernst von Glaserfeld and Seymour Papert, to mention a few. A number of researchers such as Bodner (1986), Fosnot (2005), Richardson (1997), and Patton (2002) have lately emerged as proponents of the constructivist paradigm. Unlike the post-positivists, who believe in objectivity, constructivist researchers consider subjectivity as the basis of their research.

It is imperative to note that this study considers subjectivity as the basis for research. In this case, I refer to the subjectivity of meaning within data in relation to a particular context, and further that the researcher could be part of the research process in exploring the lived experiences of teachers in managing the language transition at Grade Four. This approach enabled the researcher to explore the phenomenon under study with an understanding that there are multiple factors that influence the manner in which Grade Four teachers cope with the language transition at Grade Four level. Further, the constructivist approach links with approaches that utilise qualitative methods of data collection, such as interviews, focus group discussions, qualitative surveys and observations. Such methods elicit qualitative data that seek to uncover the insider perspective on the phenomenon. In this regard, this paradigm provides useful and appropriate methods that the study needs to explore; that is, the teachers' lived experiences in managing the language transition that takes place at Grade Four level. For example, the study used focus groups interviews to collect in-depth and rich data on teachers' lived experiences.

During the 1980's to 1990's, the critical theorists challenged the position of constructivism regarding its neglect of the issues of power relation, social justice and the emancipation of the marginalised group of society. The next section expands on this notion. Even though critical paradigm was not part of the paradigm used in this study, the purpose of the discussion is to demonstrate the processes that paradigms have developed over the years in order to contextualise the chosen constructivist paradigm in this study.

### **Critical paradigm**

Critical paradigm researchers assume that knowledge is not neutral but is influenced by human interests, that all knowledge reflects the power and social relationships within society and that an important purpose of knowledge construction is to help people improve society (Banks, 1995). It started late in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Amongst the main proponents of this paradigm are Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, and Jurgen Habermas (Hoffman, 1989; Jay, 1996).

The purpose of the critical paradigm is not only to understand situations or phenomena but to change them. In other words, the critical paradigm differs from constructivism by acknowledging the power dynamics that exist in societies and adding the social change element to research. Researchers who

work within this paradigm are interested in such concepts as legitimacy and equality, voice, ideology, power, participation, representation, inclusion and interest. For example, if we say that people have their truth, that truth links to power. Thus, the researchers need to look at how a truth is tied to power relations, with the intent to emancipate the marginalised group of society and give them a voice. The basic intent of doing research, in this case, is to empower and free the disempowered to realise a genuinely democratic society (Mertens, 2010; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2011). This paradigm adopts the qualitative approaches to research; however, it does not form part of this study. The purpose of its inclusion in this discussion is to indicate how paradigms have shifted over the years with regard to approaches used in research. The following section discusses the latest move towards a mixed methods approach.

### **The move towards a mixed method approach**

Drawing from the discussion on paradigms above, the researcher adopted a position of going to the research field with an open mind and using the methodology that is not fixed to any one paradigm but is rather guided by the research problem and the research questions. This choice is influenced by Teddlie and Yu (2007) and Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), who argue that it is possible for a researcher to link quantitative and qualitative methods together in a creative way to answer the research questions without fixating the methods within one paradigm. It also enables the research to explore the phenomenon

of study on both a large scale using quantitative and an in-depth observation through qualitative methods. The use of these methods increases the reliability of data gathered and validity of the findings. This provides the basis for the choice of mixed method convergent parallel design for this study that is discussed in the next section.

### **Mixed methods convergent parallel research design**

The study adopted a mixed methods research design, to interrogate the research critical questions. These required an investigation using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Research questions play a central role in the process of designing a mixed method study (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; 2010; Creswell, 2011). They determine the type of information to collect and the process of how it is gathered. According to Greene (2007) and Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), mixed methods research is research in which the researcher collects and analyses data, and integrates the findings from both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The usefulness of this approach is that it strengthens the understanding and analysis of the phenomenon being investigated, thus enabling the researcher to achieve a deeper insight into the research phenomenon. Furthermore, Greene (2007) conceptualises this form of inquiry as a multifaceted way of looking at the social world; the multiple ways of seeing and hearing, the multiple ways of making sense of the social world, and the multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued and cherished.



Creswell and Plano-Clark (2010) describe convergence parallel design as occurring when the researcher collects and analyses both qualitative and quantitative data in a single research process and then merges the two sets of results into an overall interpretation. This design is in line with the objective and the research questions of this study, in the sense that the quantitative data was collected through a cross-sectional survey of 400 teachers. The qualitative data was generated from Grade Four teachers' interpretation of their own experiences in teaching English Second Language learners using English as LoLT. Five focus group discussions were conducted with teachers to produce qualitative data, and both sets of quantitative and qualitative data were analysed and compared to arrive at the overall interpretation. The quantitative approach (cross-sectional survey) was used for generalisation purposes on the attitudes of Grade Four teachers towards second language acquisition and language-across-the-curriculum. The qualitative data enables an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences in teaching the ESL Grade Four learners using English as LoLT. Diagrammatically the convergence parallel design as adapted from Creswell and Plano-Clark (2010) is represented in figure 4.1 below:

**Figure 4. 1 Convergence Parallel Design**

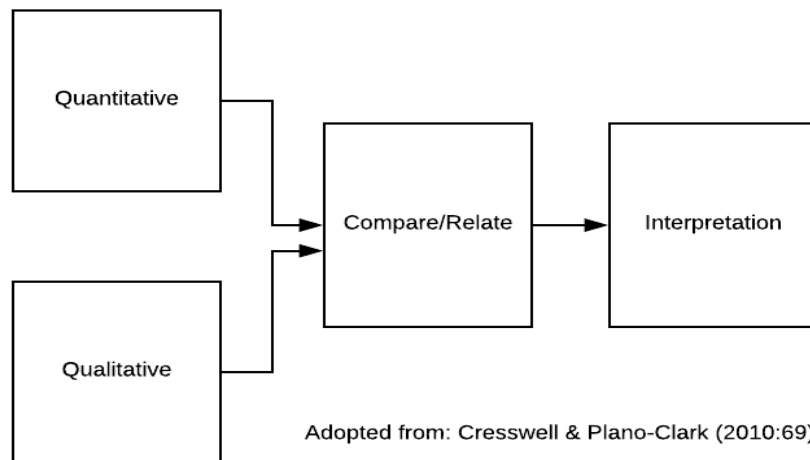
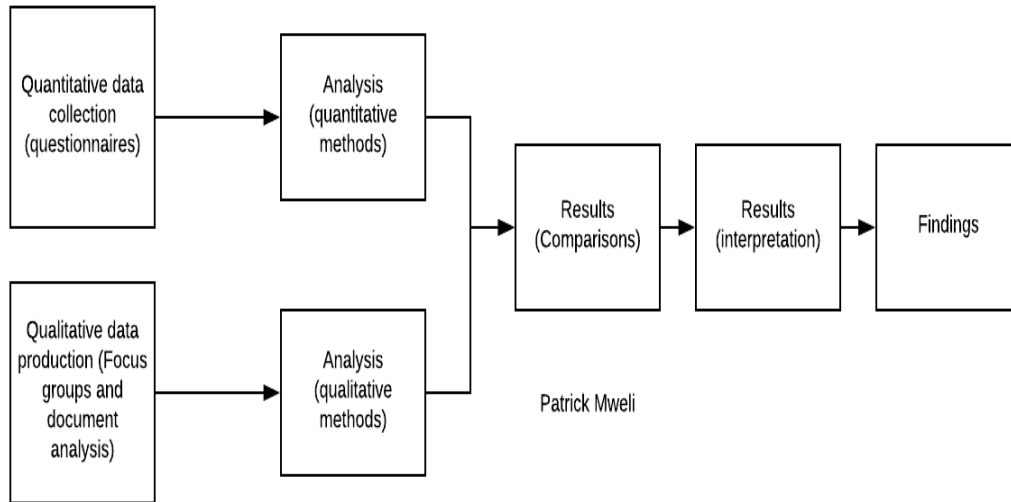


Figure 4.1 illustrates the convergence parallel design. The convergence parallel design enables the interpretation as “to what extent and in what way the two sets of data converge, diverge from each other, and/or combine to create a better understanding in response to the study’s overall purpose” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010, p. 78). Figure 4.2 illustrate the application of the convergence parallel design to this study:

**Figure 4. 2 Application of Convergence Parallel Design**



The quantitative data was collected using questionnaires to explore teachers’ attitudes. Concurrently with this data collection, qualitative focus group interviews and document analysis were conducted to explore teachers’ experiences in teaching ESL Grade Four learners using English as LoLT. The two sets of data were analysed independently. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS software to apply descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, while the qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The results from the two sets of data were compared and interpreted to arrive at the overall findings.

### **Research Field**

The research site was comprised of two districts; UMgungundlovu and Pinetown districts, both situated in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South

Africa. According to the Department of Basic Education Educational Management Information System (EMIS) report of May 2016, the Pinetown district records show the 2016 enrolment statistics as 26,776 Grade Four learners who are registered in both <sup>5</sup>public and independent Schools serviced by 765 teachers (DBE EMIS, 2016). The UMgungundlovu district enrolment figures of 2016 are reported as 19,770 learners registered for Grade Four and 565 teachers servicing those (DBE EMIS, 2016). The targeted schools were from urban (urban schools and former model C schools) and semi-rural (township schools) environments, which reflect the mixed population regarding socio-politico-economic contexts. The reason for this approach was to explore attitudes and lived experiences of Grade Four teachers in managing the language transition from different school contexts and with different perspectives. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 show the geographical maps of the municipalities in which the research site is situated.

KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa consist of twelve education districts: namely, UMkhanyakude, Zululand, Amajuba, UMzinyathi, UThukela, King Cetshwayo, ILembe, UMgungundlovu, Harry Gwala, UGu, Pinetown, and UMLazi districts. The demarcation of the ten districts is based on municipality boundaries, except EThekweni Metro municipality that is split into Pinetown and UMLazi district. The Pinetown district covers the north part of EThekweni municipality while UMLazi district forms the southern part of the municipality. UMgungundlovu and the Pinetown Districts were selected as the research sites for this study.

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<sup>5</sup> Public school are fully under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education (DoE) and independent schools are privately own and also monitored by the DoE through policy measures.

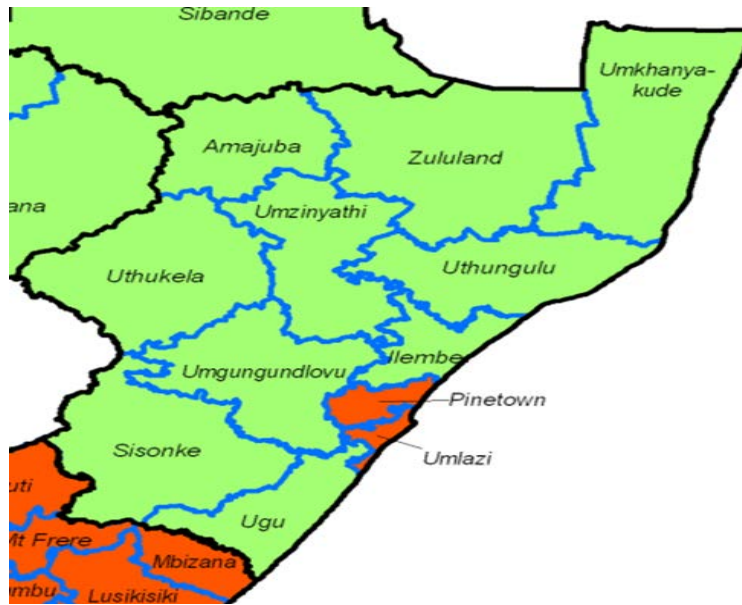
**Figure 4. 3 UMgungundlovu**



From: [www.municipalities.co.za](http://www.municipalities.co.za)

Figure 4.3 shows UMgungundlovu district, which is the municipality comprised of the following Wards; UMshwati, UMsunduzi, EMkhambathini, Richmond, IMpendle, UMngeni, and IMpofana. The teachers who participated in the project were drawn from the schools that were widely distributed across the seven wards. Some schools were selected from the Pinetown District that is shown in Figure 4.4 below:

**Figure 4. 4 Pinetown District**



<https://www.google.co.za/search?q=kzn+education+districts+map&biw=1366&bih=643>

The Pinetown is comprised of four circuits: Hammarsdale, KwaMashu, Phoenix, and UMhlathuzana. Each circuit is divided into four wards and together form 16 wards. The teachers who participated in the study were sampled from the wards within the selected circuits (see Table 4.2 below).

### **Population and sampling procedures**

The population of this study consists of all teachers who teach a subject in Grade Four in selected urban and rural schools of Pinetown and UMgungundlovu Districts in KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. The study has two sampling procedures that are in line with convergent parallel design mixed research method: that is, cluster and purposive sampling.

## **Cluster sampling**

In research, a cluster is any entire group with similar characteristics (Karnell, Cupp, Zimmerman, Feist-Price, & Bennie, 2006). Cluster sampling is a sampling procedure where the population is partitioned into blocks referred to as Primary Sampling Units (PSUs). Each PSU is composed of secondary units or elements called Secondary Sampling Units (SSU). In other words, the SSU are sub-units of the PSU. The PSUs (cluster) are randomly selected to be included in the sample. In this regard, every PSU has equal chance to be included in the sample. Although the PSUs are selected, it is the SSUs that are observed.

In this study, I then used the two-stage cluster sampling. In this sampling, the circuits within a district are regarded as PSUs (the clusters). The wards within the circuit are classified as SSUs. In the first stage of sampling, the clusters to be included were then selected using random sampling. In this regard, the researcher allocated numbers to the seven circuits. Then all the circuits allocated number one (1) were selected to take part in the study. This means all clusters had equal chance of being selected. The list of the circuits and their wards for each of the two districts (Pinetown and UMgungundlovu) are indicated in Table 4.1 below:

**Table 4. 1: Sampling Frame**

AREA	CIRCUITS	Sample from Ward
PINETOWN DISTRICT	<b>1.Hammersdale</b>	100
	2.KwaMashu	-
	<b>3.Phoenix</b>	100
	4.UMhlatuzana	-
UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT	<b>5.Camperdown</b>	100
	6.Midlands	-
	<b>7.Vulindlela</b>	100
TOTAL SAMPLE SIZE		400

Table 4.1 indicates that in the Pinetown district, Hammersdale and Phoenix circuits were selected while in the UMgungundlovu district, Camperdown and Vulindlela circuits were selected as research sites. The participating circuits are indicated in bold in the above diagram and next to each is the number of teachers that were selected from it. The wards within the circuits were also selected using random sampling. The same procedure of allocating number one (1) or two (2) that was used for the circuit, was applied in this case. All wards allocated the number one (1) participated in the study. This process was repeated until the required number of 400 returned questionnaires was achieved, since some of the questionnaires were not returned in the initial administration of the questionnaires. All Grade Four teachers from the selected wards were invited to participate in the study. The response rate was satisfactory since the principals and the subject Head of Departments (HODs) within the schools assisted in motivating teachers to participate in the study. There was a small percentage of schools where teachers were unable to participate for various reasons. In such cases, the researcher returned to the list, scratched out that particular school, and then allocated the number one (1) to



the next school. The number of teacher participants from each district (Pinetown and UMgungundlovu) was 200, and the total for both was 400 teachers. The teachers were spread across the selected wards.

### **Purposive sampling**

This section entails focus group sampling covering the qualitative part of this study. The qualitative research approach is relevant in this section because of its reliance on verbal descriptions and interpretation of events that disclose the richness of human experiences (Dunn, 2010). Purposive sampling was thus used to select the sample. The researcher had a purpose that led to the selection of the participants (Plowright, 2011, p. 43) and in this regard, the researcher intended to select participants who have the experience in teaching Grade Four learners whose mother tongue was neither English nor Afrikaans. For these learners, Grade Four is the period of language transition when English suddenly becomes their LoLT. The selection was done by first defining the criterion for the required participants and then identifying those individuals or groups that possess similar characteristics (Patton, 2002; Palys, 2008; De Vos et al., 2011). Hence, in this way the researcher used his judgment as to which participants could provide the best information to achieve the objectives of this study. Several researchers (Kumar, 2011; Bryman, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2017) have alluded to this idea when stating that purposive sampling is a process of selecting people who are likely to have the required information.

Purposive sampling is thus a feature of qualitative research used for selecting participants by focusing on special qualities necessary for eliciting the required information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2013). In this regard, the researcher hand-picked the participants and included them in the sample, by judging the typicality or possession of particular characteristics being sought (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Hence, 20 Grade Four subject teachers participated in five focus group sessions; that is, three groups from urban schools, which included an elite private school with two participants and a public former model C school with six participants. The other two focus group sessions were conducted in semi-rural (township) schools with five participants per focus group discussion.

All participating teachers were selected from the group of teachers who took part in the survey section (Part 1) of this study to allow continuity of information gathering. Where indicated, further maximum variation sampling was employed to ensure that the sample covers all the essential characteristics of the population under study (Jayaraman, 2000). During the visit to the districts to do sampling, the researcher was received with warmth and kindness in most of the schools in both Pinetown and UMgungundlovu districts. However, some of the schools seemed to be unwelcoming, more especially the elite schools who regarded the study as an interference and troubling of their teachers. These schools were suspicious, were not eager to engage in more discussion, and rejected the invitation. The reason for this behaviour is unknown but seem to point at signs of mistrust and intolerance. Nevertheless,

one elite school participated. The next section elaborate on the research strategy of the study.

### **Research strategy**

The empirical study was conducted in two phases in line with the mixed method design. Phase one was a quantitative part of the study, which used a cross-sectional survey where a questionnaire was administered. It aimed at exploring teachers' language attitudes. Part two constituted of a qualitative approach and utilised focus groups to produce rich qualitative data about teachers' experiences

#### **Part one: Quantitative cross-sectional survey**

In this section, the approach used in Part one of the study to explore the language attitudes of the teachers at Grade Four level is presented.

Phase one of the study is cross-sectional in design, meaning that it is designed to study a phenomenon by taking a cross-section of it at one time (Babbie, 1990). This is evident in the sense that 400 Grade Four teachers sampled across Pinetown and UMgungundlovu Districts took part in a short period of time. A sample of 200 teachers from each district was selected. All teachers who teach

Grade Four across all subjects in both districts participated in the study. The selection of teachers to participate in the study is cross-sectional with regard to the time; that is, they all taught in 2016 at the period in which the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was a guiding document in the South African schooling system.

The aim of using a cross-sectional survey was to identify the prevailing attitudes of selected teachers across the two districts. Kumar (2011) maintains that cross-sectional designs are useful in obtaining the overall picture of the phenomenon being studied as it stands at the time of the study. The purpose for choosing the survey design for this research was rooted in Babbie's (1990) explanation that surveys enable researchers to generalise from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristics, attitudes or behaviour of the population. Furthermore, researchers benefit more in using surveys than other design methods in the sense that the cost of conducting them is very low and there is a rapid turnaround in data collection.

The study also benefited in the sense that the mixed methods design assisted the researcher in reaching a large population of the participants and a lower cost. The sampling for the cross-sectional survey enabled the study to have a rapid turnaround in data collection in two district within a very short time. More importantly, the cross-sectional surveys targeted 400 Grade Four teachers as a sample for all Grade Four teachers in KwaZulu-Natal province. It is important to note that not all teachers that were targeted participated as

initially planned. To reach the targeted sample the researcher continuously used random sampling as explained previously in the sampling section (4.5) until the maximum of 400 teachers was achieved to enable a fair representation of the population and allow the findings to be generalised.

### **Assessment of teachers' attitudes toward LoLT: The language attitude questionnaire**

The researcher adopted the Language Attitude Questionnaire that was developed by Bekker (2004) for testing language attitudes of tertiary learners at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The researcher read all the questions and realised that, if used to test the language attitudes of teachers at primary school level, it could produce interesting results, but it needed to be adapted to suit Grade Four teachers' context. Minor alterations were done to the original questionnaire to suit the population studied in this research. Bekker (2004) originally designed it to measure language attitudes at tertiary level. The adjustments of some of the questions was done to make them relevant to the primary schools. For example, the following words were changed: university or tertiary education to the word 'primary' school. To illustrate, 'Only some of the African languages should be used at South African tertiary institutions to teach' was changed to, 'Only some of the African languages should be used at South African primary schools to teach'. The researcher also added the section on teachers' biographical information.

Before the development of Bekker's (2004) questionnaire, there was no evidence of a standardised questionnaire available to measure a particular aspect of language attitude. Language attitude research in South Africa, as elsewhere, needed the design and implementation of measurement instruments, such as attitude scales with tested internal reliability, to measure teachers' language attitudes. Hence, this questionnaire was adopted because of its reliability that has already been tested. The scale first emerged with three factors when factor analysis was performed; namely, language and understanding, English only and language and identity. The means and the standard deviations and reliability coefficients of each of the three factors comprising the absolute scale are provided in Bekker's questionnaire. Cronbach's (internal consistency) alphas were reported as 0, 83; 0, 77; and 0, 54 for the three factors respectively (see Appendix 1).

The language questionnaire was then piloted. The researchers wrote the letters to the principals of the randomly selected schools in both Pinetown and UMgungundlovu districts. The permission was granted in most schools and few were rejected. A small scale of 50 Grade Seven teachers was sampled purposefully and with convenient sampling across the two districts to determine the accuracy and relevance of the questionnaire items. The researcher used random sampling as explained earlier in section 4.5 in a small scale. Twenty-five Grade Seven teachers were selected from each district; that is Pinetown, UMgungundlovu districts where 15 teachers were chosen from semi-rural schools, and the next 15 from urban model C schools, including the elite schools. The sampled teachers were not eligible to take part in the main

research project as it was targeting Grade Four teachers. The input from pilot teacher respondents was limited to testing the reliability of questionnaire items. In this regard, the respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire and provide comments on the clarity and relevance of questions to language teaching and learning at primary school.

Out of 50 questionnaire that were sent out to teachers, 34 were returned completed, 10 were returned blank, and six did not return. The responses were not statistically analysed by the researcher since the piloting purpose was to determine the accuracy of the questionnaire item; the focus was on the comments made by the teacher. Most responses indicated some spelling mistakes, wrong numbering and some questions not correctly constructed. The researcher then attended to those comments and prepared the final questionnaire for Grade Four teachers' survey.

After piloting, the questionnaire was prepared for the survey. The researcher, assisted by one PhD student, administered the questionnaires and two Bachelor of Education (B Ed) fourth year students entered data into SPSS. The researcher, with the assistance of the project promoter, trained the research assistants on their roles in the study. For example, the PhD student research assistant was trained on how to conduct focus groups interviews while the two B Ed learners got training on entering data on the SPSS and Excel. The researcher and his research assistance went physically to the participating schools to distribute and collect the questionnaires. The response rate within

certain schools was good due to the assistance received from the principals and HODs, who ensured that the teachers completed the questionnaire, and were ready for collection. However, the majority of the schools had difficulty in completing the questionnaire on time. Teachers complained of being busy and overloaded and thus did not have time to attend to the questionnaires, even though they were willing to participate. This situation resulted in them postponing the due date and asking the researcher to collect on later dates. Sometimes the researchers had to go to the same school three or four times to get most of the completed questionnaires. A very small percentage did not come back and another small portion came back blank.

## **Procedure**

Participants completed the questionnaire with 62 items (see Appendix 1). The researcher administered the instrument with the assistance of three research assistants. As mentioned above, the researchers first visited the participating schools to negotiate with Grade Four teachers to get their consent to participate in the study. The teachers then signed the consent forms, and appointments were made for the administration of the questionnaires. Due to the length of the questionnaire, participants completed them during their own time after work. The researcher requested the participants to bring the questionnaires back at the agreed time. This procedure was convenient for most teachers, due to the limited free time they had during school hours. However, it had some problems in that not all teachers brought the questionnaires back on time and



the assistant researcher had to come back a couple of times to one school to collect the completed questionnaires.

## **Part two: Qualitative research design using focus groups**

Phase two used the qualitative approach and focused on the in-depth understanding of the experiences of Grade Four teachers in teaching learners who speak English as a second language using English as LoLT. The qualitative research approach is relevant in this section since, owing to its reliance on verbal descriptions and interpretation of events, it uncovers the richness of human experiences.

According to Maxwell (2005), qualitative data that is produced within this paradigm is not restricted to the results of specific methods that are used, but the researcher is also an instrument in a qualitative study approach. The researchers' eyes and ears are used as tools to make sense of what is going on in the context of the participants. This approach allows the researcher to generate data and explore rich and in-depth data about the phenomenon being studied.

### **Focus group sessions**

Twenty-Four Grade Four subject teachers participated in five focus groups sessions. The number of teachers per session differed from semi-rural schools and urban schools, depending on the number of teachers who were then teaching Grade Four and those who have taught it and were willing to participate. Where indicated, further maximum variation sampling was employed to ensure that the sample covers all the essential characteristics of the population under study (Jayaraman, 2000). These sessions were purposefully selected to include teachers from semi-rural and urban schools. The researcher invited Grade Four teachers to focus group sessions through their principals because these sessions were conducted during lunch breaks and after school within the school's premises. The principals through Grade Four HODs gave the researcher permission and set the date for him to conduct focus group discussions. Where the dates of different schools clashed, the researcher used the services of the trained research assistant to conduct focus group discussions. All Grade Four teachers teaching all subjects were invited to these sessions. Participating teachers also granted consent in writing for their participation. The sessions were conducted on different dates and times as set by the schools to be appropriate for them.

The focus group sessions were used to produce qualitative data on how Grade Four teachers negotiated the language gap between Grade Three to Grade Four transitions; their experiences of the language divide, how it operated in the classroom, as well as how they mitigated the challenges. Furthermore, after a broad and deep reading of the available literature on language education, mother tongue education and the language in education policy of South Africa,

the researcher, with the assistance of the promoter of the study, designed open-ended questions that would attempt to provide answers to the second research question of the study (refer to Appendix 6).

At Pinetown district, the response rate of the schools to focus groups sessions was low in the sense that the majority of schools were willing to complete the questionnaires but reluctant to participate in focus group sessions. The prevalence of this attitude was higher in semi-rural compared to urban public schools and independent elite schools. According to the researcher's observation, the influence on whether to accept or reject the focus group sessions came from the school management teams (SMT), who took decisions and disseminated them to staff members. Nevertheless, with the assistance of the principals and the heads of department of the identified schools, permission was granted and dates were set for the sessions.

The response rate at UMgungundlovu district to focus groups invitation was satisfactory. Most of the identified potential participant schools were willing to be involved without any difficulty. The area that the researcher visited was around the Pietermaritzburg campus of the university. According to the researcher's observation, these schools were used to being visited by researchers, as they knew the process and could even report that another researcher came after you, and did one and two. In this regard, sampling in UMgungundlovu was not problematic as compared to the Pinetown district indicated above.

During the focus group discussions, the researcher noticed that there were different reactions between teachers teaching in semi-rural schools and those teaching in elite schools in urban areas. Semi-rural teachers used these sessions as a platform to vent out their problems of teaching English second language learners using English as LoLT. Specifically, they related how the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is insensitive to the needs of ESL learners who are experiencing language change, and how this affects their effective teaching (i.e. their practice within the classroom). They were indignant towards the Curriculum Policy and that indicated the mood, which highlighted that teachers are not coping well with the curriculum policy document. The majority of these teachers are English second language speakers themselves.

In contrast, teachers from elite urban schools displayed a cool, collected mood. They were explaining at length about their success in managing second language acquisition. More particularly, on how they bridged the language gap if the learner comes from schools that used different language as LoLT. These teachers displayed a mood of being comfortable with what they were doing in terms of teaching ESL learners using English as LoLT. The majority of them are English mother tongue speakers. Finally, all the sessions went well. Teachers actively participated and enjoyed the focus groups discussion sessions and others even mentioned that doing this study was a brave step by the researcher.

## **Document analysis**

The researcher used document analysis in this study to triangulate data collection methods in order to generate rich qualitative data. Documents are described as being helpful to research when the intention is, “ to uncover meaning, develop understanding and discover insight relevant to the research problem” (Merriam, 1988). The research problem in this study is that most English second language learners do not possess the necessary English proficiency to use it as LoLT. In this regard, the researcher, in exploring how teachers mitigate the language transition within the latter situation, decided to explore ESL learners’ workbooks across different subject areas at Grade Four to understand and interpret how learners use English in written class activities. Secondly, the researcher explored teachers’ lesson plan to understand the methods teachers used to teach ESL learners using English as LoLT, and lastly school language policies and the national language policy in education were also explored to uncover policy provision in terms of languages used as LoLT in South African schools.

Permission to access learners’ books and teachers’ lesson plans was requested verbally from the principal and the HODs after the administration of the language questionnaire and focus group discussion sessions. The permission was granted on condition that the researcher should access and use learners’ workbooks and teachers’ within the school environment. Principals allowed the researcher to print the school language policy, as was requested. An electronic copy of the national

language in education policy was retrieved from the Internet. The researcher then used the afternoon time when the learners were dismissed to read and thematically analyse the documents. The themes that emerged were incorporated into the themes that emerge from data gathered during focus group discussions. The next section expands on both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

### **Data analysis process**

In this section, the researcher presents the quantitative data analysis method used in the study to investigate the attitudes that Grade Four teachers had towards LoLT at this level, as well as Grade Four teachers' lived experiences.

### **Quantitative data analysis**

The participants' responses from the survey were assigned numerical values in the codebook. Numerical data was captured into a computer using SPSS software for analysis purposes. As mentioned previously, other research assistants assisted in capturing data on Excel spreadsheets and the captured data on Excel spreadsheet was then transferred to SPSS software. Then 400

questionnaires that were returned was sent to a professional statistician within the University for cleaning and statistical analysis.

Data was preliminarily analysed using the descriptive analysis method provided by the SPSS software to determine the mean and the frequency of responses in each category. The relevance of the latter is that descriptive statistics transform or summarise a set of data into a visual overview, either such as a table or graph or into one or more numbers that summarise data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Data in this case was analysed and presented in tables and graphs using the help of SPSS software.

Then inferential statistical analysis followed; the majority of these tests were done by the professional statistician, while the researcher did some of them using SPSS software. Primarily, the principal component factor analysis was done on the language attitude questionnaire to identify the factors (see subheading 5.3). Thereafter, the pattern matrix (Table 5.8) was developed indicating factor loading. The four factors were identified and named as follows: Factor 1=African language preference; Factor 2=English language preference, Factor 3=Challenges of African languages and Factor 4=African language identity and development. A component correlation matrix (see Table 5.9) was then developed for to determine the relationship between the four factors. The researcher then used the One-way ANOVA test (subheading 5.4) to determine the influence of biographical information of the respondents on the four factors. Since the One-way ANOVA test cannot account for variables

with two items, the researcher then used the t-test to measure the equality of variance for language, gender and area. Multi-linear regression (Table 5.20) was conducted to determine the relationship between the four factors and the variation between age, experience, qualification, language and subject taught. The next section elaborates on the qualitative data analysis (Part 2) of the study.

### **Thematic analysis of qualitative data**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data that was generated during focus group discussions. Thematic analysis is relevant to this study since it allows themes to emerge and provides a more detailed account of Grade Four teachers' experiences by focusing on the themes that emerge from the data. In other words, thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns [themes] within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of thematic analysis is represented as follow:

1. Familiarising yourself with your data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis begins by a thorough reading and re-reading of raw data so that the researcher familiarises himself/herself with the data. Thereafter, the researcher will have deeper understanding of the data and start generating initial codes. From these codes, a search for themes and possible codes that can be brought together to



formulate a theme is undertaken (Boyatzis, 1998; Crabtree & Miller, 1999). The reviewing and definition of these themes will then take place and lead to the final stage of producing the report. This process aims at reducing and transforming data and revealing its hidden meanings, and this leads to thick descriptions and the interpretation of data.

In this study, the researcher has followed the above mentioned thematic analysis process by first reading and re-reading raw data to familiarise himself with the concepts and arguments inherent in Grade Four teachers' narratives of their experiences which were produced using focus groups discussion sessions. Then the researcher coded raw data using different colours to represent each code. Common codes were then put together to identify the themes that emerged. The researcher then reviewed and defined the themes with reference to raw qualitative data and what participants meant, considering how they presented it and what was not said but implied. This was undertaken in detail; in chapters five and six the report on the findings (the themes that emerge from data) is discussed.

### **Reliability and validity**

### **Quantitative survey [Part one]**

Reliability in quantitative research is more concerned with the reliability of the instruments. In this sense it means that if the responses of the participants can remain the same and can be determined in a test-retest method, the instrument can be said to have stability (Charles, 1998; Mertler, 2015). Hence, when there is high degree of stability, there is an indication of high degree of reliability in the case where the results are repeatable. Mixed method approaches account for two types of validity (quantitative and qualitative understanding of validity). The questionnaire was subjected to internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The results of the test indicated Cronbach's Alpha =.826 which is greater than 0.6. The questionnaire can be said to have high degree of reliability and items in the questionnaire have high level of internal consistency. Validity, from a quantitative research perspective, determines whether the research measures what it was intended to measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015). To ensure the validity of instruments used in this study, the questionnaire was piloted to determine the errors in spelling, sentence structure and clarity of meaning to maximize the validity and reliability in part one of this research. Errors that were determined during piloting were corrected before the questionnaire was administered in the field. Further, the questionnaire was also be subjected to factor analysis to establish factorial validity while the use of two survey questionnaires accounts for convergent validation.

## **Qualitative [Part two]**

Qualitative approaches (Part two) view validity as the trustworthiness of the study (Saville, 2008; Kumar, 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Trustworthiness enables the achievement of credibility, confirmability, and transferability of data and findings within qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The trustworthiness of data and findings is necessary for this section since for a qualitative researcher, understanding is more suitable than validity. In other words, qualitative researchers use the term trustworthiness to refer to validity. Trustworthiness is ensured regarding credibility, confirmability, and the transferability of data and findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The data that was collected during the focus group sessions was recorded to achieve credibility of the data. Hence, data gathered reflects the realities and the lived experiences of the respondents.

The researcher tape-recorded the data from focus group sessions to capture accurately the information articulated by the participants and transcribed it at a later stage. A detailed reading of the transcripts following the process, as indicated in Table 4.2, ensured the credibility of the study. Furthermore, to limit the researcher's own biases, the researcher made field notes and recorded his thoughts and feelings, which he made open to discussion with his peers (PhD students, researchers, project supervisors, and participants). Data gathered from the research process was available for other researchers in the field and project managers of probing. The researchers in this regard made himself available for interrogation and answering of the questions arising from the research through seminar presentation and PhD cohort group sessions. The researcher engaged in the above-mentioned activities to guard against

subjectivity in the process and reporting of the results. A copy of transcript was sent to each of the five schools where focus groups were conducted, for participants to read and confirm the accuracy of the information noted in the transcripts, so to achieve confirmability. The thick description of the context and presentation of the participants' responses verbatim provided enough details for the reader to check on the process and verify the findings. Consequently, the reader will be able to transfer the findings of the study to other contexts.

## **Ethical considerations**

### **Gatekeeping issues**

At the beginning, before the researcher commenced with the research fieldwork, he wrote the research proposal and submitted it to the School of Humanities to get their approval of the project as doable within the educational psychology discipline. Thereafter, the researcher presented the proposal to the panel that then gave the researcher the go-ahead with the study. Concurrently, the researcher sent an application form to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education to seek permission to do research in public schools and work with teachers as participants, and permission was granted with reference number (see Appendix 8). Another letter was sent to the school principals (see Appendix 4) asking permission to use the schools as research sites and to be allowed to engage with the teachers within the school premises. The researcher also submitted a research proposal to the University Ethics Committee to get

ethical clearance to do that the study. The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal granted ethical approval for the study. The ethical clearance number is HSS/1373/015D (see Appendix 6). After the analysis of the findings, the title of the study was adjusted and an application for this adjustment was made to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, and the certificate of amendment was issued (see Appendix 7). The following issues were addressed within the university ethical clearance.

### **Respect for persons**

Primarily, a letter to obtain participants informed consent was written (refer to Appendices 2 & 3). Informed consent has been described by Diener and Crandall (1978) as the procedure where the individual give permission to participate in a project with volition. It is important to note that all the participants in this study are competent, and they gave consent voluntarily and this increased the validity of this study (Nnebue, 2010; De Vos et al., 2011). In this letter, the researcher explained in detail what the study required of the participants. Within the content of the consent form, participants were informed about the nature of the study and were given assurance of the confidentiality of information they would submit and issues of anonymity. This issue enabled the participants to make an informed decision whether to participate in the study or not. In addition, participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time during the research process and for them

to participate they had to give their consent to do so by signing the letter. The researcher then scheduled a short meeting of about 15 minutes with the potential participants and explained to them the value of the study and the importance of their participation including their free will in giving information without the fear. Since the Department of Education and the schools approved the study, it was explained to the participants that these approvals did not mean that they were obliged to participate.

Moreover, participants were informed about the confidentiality of information in the research process. Participants were made aware that everyone who took part in the study was bound by ethics in research not to publish the information that was rendered in these discussions without the permission of all the respondents and of the researchers, who would ensure that ethical issues are met in this regard. The participants' identities would be protected by using pseudonyms when publishing the results. The confidentiality and anonymity discussed above also took care of 'non-maleficence' (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), meaning 'do no harm' to the participants, as the participants were made aware that their identity and descriptions of schools were protected by using pseudonyms where it was necessary. Participants then signed the consent form to confirm their participation.

### **Social value of the study**

South Africa as a multilingual country had a long-standing language problem in education that is likely to be rooted in the use of Eurocentric languages and their western ways of knowing to educate the African language-speaking children. In this manner, the findings of the study might be of benefit to the policy makers, in the sense that the study provides new information on the relationship between learners' and teachers' worldviews that is achieved when using the mother tongue. Implementing the recommendations of this study thus has the potential to give African-speaking learners full access to knowledge. Moreover, teachers will also benefit in the sense that, by using the information and mother tongue educational model introduced in this study, they will be able to teach better and become effective capable others in the process of learning and teaching that occurs within the classroom.

The main aim of education is to empower the citizens of the country to live better by fully participating in the society and the economy of the country and global economy. Hence, when African-speaking learners get full access to knowledge and develop critical thinking, this is likely to result in innovation that will in turn benefit the whole citizenship of this country. It is also important that the findings of the study and its recommendations on the proper implementation of the language policy could provide some solution to the language problems nationally in South African and around the African countries that have been dominated by the hegemony of English over decades.

## **Non-maleficence: Preventing harm**

Non-maleficence refers to the fact that no harm should be done to the participants of a research project, whether physically, emotionally, personally or professionally (Cohen et al., 2011). The methods used in this study (questionnaire and focus groups interviews) have been carefully designed to avoid any of the abovementioned factors. However, in research there might be unintended outcomes that might creep in as the research process progresses. In this case there might be an infringement of professional integrity of the participants because of their work ethics. They are not allowed to give out information that would jeopardise the integrity of the institution in which they work or their beliefs system and attitudes. To avoid this situation, the researcher gave the participants full information on their rights to participate or not to participate in the study if they felt their professional ethics as teachers and their belief systems as individuals could be affected (Oliver, 2010).

## **Dissemination of findings**

The findings were presented in an honest and trustworthy manner to avoid bias, in the sense that bias is a deliberate attempt either to hide what the research has found or to highlight something disproportionate to its true existence. In this manner, the participants' responses were presented verbatim and the report was



presented to the participants to verify the authenticity of the report. Furthermore, the findings of the study were disseminated through the submission of a written report thesis to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's online database and libraries for other researchers and interested parties to access them. Another copy of the findings was sent to the Department of Education as the fulfilment of the requirement of one of the conditions for granting the permission to conduct in departmental schools. In this manner, the findings will be available to policy makers in this country and other stakeholders in education. All the participants will be informed of the availability of the thesis to them through the online system and University libraries.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the mixed methods convergent parallel design as the appropriate methodology to explore the language attitudes and lived experiences of Grade Four teachers in managing language change at this level. The design was influenced by the research questions of the study that required the collection of quantitative data on the language attitudes of teachers, and the gathering of qualitative data on the lived experiences of the teachers. The next chapter presents the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reports on the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data. The first part presents the personal profile of the respondents in terms of age, language, qualification, subject taught and area. It then proceeds to represent the results of the factor analysis process conducted on the language attitudes questionnaire. The following test results are reported: the data adequacy test, pattern matrix, component correlation matrix, scree plot, reliability statistics, named extracted factors, descriptive statistics, correlation of factors, the effect of biographical information on key variables, factors of attitudes towards LoLT by area and multi-linear regression analysis. Lastly, the qualitative findings are presented, done in a comparative manner under the following themes: African languages as LoLT; English language preference as LoLT; and parental involvement in education. The chapter concludes by providing the summary.

### **Personal profile of the respondents**

In this section, the researcher presents the personal profile of the respondents in terms of age, language, qualification, subject taught, and area. An overall finding in terms of demographic information is as follows: the majority of the respondents (almost 60%) are between the ages 40 to 60 years and a minority (40%) between 20 to 39 years (Table 5.1). Most of these teachers have a Bachelor of Education degree (49%) (Table 5.3) and 64% are IsiZulu mother tongue speakers while 36% are English mother tongue speakers (Table 5.2). The majority have a teaching experience that is between 1 and 10 years at 39.4% (Table 5.4). The largest subject grouping of these teachers is language

teachers (43%), followed by mathematics teachers (19.2%), then natural sciences teachers (14%) (Table 5.5). The remaining 17.4% of teachers teach other subjects such as EMS, Social Sciences and Life Skills. The demographic information is important in this study since it gives an indication of which factors influence the attitudes of these teachers towards the LoLT that is currently used to teach African learners at Grade Four level. The following sections expand on participants' demographic information.

### The age of the respondents

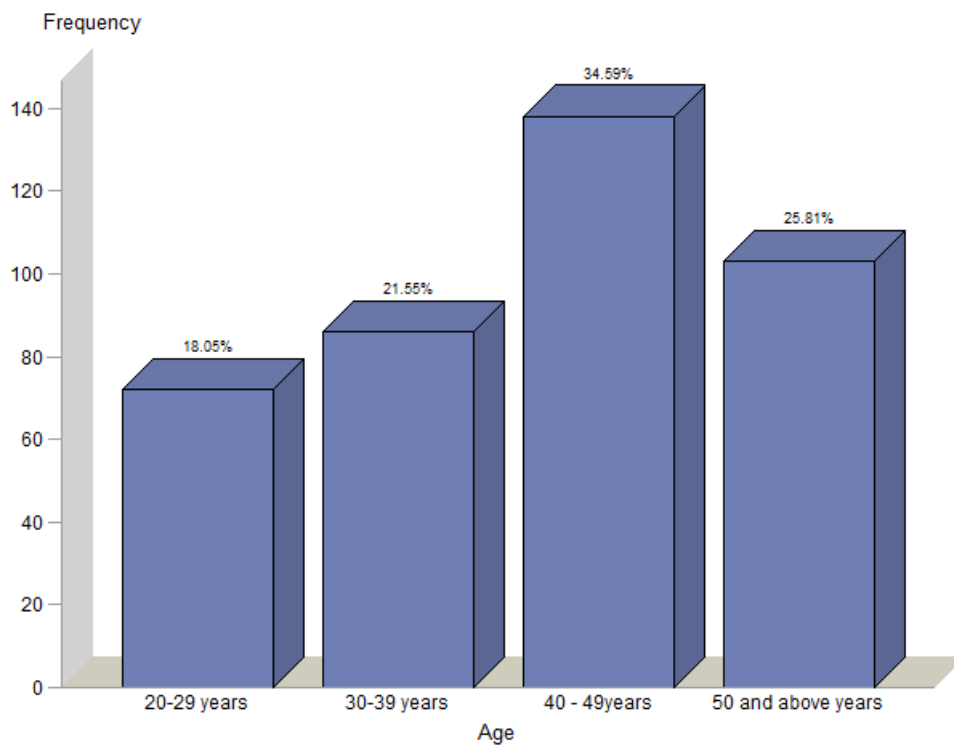
The age of the participating Grade Four teachers ranged from 20 to 50 and above years. Table 5.1 indicates that 18.05% of the respondent are in the age group of 20-29 years, 21.55% of the respondents are in age group of 30-39 years, 34.59% of the respondents are in the age group of 40-49 years, 25.81% of the respondents are in the age group of 50 and above years.

**Table 5. 1 Age distribution of respondents**

Age				
Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
20-29 years	72	18.05	72	18.05
30-39 years	86	21.55	158	39.60
40 - 49years	138	34.59	296	74.19

Age				
Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
50 and above years	103	25.81	399	100.00
Frequency Missing = 1				

**Figure 5. 1 Respondents distribution by age**



The researcher had grouped teachers into younger and older cohort of Grade Four teachers. The younger group of teachers was between the ages 20 to 39 years and the older group was aged 40 and above. In this case younger teacher

were N =158 while older teachers were N=241. There were thus many older teachers than younger teachers teaching Grade Four.

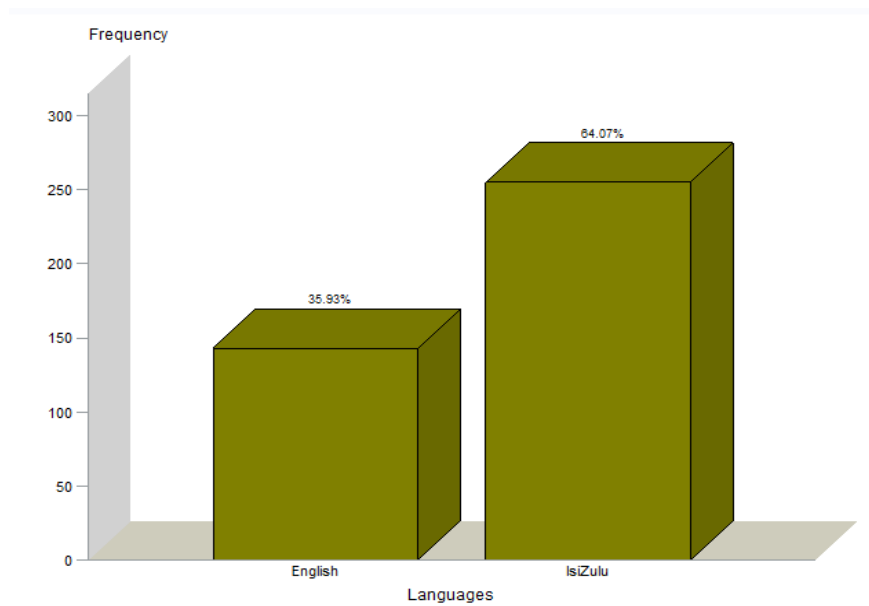
### Participants' languages

The respondents' home languages were either English or IsiZulu. 35.93% of the respondents indicated English as their home language and 64.07% of the respondents indicated IsiZulu as their home language. Two respondents did not indicate their home language, but this number is not sufficiently large to affect the outcome of the analysis.

**Table 5. 2 Home Language distribution of respondents**

<b>Home language</b>				
<b>Languages</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>English</b>	143	35.93	143	35.93
<b>IsiZulu</b>	255	64.07	398	100.00
<b>Frequency Missing=2</b>				

**Figure 5. 2 Respondents' distribution by home language**



The distribution of the respondent by language from table 5.2 indicates that IsiZulu is the most common home language, at 65%, followed by English at 35%. The difference in frequency (English, N=143 and IsiZulu, N=255) between the two groups reflects to some degree the demographics of the South African population, where the majority of the countries' inhabitants speaks African languages. Considering the South African population statistics as indicated by Statistics South Africa (Statistics release: P0302), that the total population of Africans is 80.2% and Whites/Asians constitute 10.8% of the total population, the representation of languages indicated above is a fair distribution of the sample. This is also evident in schools where the majority of teachers speak African languages. The next section deals with the teaching qualifications of the participating Grade Four teachers.

## Respondents' teaching qualifications

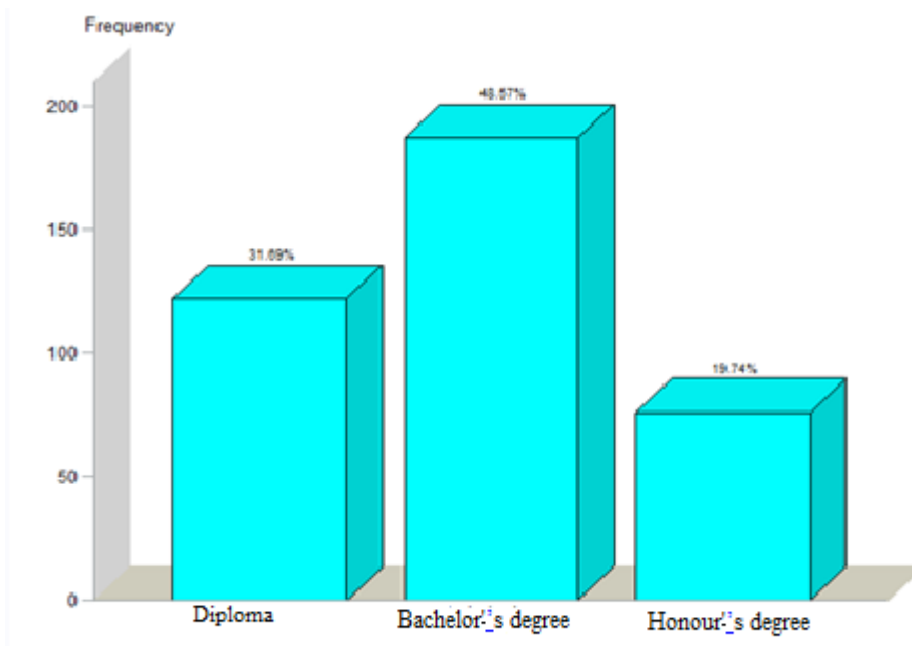
The distribution of the respondents by qualification from Table 5.3 indicates that the majority of Grade Four teachers have a Bachelor's degree at 49%, followed by teachers with a Diploma at 31%, and then teachers with an Honours degree at 20%.

**Table 5. 3 Distribution of respondents by Qualification**

<b>Qualifications of respondents</b>				
<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Diploma	122	31.69	122	31.69
Bachelor's degree	187	48.57	309	80.26
Honour's degree	76	19.74	385	100.00
<b>Frequency Missing=15</b>				



**Figure 5.3 Respondents distribution by qualification**



In this regard, the information provided above showed that most Grade Four teachers are properly qualified, and this indicates that they know what they are doing within the classroom and have authority on what they do. They have relevant knowledge, they understand what they teach and their voice is believable. The demographic of how long the participant teachers have been teaching Grade Four follows in the next section.

### **Years of teaching experiences of the respondents**

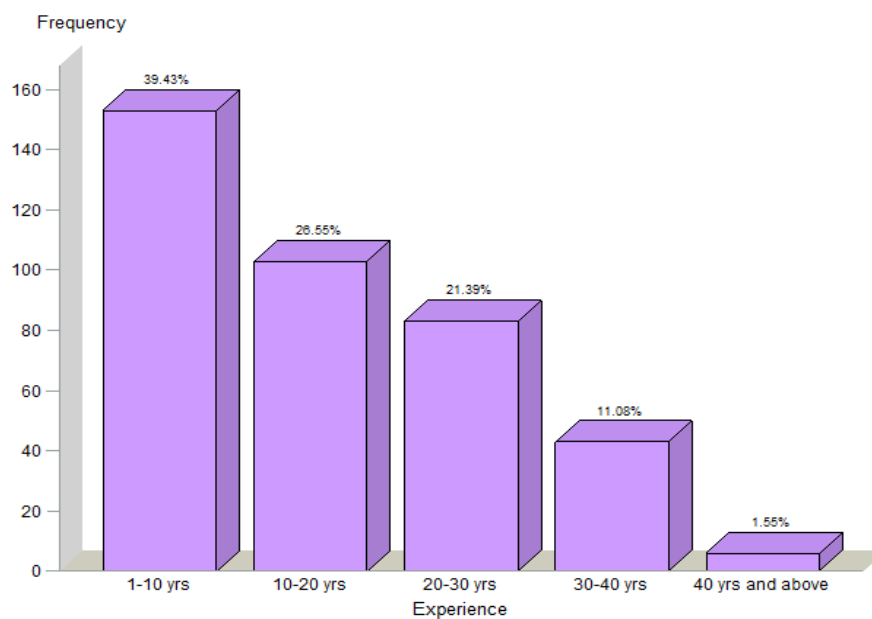
The distribution of respondents by years of experience from Table 5.4 shows that the largest group of teachers teaching Grade Four have had 1-10 years of

teaching experience (39.4%), closely followed by teachers with 10-20 years (26.5%), then teachers with 20-30 years of experience (21.3%), and teachers with 30-40 years of teaching experience (11%). The proportion of teachers with experience of 40 years and above is only 1.5%.

**Table 5. 4 Experience**

Years of teaching experience				
Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1-10 yrs	153	39.43	153	39.43
10-20 yrs	103	26.55	256	65.98
20-30 yrs	83	21.39	339	87.37
30-40 yrs	43	11.08	382	98.45
40 yrs and above	6	1.55	388	100.00
Frequency Missing=12				

**Figure 5. 4 Respondents by years of teaching experience**



Teaching experience is an important aspect in this study since the study aimed to gather rich information on the lived teaching experiences of Grade Four teachers. The more years of experience the teachers has, the deeper and richer the information he/she possesses. Figure 5.4 indicated that teachers with 1-10 years of teaching experience are more. However, a combined frequency of teachers with more than 10years of teaching experience is more than the frequency of teachers with 1-10years of teaching experience.

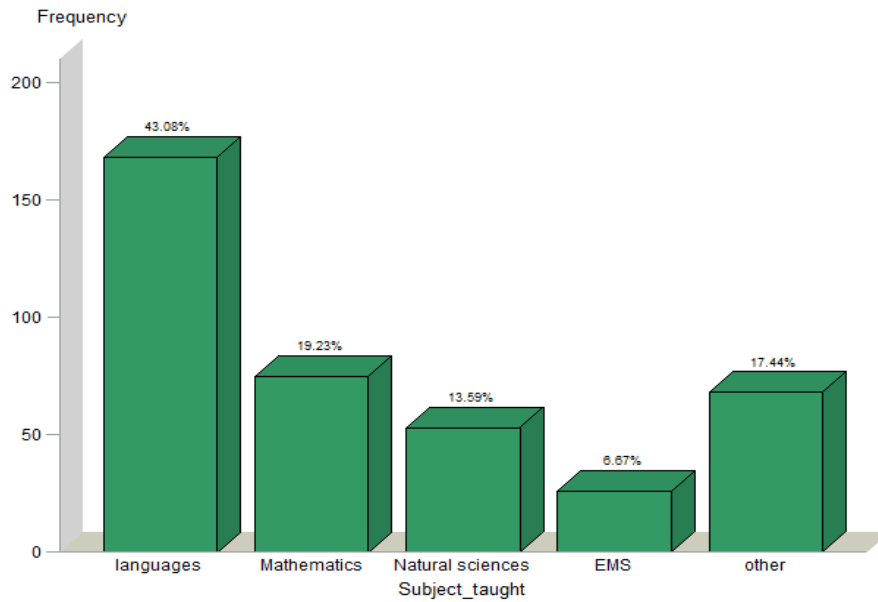
### The subjects taught by respondents

The distribution of respondents by subject taught, as shown in Table 5.5, indicates that 43% of the participating Grade Four teachers are teaching languages (English and IsiZulu); 19.2% teach mathematics; 13.5% teach natural sciences; 6.6% EMS and 17% teach other subjects.

**Table 5. 5 Subjects taught**

Subject taught				
subject taught	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Languages	168	43.08	168	43.08
Mathematics	75	19.23	243	62.31
Natural sciences	53	13.59	296	75.90
EMS	26	6.67	322	82.56
Other ( Social Sciences; Life Skills)	68	17.44	390	100.00
<b>Frequency Missing=10</b>				

**Figure 5. 5 Respondents’ distribution by subject taught**



It is also interesting to note that the majority of the participating teachers teaches the three subjects that are regarded as the important subjects in the South African education system (languages, mathematics and sciences). It is also vital to know the distribution of these teachers according to the area (Pinetown or UMgungundlovu district); Table 5.6 provides such information.

## **Area**

The area in this study provides the information about the research sites where the participants were sampled. Table 5.6 below show the distribution and representation of the participants across the Pinetown and UMgungundlovu districts.

**Table 5.6 Area**

Area				
Area	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	200	50.00	200	50.00
2	200	50.00	400	100.00

Table 5.6 indicates that the distribution of respondents according to area (Pinetown and UMgungundlovu) is even, at 50% each. The researcher discussed this distribution according to the circuits in detail in Chapter Four, where it is also shown in Table 4.2. The importance of this information is that it indicated the balance in terms of participant representation. This means that the information that was gather is not skewed towards one district.

### **Factor analysis: Language attitude questionnaire**

In this section, the following results of the factor analysis of the language attitude questionnaire are presented: data adequacy test, pattern matrix, component correlation matrix, scree plot, reliability statistics, name extracted factors, descriptive statistics, correlation of factors, the effect of biographical information on the key variables, factors of attitudes towards LoLT by area, regression analysis, and beta loadings.

## Data adequacy test

The first test for the appropriateness of the application of the factor analysis is to check if the sample is adequate to apply factor analysis technique; this is done by checking if the number of observation exceeds 200 (Field, 2013). The number of observations in this study is 400, which makes it pass the criteria.

**Table 5. 7 KMO and Bartlett's Test**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.767
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3136
		.595
	Df	903
	Sig.	.000

Adequacy will be satisfied using the KMO test if the KMO value exceed 0.6. Table 5.9 shows KMO=0.767, indicating adequacy for application of factor analysis. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity tests the hypothesis that correlation matrix is an identity matrix, meaning that the diagonals are ones and the off-diagonals are zeros. A significant result (Sig. < 0.05) indicates that the matrix is not an identity matrix; that is, the variables do relate to one another enough to run a meaningful factor analysis.

## Factor loadings

The principal component is one of the method of data reduction; this method was applied for the factor analysis in this study. The method seek to determine from the respondent if there is an observable grouping of ideas. Items that loaded on more than one factor were removed from the factor analysis and the factor analysis was re-run, yielding the pattern matrix in Table 5.8. Four factors were extracted according to the structure of the questionnaire. From the factor analysis, 13 items loaded on Factor 1, 12 items loaded on Factor 2, 9 items loaded on Factor 3 and 6 items loaded on Factor 4. The researcher named extracted factors as follows: Factor 1: African language preference, the reason being that all 13 items that loaded on this factor relate to the preference of African languages as LoLT to teach ESL Grade Four learners. Similarly, the researcher named Factor 2, as English language preference because the items that loaded in it deal with the issue of English as LoLT to teach ESL Grade Four learners. Further items that loaded in Factor 3 relate more to challenges of African languages, hence I named it the African languages challenges. Lastly, Factor 4 was named African language identity and development because factors loading in it relate more with African language identity and development.

**Table 5. 8 Pattern Matrix (Factor loadings)**

<b>FACTOR 1</b>	<b>Loadings</b>
<b>Item: 39</b> If African languages were used more at Grade Four to teach, learners could express themselves better	.753
<b>Item: 28</b> If African languages were used more at Grade Four the pass rate would be higher	.735 .715
<b>Item: 20</b> At South African schools the majority African languages should be used to teach	.697
<b>Item: 1</b> Teaching with African languages at Grade Four will show the intelligence of African learners	.686
<b>Item: 7</b> If African languages were used more to teach at primary schools learners would not have so many problems	.620 .608
<b>Item: 23</b> Primary school teachers must be made to learn African languages	
<b>Item: 31</b> if African languages were used more to teach at primary schools it would help learners whose English is not good	.581 .577
<b>Item: 5</b> Using only English for teaching and learning disadvantages African learners	
<b>Item: 40</b> Using African languages to teach at Grade Four will be in line with the South African Constitution	.408
<b>Item: 4</b> People only need to get used to the idea of using African languages for teaching and learning for it to work	.395
<b>Item: 2</b> It is a good idea to use African languages to explain difficult English words in school books	.316
<b>Item: 47</b> English speaking learners at South African schools have an unfair advantage over African learners	
<b>FACTOR 2</b>	
<b>Item: 57</b> Using only English in teaching is a way of keeping the standards high	.765
<b>Item: 54</b> South Africans will be united in education through using English	.720
<b>Item: 60</b> Using only English for teaching is a way of remaining competitive	.701
<b>Item: 51</b> English should be the only language of teaching and learning at primary school level	.678
<b>Item: 52</b> It is cheaper to use only English for teaching at Grade Four level	.614
<b>Item: 37</b> One needs English to understand academic ideas	.607
<b>Item: 33</b> English should be the only language that we should use to teach in schools and universities	.606
<b>Item: 53</b> One needs English to make money	.564
<b>Item: 36</b> English must come first at South African primary schools	.563
<b>Item: 45</b> You cannot use African languages to get a job	.501
<b>Item: 10</b> African languages cannot be use to explain academic ideas	.458
<b>Item: 30</b> One will not be able to use the African languages in one's career	.441
<b>FACTOR 3</b>	
<b>Item: 29</b> Many learners cannot use the official version of the African languages	.616
<b>Item: 22</b> It is difficult for African learners to write and read in their own languages	.613
<b>Item: 8</b> It will take too long to replace English as the only language of learning and teaching	.470 .466
<b>Item: 26</b> English is an international language	.404
<b>Item: 59</b> Afrikaans should be use for teaching and learning in South African schools	.375
<b>Item: 27</b> It is not practical to translate from English into African languages	.360
<b>Item: 48</b> Grade Four teachers should use 'Fanakalo' for teaching and learning at South African schools	.357
<b>Item: 3</b> Teaching with African languages at Grade Four will not be practical	.355
<b>Item: 9</b> Afrikaans is an African language	
<b>FACTOR 4</b>	
<b>Item: 46</b> All languages are equal	.636
<b>Item: 56</b> No language is worse than any other	.603
<b>Item: 58</b> The speakers of African languages are the ones who must develop these languages for teaching	.591
<b>Item: 34</b> You mother tongue play a big role in your sense of identity	.564
<b>Item: 55</b> There is a big difference between the spoken and written forms of the African languages	.446
<b>Item: 50</b> It is impossible to use all the official African languages to teach at Grade Four level in South African schools	.332

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations*



Tables 5.8 indicate the pattern in which factors loaded into the four factors. The total number of factors that loaded in all factors is 39 items, which is 37% less than the total number of questions in the original questionnaire with 62 items. In this regard, the original language attitude questionnaire has been reduced (see Appendix 1). The shorter version, named the teachers language attitude questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was developed for use in a new context (teaching), to investigate teachers' language attitudes at primary school level. The researcher would recommend it to other researchers in linguistic, educational and psycholinguistic research as the most reliable (see Table 5.10 below) tool to investigate language attitudes.

### Component correlation matrix

To determine which extraction method to use for the factor analysis and which component rotation method is appropriate for this research, a component correlation was conducted and the results are indicate in Table 5.9

**Table 5. 9 Component correlation matrix**

	1	2	3	4
1	1.000	-.188	-.080	-.013
2	-.188	1.000	.379	.064
3	-.080	.379	1.000	.021
4	-.013	.064	.021	1.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalisation.

It is expected that the correlation between at least any of the two components should be greater than 0.3 and from Table 5.9 the correlation between component 2 and component 3 can be seen to be equal to 0.379, indicating the appropriateness of the rotation method used.

### Scree plot

The researcher during factor analysis used a scree plot to determine which factors to retain for analysis (Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004). Table 5.6 shows the components sorted in decreasing order of variance; the most important factors are listed first.

**Figure 5. 6 Scree plot**

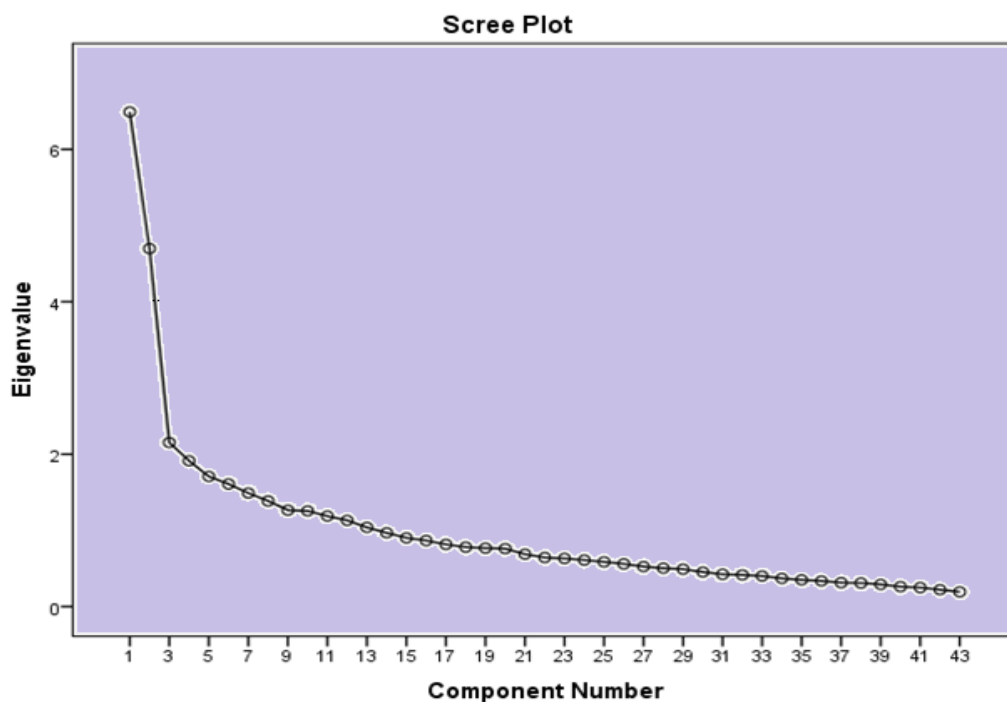


Figure 5.6 show four factors in a descending order in a steep slope to be items well grouped together; they can therefore be extracted as factors for analysis. To determine these four factors, a rule of thumb is that the major factors account for most variance (Cattell & Jaspers, 1967) and are listed at the top of the steep slope while the components at the shallow slope contribute less to the solution and are often eliminated.

### **Reliability of the language questionnaire**

The researcher conducted a reliability test of the language questionnaire to determine how reliable the questionnaire can be in assessing factors of attitude towards LoLT. The results are indicated in Table 5.10 below.

**Table 5. 10 Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.826	.824	62

Table 5.10 indicates that with a Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.6, the questionnaire can be said to have a high degree of reliability and that the items in the questionnaire have a high level of inter-item consistency.

## Descriptive statistics

For purpose of exploration and to give an overview of the factors, descriptive statistics were calculated for the four factors and results are displayed in Table 5.11. The main descriptive indicator is the mean, which gives the average of the factors of attitude towards LoLT. The higher the mean, the more important the factor is in describing attitudes towards LoLT.

**Table 5. 11 Descriptive statistics for factors of language attitude**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
African language preference	397	63	1	64	39.30	9.822	96.475
English language preference	394	59	1	60	34.27	9.312	86.720
African languages challenges	396	42	1	43	25.29	5.779	33.399
African language identity and development	392	29	1	30	20.66	4.581	20.983
Valid N (listwise)	391						

Table 5.11 indicates that African language preference has the highest mean (N=397, M=39.30) and is thus deemed to be the most important factor, followed by English language preference (N=394, M=34.3), then African languages challenges (N=396, M=25.3). The factor with the least mean was African identity language and development. The following diagram in Figure 5.7 gives the pictorial display of the means of factors explained above.

**Figure 5. 7 Means of factors**

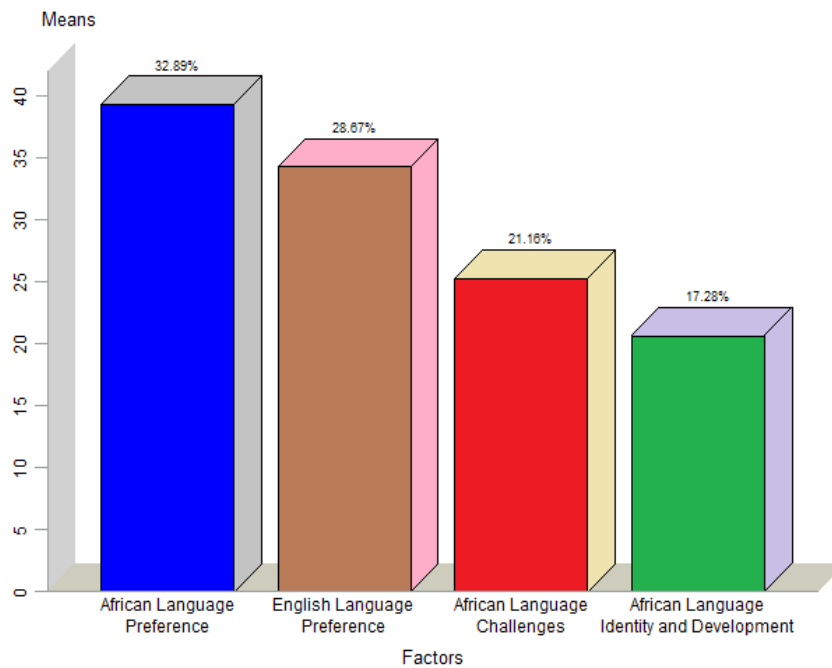


Figure 5.7 indicates that African language preference with a mean of 32.89% can be said to be the most important attitude that relates to the transition, this indicates that the largest grouping of teachers has a preference for African language in the transition from Grade Three to Grade Four. This was followed by the attitude of English language preference in such transition (28.67%), then African language challenges (21.16%) and lastly African language identity and development (17.28%).

## Correlation of factors

In determining the factors of attitude towards LoLT, one or more factors may combine together to contribute to the attitude towards language change and all factors may not be entirely independent of each other, therefore it is necessary to investigate if there are one or more factors that are related to each other. The researcher conducted a correlation test using the Pearson correlation; the results are indicated in Table 5.12 below.

**Table 5. 12 Correlation of factors**

		<b>Correlations</b>			
		African language preference	English language preference	African languages challenges	African language identity and development
African language preference	Pearson Correlation	1	.027	.276**	.224**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.588	.000	.000
	N	397	394	396	392
English language preference	Pearson Correlation	.027	1	.503**	.272**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.588		.000	.000
	N	394	394	394	391
African languages challenges	Pearson Correlation	.276**	.503**	1	.200**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	396	394	396	392
African Language status and Development	Pearson Correlation	.224**	.272**	.200**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	392	391	392	392

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5.12 indicates that there is a significant relationship between African language preference and African languages challenges; also, there exists a significant relationship between African language preference and African language identity and development. However, as expected, there appears to be no significant relationship between African language preference and English Language Preference.

Table 5.12 indicates that English language preference has a significant relationship with African language challenges and African language identity and development but no significant relationship with African Language Preference, as seen earlier.

Table 5.12 indicates that African language challenges have a significant relationship with all other three factors (African language preference, African language identity and development and English language preference).

Table 5.12 also indicates that African language identity and development have a significant relationship with the other three factors (African language preference, English language preference and African languages challenges).

### **Effect of biographical information on the key variables of the study**

In this section the researcher presents the results of the analysis of variance by age, qualification, experience and subject taught, to establish their effect on the four factors established in Table 5.8 (Factor 1: African language preference,

Factor 2: English language preference, Factor 3: African languages challenges and Factor 4: African language identity and development). In addition, the researcher also presents the results of the t-test for respondents' languages (English and IsiZulu).

### Analysis of variance by age group

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between age groups was conducted to explore the relationship between age and the four factors: African language preference, English language preference, African languages challenges and African language identity and development. Participants were divided into five groups according to their age (20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, 50-60 years, and 60-69 years).

**Table 5. 13 ANOVA: Age**

		<b>ANOVA</b>				
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
African language preference	Between Groups	199.649	4	49.912	.522	.719
	Within Groups	37362.523	391	95.556		
	Total	37562.172	395			
English language preference	Between Groups	358.472	4	89.618	1.064	.374
	Within Groups	32678.770	388	84.224		
	Total	33037.242	392			
African languages challenges	Between Groups	616.813	4	154.203	4.944	.001
	Within Groups	12163.405	390	31.188		
	Total	12780.218	394			
African Language Identity and Development	Between Groups	208.075	4	52.019	2.518	.041
	Within Groups	7996.432	387	20.663		
	Total	8204.508	391			

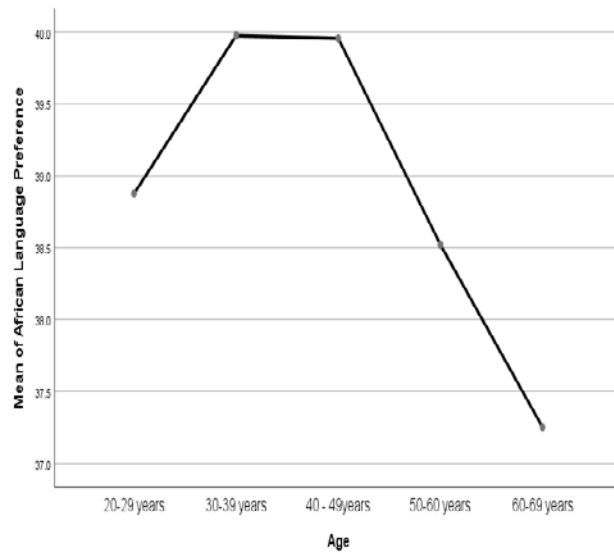
*Key: Df – Degrees of Freedom, F – F Statistic, Sig=p. value or level of significance*



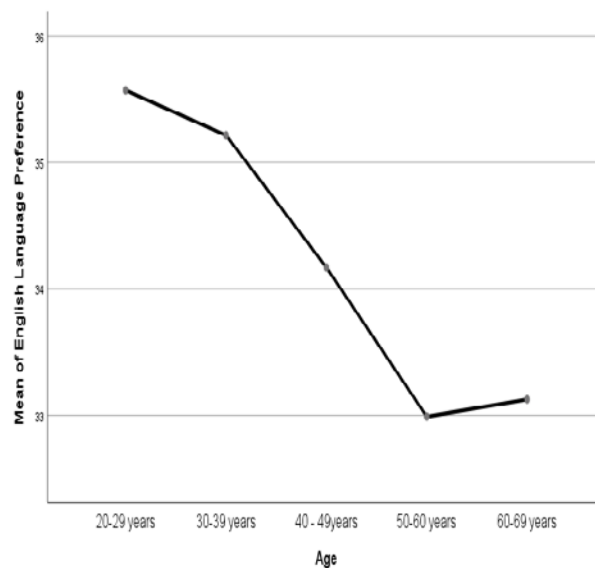
Table 5.13 indicates that Grade Four teachers in the various age groups do not differ significantly ( $p=0.719$ ) in their views regarding the effect of African language preference. Similarly, Grade Four teachers in various age group do not differ significantly ( $p=0.374$ ) with regard to English language preference on attitudes towards the LoLT in the management of the transition from Grade Three to Grade Four. However, there is a significant difference ( $p=0.01$ ) in teachers' views of importance of African language challenges and African language identity and development on attitudes towards the LoLT, based on age group differences. To determine where the difference is, a multiple comparison post-hoc test was performed to see where the difference comes from. The Bonferroni t-test indicated that the mean score for those aged 20-29 years ( $M=27.6$ ,  $SD=4.72$ ) was significantly different from those aged 40-49 years ( $M=24.9$ ,  $SD=5.43$ ), and 50-60 years ( $M=24.3$ ,  $SD=5.28$ ). There was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between 30-39 years ( $M=25.6$ ,  $SD=6.61$ ) and all other groups. This implies that teachers in age group 20-29 years have a different view of importance of African language identity and development on attitudes towards the LoLT from teachers in age groups 40-49 years and 50-60 years.

The line graphs below indicates the means of factors as determined by age in the ANOVA test.

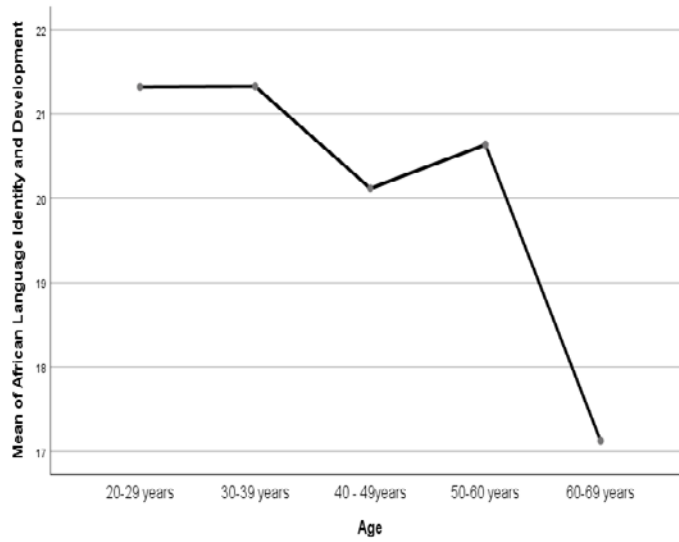
**Figure 5. 8 African language preference**



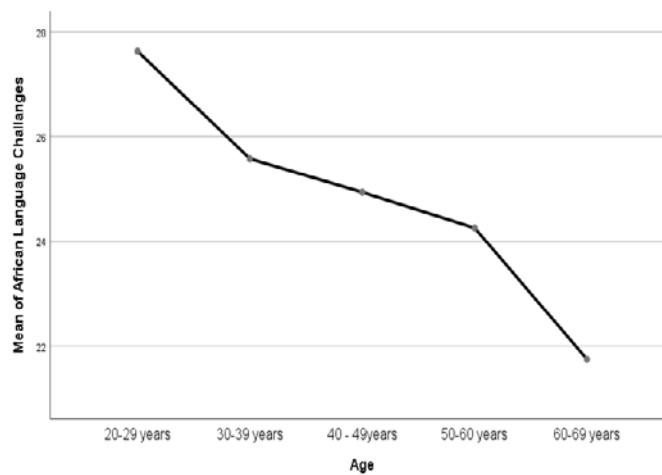
**Figure 5. 9 English language preference**



**Figure 5.10 African language identity and development**



**Figure 5. 11 African languages challenges**



Comparisons of the factors of attitude toward LoLT was done along the age line, to determine if the age of respondents is related to their attitudes towards LoLT.

## Analysis of variance by qualification

To explore the relationship between qualification and the four factors the researcher conducted a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test (African language preference, English language preference, African languages challenges and African language identity and development). Participants were divided into three groups with regard to their teaching qualification (Diploma; Bachelor degree, and Honour's degree). The p-value in all factors were above 0.05, African language preference ( $p = .398$ ); English language preference; ( $p = .362$ ); African languages challenges ( $p = .232$ ) and African language identity and development ( $p = .742$ ); hence, there is no statistically significant difference among the groups. In other words, attitudes towards the LoLT do not vary by qualification of respondents.

**Table 5. 14 ANOVA: Qualification**

		<b>ANOVA</b>				
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
African language preference	Between Groups	518.019	4	129.505	1.344	.253
	Within Groups	37278.815	387	96.328		
	Total	37796.834	391			
English language preference	Between Groups	260.253	4	65.063	.752	.557
	Within Groups	33239.155	384	86.560		
	Total	33499.409	388			
African languages challenges	Between Groups	128.636	4	32.159	.967	.426
	Within Groups	12843.236	386	33.273		
	Total	12971.872	390			
African language identity and development	Between Groups	13.791	4	3.448	.161	.958
	Within Groups	8182.540	382	21.420		
	Total	8196.331	386			

*Key: Df – Degrees of Freedom, F – F Statistic, Sig=p. value or level of significance*

Table 5.14 indicates that teachers with various qualifications do not differ in perception of African language preference, English language preference, African languages challenges, and African language identity and development, as related to the LoLT in the management of the transition from Grade Three to Grade Four.

### Analysis of variance by experience

The researcher conducted a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to explore the relationship between experience and the four factors (African language preference, English language preference, African languages challenges and African language identity and development).

**Table 5. 15 ANOVA: Experience**

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
African language preference	Between Groups	482.126	4	120.532	1.301	.269
	Within Groups	35287.659	381	92.619		
	Total	35769.785	385			
English language preference	Between Groups	410.438	4	102.609	1.229	.298
	Within Groups	31570.382	378	83.520		
	Total	31980.820	382			
African languages challenges	Between Groups	188.633	4	47.158	1.508	.199
	Within Groups	11885.586	380	31.278		
	Total	12074.218	384			
African language identity and development	Between Groups	56.271	4	14.068	.667	.615
	Within Groups	7953.303	377	21.096		
	Total	8009.573	381			

Key: Df – Degrees of Freedom, F – F Statistic, Sig=p. value or level of significance

Participants were grouped into five levels with regard to their teaching experience in relation to duration as calculated in years (1-10 years; 10-20

years; 20-30 years; 30-40 years, and 40 and above). The p value in all factors from Table 5.15 was above 0.05: African language preference (p =.269); English language preference (p =.298); African languages challenges (p =.199) and African language identity and development (p =.615); hence, there is no statistically significant difference among the groups. This implies that there was no evidence to suggest that the years of experience had an effect on teachers' attitudes towards the LoLT in the transition from Grade Three to Grade Four.

### **Analysis of variance by subject taught**

A one-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the relationship between subjects taught on the four factors: African language preference, English language preference, African languages challenges and African language identity and development. Participants were grouped into five groups according to the subjects they teach (languages, mathematics, Natural Sciences, EMS and others). The p value in all factors were above .05: African language preference (p =.853); English language (p =.110); African languages challenges (p =.518) and African language identity and development (p =.177).

**Table 5. 16 ANOVA: Subject taught**

		<b>ANOVA</b>				
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
African language preference	Between Groups	125.596	4	31.399	.337	.853
	Within Groups	35660.734	383	93.109		
	Total	35786.330	387			
English language preference	Between Groups	632.313	4	158.078	1.896	.110
	Within Groups	31681.750	380	83.373		
	Total	32314.062	384			
African languages challenges	Between Groups	102.073	4	25.518	.812	.518
	Within Groups	12006.598	382	31.431		
	Total	12108.672	386			
African language identity and development	Between Groups	132.245	4	33.061	1.586	.177
	Within Groups	7902.315	379	20.850		
	Total	8034.560	383			

*Key: Df – Degrees of Freedom, F – F Statistic, Sig=p. value or level of significance*

Table 5.16 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference among the attitudes of respondents by groups of subject taught. In other words, there is no relationship between the teachers' subjects and their attitudes towards LoLT.

ANOVA only accounts for variables with more than two levels, as done above for age, qualification, experience, and subject taught. Hence, it will be inappropriate for variables with two levels, therefore in order to measure variation within the variables in those cases, the researcher conducted a t-test, which is an equivalent to ANOVA for variables with two levels. The following Table 5.17 (Language group); Table 5.18 (Variance by Area) and Table 5.19 (variance by Gender) indicate the result of the t-tests.

### Test for equality of variance by language group

The language group have two groups and ANOVA will be inappropriate, hence a t-test on the equality of variance was done to compare differences between the two groups, under the assumption that there is no significant difference between the two groups; the results are indicated in Table 5.17 below.

**Table 5. 17 Levene’s test for equality of variances by language group**

		F	Sig.
African language preference	Equal variances assumed	.564	.453
English language preference	Equal variances assumed	.361	.548
African languages challenges	Equal variances assumed	1.279	.259
African language identity and development	Equal variances assumed	.266	.606

Table 5.17 indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in the perception of African language preference, English language preference, African languages challenges and African language identity and development between Grade Four teachers with English as their mother language and Grade Four teachers with IsiZulu as their mother language.



### Test of equality of variance by area

The area also has two classes; Pinetown and UMgungundlovu, and to compare means of the factors of attitude towards LoLT by area, a t-test is required. The following table indicated the results of the t-test on the equality of variance by area.

**Table 5. 18 Levene’s test for equality of variances by area**

		F	Sig.
African language preference	Equal variances assumed	2.030	.155
English language preference	Equal variances assumed	3.173	.076
African languages challenges	Equal variances assumed	1.336	.248
African language identity and development	Equal variances assumed	.115	.735

Table 5.18 indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers from Pinetown district and teachers from UMgungundlovu district regarding African language preference, English language preference, African languages challenges and African language development and identity.

### Test of equality of variance by gender

The researcher conducted a t-test on the equality of variance by gender, to determine if there is a significant difference between male and female teachers in Grade Four in their attitudes towards the LoLT. Table 5.19 displays the result of test for equality of variance.

**Table 5. 19 Test for equality of variance by gender**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
African language preference	Equal variances assumed	5.348	.021
English language preference	Equal variances assumed	.126	.723
African languages challenges	Equal variances assumed	.227	.634
African language identity and development	Equal variances assumed	.099	.753

Table 5.19 indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of male teachers and female teachers regarding English language preference, African languages challenges and African language development and identity. However, based on the t-test result ( $p = 0.021$ ), male and female teachers differ significantly in their view regarding African language preference. Evidence from the result suggest that male and female teachers do not sufficiently agree on views regarding English language preference and attitude to LoLT. In other words, male teachers in Grade Four have different opinion from female teachers of the same grade regarding African language preference.

### **Regression analysis**

A multiple regression was performed to establish the relationship between the four factors and the magnitude of their impact on attitude to LoLT. The regression analysis here in this study should be taken as descriptive. The multiple regression procedures also allow us to determine which factor best predicts attitude towards LoLT. The regression equation is of the form:

$$\hat{Y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon_i$$

Where;  $\hat{Y}$  is the expected value for attitude towards language change.

$X_1$  is African language preference

$X_2$  is English language preference

$X_3$  is African languages challenges

$X_4$  is African language identity and development

$\beta_0$  is the intercept which is value of Y when all of the independent factors are equal to zero, and

$\beta_1$  to  $\beta_4$  are the estimated regression coefficients.

$\varepsilon_i$  is the random error not accounted for by the study

Each regression coefficient represents the change in Y relative to a one unit change in the respective independent variable (Factor).

**Table 5. 20 Multiple Linear Regression**

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square <sup>a</sup>	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F. Change
1	.961 <sup>a</sup>	.924	.923	7.535	.924	1172.877	4	386	.000
ANOVA									
Model	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square		F	Sig.		
Regression	266373.146		4	66593.287		1172.877	.000 <sup>b</sup>		
Residual	21916.204		386	56.778					
Total	288289.350		390						
Coefficients <sup>a,b</sup>									
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		F	Sig.			
	B	Std. Error	Beta						
African language preference	1.488	.043	.510		34.619	.000			
English language preference	1.329	.051	.435		26.297	.000			
African languages challenges	1.503	.082	.299		18.346	.000			
African language identity and development	1.609	.090	.267		17.924	.000			

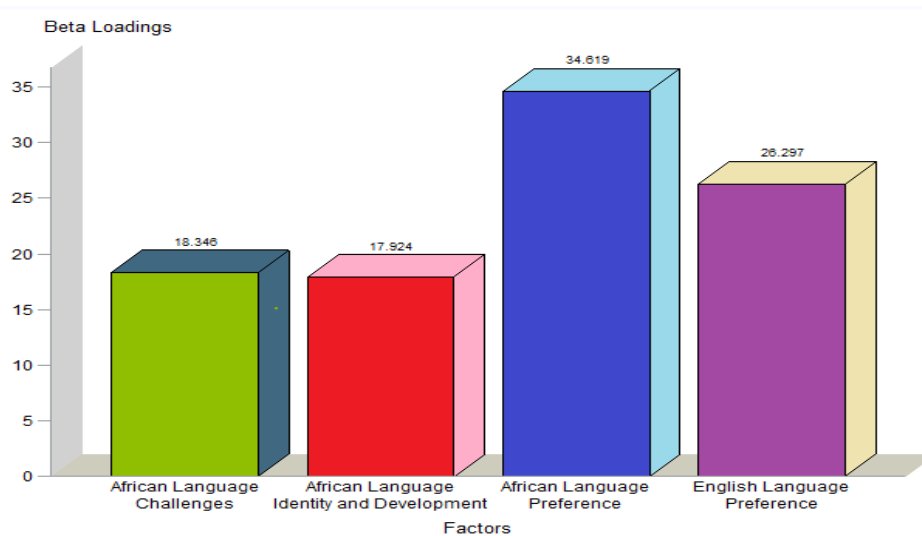
$$\hat{Y} = 12.962 + 1.488(\text{African language preference}) + 1.329(\text{English language preference}) + 1.329(\text{African languages challenges}) + 1.609(\text{African language identity and development})$$

The regression coefficient associated with African language preference is 1.488 suggesting that each one unit increase in African language preference is associated with a 1.488 unit increase in attitude towards LoLT. From the

regression, it shows that the impact of African language preference contributes more towards the attitude towards LoLT, followed by English language preference and the least was the African languages challenges. All these four factors contribute to attitude towards LoLT.

The beta loadings gives the magnitude of the individual impact of each factor. The following Figure 5.12 indicates the beta loading as generated by the multiple linear regression in Table 5.20 above.

**Figure 5. 12 Beta loadings**



From the Figure 5.12, it is obvious that African language preference has a greater magnitude (value for factors), which further confirms it as the most significant factor of attitude towards LoLT; English language preference, then African languages challenges and lastly African language identity and development follow this with the least magnitude.

## **Qualitative data presentation**

The qualitative data presented in this section was organised according to the following themes: Mother tongue as language of learning and teaching (LoLT), Learners' knowledge of the standard mother tongue languages, English as LoLT at Grade Four, Breakdown in classroom communication, and Data from document analysis (notes). Document analysis in this study serves as a tool to make a follow up on the themes that emerged from focus group discussions data. It is imperative to note that data, from focus group discussion, was analysed using thematic analysis. This means that the data was coded, and analysed to identify themes that emerge from it. These themes were then used as a framework to present data in this section. Furthermore, pseudonyms for both schools and participating teachers were used to protect identity. The following section presents qualitative data in a table format.

### **Mother tongue education**

“Benefits can be seen in the learners being able to relate to a concept in their language and culture rather than just memorizing a concept or terminology they do not understand.” (Adesemowo, 2017, p. 11). When learners use their mother tongue it is arguable that the worldviews and the cultures learners bring into the classrooms connects perfectly and enable learners' full access to knowledge from a position of strength.

**Table 5. 21 Mother tongue as LoLT**

School Pseudonym	Focus Groups Number	Teachers' Pseudonym	Data gathered
Ingwe School	1	Sun	I teach Science and every time I come across a word that is not in everyday use, I will ask them for the IsiZulu word. Unfortunately, sometimes you get like three or four words IsiZulu and isiXhosa and then they have an argument. However, they are battling with the English language. If you go to the Zulu class if you walk in there they are speaking IsiZulu to one another. They want to communicate in IsiZulu. First since they are IsiZulu-speaking learners. You cannot even think in English if you are IsiZulu speaking. You think in IsiZulu. Sometimes they say explain it in IsiZulu so we can understand. Because they [learners] just look at you.
Mvelo School	2	Mol	When you teaching IsiZulu clearly they will be able to understand what is going for majority of the class they opt for IsiZulu
Mzamo school	3	Bheki	We notice that the learners although they speak IsiZulu very well they actually having a problem with the written work. Maybe they do not write at home.
Ndokweni School	4	Zoey	Language teachers can help especially us as IsiZulu speakers who understand IsiZulu better because if we teach them something in English then we can translate to them in IsiZulu so they will know better although I don't like them to know more IsiZulu than English they should know both.

It is evident in the data presented in Table 5.21 that teachers always resort to codeswitching to mother tongue when learners do not understand the concepts

presented in English. This situation also indicate that teachers explain better and learners understand better, when the mother tongue is used.

### **Challenges of mother tongue in education**

“Language has become a commodity that can be sold and is central to the new global economy” (Heller, 2010, p.350). Mother tongues languages have a problem in the sense that they have to compete with languages that are dominant in the global market, in the sense that communities believe that English is a global language and this idea has resulted in African languages to be unpopular and not promoted in most societies where these languages are spoken.



**Table 5. 22 Learners’ knowledge of standard mother tongue language**

School  Pseudonym	Focus Group	Name:  Teacher  Pseudon ym	Data gathered
Solwazi  School	5	Zim	<p>Enye into mase ubheka ilanguage across the curriculum kunenkinga ngampela size sincome ukusebenzisa i-english kuphela ngesizathu esisodwa sokuthi IsiZulu lesi umnyango wezemfundo othi asisetshenzise abantwana bethu abasazi. <b>[Another challenge is with the language across the curriculum that we opt for English only when we teach the reason being that learners do not know the IsiZulu that the Department of Education wants us to teach].</b> Ekubeni futhi sekufanele kusetshenziswe IsiZulu ngqo, uma ngabe kuzokhulunywa ngamagama esiZulu ngempela kuthiwe hamba uyongithengela isikwa esinsundu. <b>[What is needed is that we use proper IsiZulu words, for example if you want to say go and buy brown bread, we need to use proper IsiZulu word ‘izinkwa ezinsundu’].</b> Uma sekusetshenziswa IsiZulu ngqo ingane iyadideka ngoba nakuba bengumphakathi wala emzansi kodwa they are using english words kwi vocab yabo ngisho umuntu ongafundile uyakwazi nje izinto eziwu three, uzosebenzisa lokho, amagama nje abawasebenzisile awe English. <b>[When proper IsiZulu is used the learner gets confused since they normally use English vocabulary in their daily talk]</b></p> <p>Inkinga esiba nayo kuma content subject kuba inkinga ukusebenzisa IsiZulu ngoba kubakhona la magama esingawasebenzisi kwathina emakhaya abazali abangawasebenzisi, basebenzisa wona lawa esiNgisi. <b>[The main problem with the content subjects is that parents do not use the words we use at school instead, they use English words rather than proper IsiZulu words]</b></p>

Table 5.22 indicates that teachers anticipate a problem in the use of mother tongue as LoLT since learners do not have the sufficient vocabulary in the standard version of IsiZulu that the Department of Education wants to be taught at Grade Four.

### **Hegemony of English**

“Contrary to the initial idea of additive bilingual education, implementation (Language-in-education policy) has given rise to a subtractive system of bilingual education” (Tibategeza & Du Plessis, 2012, p. 185). In this sense, English has dominated most of the African continent’s education systems. As a result, this has led to the curtailment of most African languages, which shifted into the background in education. In this manner, African cultures have been disembowelled as the Eurocentric, ways of knowing and knowledge have dominated the education system. Table 5.23, Table 5.24 and 5.25 below indicate the hegemony of English in South African education system.

**Table 5. 23 English as LoLT**

School Pseudonym	Focus Groups Number	Teachers' Pseudonym	Data gathered
Mzamo school	3	Lulu	They (learners) do not read as much as they used to, that also affects the way they should write.
Ingwe School	1	Kune	We also find that with the reading, specifically some learners might be able to read fairly well but they do not understand what they are reading. They seem to battle with comprehension. Others, (learners) do not read. They do not go to libraries. They are not interested
Mvelo School	2	Mbili	They (learners) do not have the vocabulary; they do not have the understanding. They do not have that background knowledge of how to communicate.
	5	Zodwa	Kwa Grade Four abafundi sekufanele baqale babhale ama essays, kodwa izingane azazi ukuthi ziqalephi ngoba yilento yokuthi ivocabulary abanayo eyanele ukuthi baqale babhale ngisho sebesazi besiqonda isihloko. <b>[At Grade, Four, learners have to write essays but they do not know where to start writing because they do not have enough [English] vocabulary to start writing even though they might understand the topic.]</b>
	3	Ndodo	I think many of our different learners have parents speaking to them at home in English. They (learners) are getting more of English at home. Apparently, the IsiZulu learners speak IsiZulu at home. They talk IsiZulu on the playground. They also speak English to their parents. It is a big mixture of everything
Ndokweni School	4	Nke	They (learners) watch TV, and everything is in English on social media. They are confronted and exposed to English from an early age.

	3	Thabzolo	When they (learners) are switching from mother tongue, we are fortunate that currently demographically in this school that many of the IsiZulu learners have English before. They chose to start in this school from grade R where the language of learning is English. There is no big switch from the outset.
	4	Nde	They are speaking English and a lot of the parents nowadays I am sure you are aware of the demographics when living in the central city they are speaking English at home. The IsiZulu speaking parents are no longer speaking to their learners in Zulu at home.

Table 5.23 indicates that most African learners do not have the English vocabulary to enable them to communicate effectively and read English well. However, in some schools African learners are speaking English, this is influenced by the fact that their parents speak to them in English. They are also exposed to the English media, which socialises them in Eurocentric ways of knowing.

**Table 5. 24                    Grade Four teachers’ language classroom practice**

School Pseudonym	Focus Groups Number	Teachers’ Pseudonym	Data gathered
Solwazi school	5	Mine	Mangabe sesila nabo kwagrade 4 sometimes uthola kunzima ukufundisa ekilasini sekumele ukuthi ukhulume nge English ubuye ukhulume ngesiZulu, omunye umntwana uze waphakamisa isandla wathi Miss angisezwa ... ngicela ukuthi uchaze nge English ubuye uchaze futhi nangesiZulu. Usuthola ukuthi umsebenzi usuqala ukuba mningi. Manje ufike uxoxe nge English uphinde uqale phansi uyoxoxa ngesiZulu uyayibona leyonto. <b>[It becomes difficult to teach at Grade Four we are forced to codeswitch from English to IsiZulu. One learner recently put up his hand and said Miss I do not understand will you please also explain in IsiZulu. Then this creates a lot of work since one has to present in English and present the same information in IsiZulu.]</b>
Solwazi school	5	Musa	Ngike nami ngayizwa leyonto kuthiwa uthisha we math wacina ese codeswitsher ebuyela esiZulwini ngoba izingane azisezwa ukuthi kwenzakalani. <b>[I also heard that one mathematics teacher opted to codeswitch back to IsiZulu because learners did not understand anything].</b>

Table 5.24 shows that teachers have trouble in teaching African learners using English as LoLT, in this manner they are forced to codeswitch to IsiZulu so that learners would understand the instructions. The following Table 2.23 expand on the issue of hegemony of English within the classroom, which resulted in classroom communication breakdown.

**Table 5. 25 Breakdown in classroom communication**

School Pseudonym	Focus Groups Number	Teachers' Pseudonym	Data gathered
Ingwe School	1	Ndoo	Right now, the second language [English] is becoming a massive obstacle to learners. They [learners] are failing it. It is not just grade Four but [a problem] across all the grades. All the grades are battling with the second language.
Ndokweni school	4	Nene	They lack confidence. They lack confidence in the language. Therefore, if they do not have confidence in the language of teaching and learning that means they will not even participate
Ingwe	1	Bone	The fact that they [learners] are struggling with language on its own is an indication of a serious language problem. It will affect everything else. If we had to give them a question in another subject like Natural sciences (NS), they will not understand that question and they will not know how to answer that question because the problem goes back to the language. Without the language, they cannot even construct a sentence. They will not be able to answer on another subject the way they are supposed to answer. They battle with that.
	5	Mzway	Inkinga enkulu kakhulu iba Kwa Grade Four ngoba ilapho kunshitsha khona ulimi lokufunda nokufundisa kuzona zonke izifundo. Ilapho sekufanele [abafundi] bahlukane nolimi lwabo lweBele, IsiZulu. Uma ubanikeza ama 'instruction' usebenzisa isiNgisi, kuye kuphele u-10 minutes usachaza i-instruction yilapho ubona khona ukuthi kunenkinga edalwa ukushintsha kolimi lokufunda nokufundisa, [ <b>The problems starts at Grade Four where the learner has to change the language of learning from mother tongue to English as language of learning and teaching in all subjects. If you give them [learners] instructions in English, it takes about ten minutes for the teacher to explain them. It is where you realise the problem that is caused by the language negative impact of LoLT change.</b> ]

Table 5.25 shows that most African Grade Four learners are struggling with English and are failing it. This problem is not specific to Grade Four, it cuts across all grades.

### Document analysis

Data analysis was conducted to make a follow up on Grade Four teachers' lived experiences and it involved learners' workbooks in any subjects taught at this level. The table below indicates the summarised notes of the findings.

**Table 5. 26            Field notes**

Name of the document	Number of the document	Document code	Data generated
Learners' workbooks	1	DA:LB-1	Learners' workbooks were analysed by checking the accuracy of the written content in terms of spelling, sentence structure, punctuations and work completion. Most of them have serious spelling mistakes, in the sense that most learners were writing English word in IsiZulu spelling, sentences were disjointed with no punctuation and in most cases, classwork was not fully completed.
	2	DA:LB-2	
	3	DA:LB-3	
	4	DA:LB-4	
Teachers' lesson plans	1	DA:LP-1	Teachers' lesson plan analysis: these were analysed in terms of the language used and the frequency of written lesson plans per week. The findings indicated that all lesson plans were written in English. Activities were not fully explained and sometime written in short form.
	2	DA:LP-2	
	3	DA:LP-3	
	4	DA:LP-3	

Table 5.26 show that learners were struggling with communicating in writing, there were lots of spelling mistakes and disjointed sentences. Most of them were unable to

complete tasks in English. Teachers plan their lessons in English and the activities they were to do with learners in most cases were not fully explained.

## **Discussion of the findings**

In this section, the researcher discusses and compare the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data, according to the themes that emerged. The following themes emerged from the analysis of both qualitative and qualitative findings. These themes differ from the ones that emerged from the analysis of qualitative data set: The African languages as languages of learning and teaching, English as language of learning and teaching and parental involvement in education.

### **THEME 1: African languages as language of learning and teaching**

One of the findings from the survey data is that the majority of Grade Four teachers prefer the use of African languages ( $M=39.3$ ,  $SD=9.82$ ) over English ( $M =34.3$ ,  $SD =9.31$ ) as LoLT to teach the learners at Grade Four level whose home language is an African language (see Table 5.11). The positive attitudes towards the use of African languages as LoLT indicates that most Grade Four teachers agree with most items loaded on Factor 1 (see the process matrix in Table 5.8.). The loadings in Factor 1 illustrate that African languages will enable learners whose home language is African language to show their

intelligence; to access content knowledge provided by the curriculum; and express themselves better during the learning and teaching process. This finding is consistent with Cabansag's (2016) conclusions that mother tongue education enables learners in the Philippines to express ideas better, build self-confidence and yield better retention (see section 2.6). The results from the analyses of variance by demographic information [Age =  $F(4, 391) = .522$ ,  $p = .719$ , Qualification =  $F(2, 379) = .924$ ,  $p = .398$ , Experience =  $F(4, 381) = 1.301$ ,  $p = .269$ , and Subject taught =  $F(4, 383) = .337$ ,  $p = .853$ ] indicate that the preference for African languages as LoLT covers various demographic groupings.

The above discussion tells us that attitudes expressed by most Grade Four teachers reveal the worldview in their minds. In this manner most Grade Four teachers affirm the use of African languages to teach an African child as the appropriate LoLT. The reason for teachers to prefer mother tongue education might be that they believe that the use of mother tongue in education leads to better cognitive processing of knowledge and access to the knowledge or reality (Bachore, 2014, Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014, Machombo, 2017). Using mother tongue as LoLT is aligned with the ways of knowing that learners bring to school, to navigate the learning of new concepts and acquisition of skills (Adesemowo, 2017). Hence, when taught in their home language, the learners will approach academic activities from a position of strength, using the language they are comfortable and proficient in. Our background or cultures determine the manner in which we interpret reality and the world around us.



Significantly, the findings from the qualitative data (focus groups interviews) on Grade Four teachers' lived experiences in teaching, reveal that the mother tongue (see section 2.5) is intertwined with the worldview that learners bring into the classroom and this worldview is what the learners use to navigate the learning of new concepts and the acquisition of knowledge. The worldview that learners bring into the classroom contains ways of knowing that are strongly aligned with mother tongue languages and that are powerful as an enabling tool for learners to reach their full academic potential. In a situation where these powerful tools are disregarded in favour of foreign languages (Probyn, 2017) in teaching, problems of effective acquisition of skills and knowledge may arise and teachers always refer back to the mother tongue for solutions since it contains the ways of knowing that are familiar to the learner.

According to the teachers in the focus group session, the use of mother tongue as LoLT increases understanding of the learning content as teachers constantly refer back to it when learners do not understand the subject content. Furthermore, the teachers expressed that learners themselves want to communicate in IsiZulu; the fact that learners speak in IsiZulu indicates that they also think in IsiZulu. Indirectly, the above responses indicate the difficulty that teachers have using English as LoLT, in teaching African learners whose mother tongue is IsiZulu.

To illustrate, the veracity of human mental functioning is rooted in the individuals' worldview and developed within a particular language and culture.

This worldview forms the reality of the individual and it resides within the individual's mind as a point of reference to engage with the outer world. The human mind allows an individual to see things in a particular way. We view our world according to the worldview created in our mind, based on cultural beliefs and values. In other words, everything that exists in our outer world has its representation in the mind (Ngugi Wa Thiongo, 1994). The language in this case is the central cultural tool used to interpret the mental picture of the outer world. Although the mother tongue language aligns well with the learners' worldview that they bring to the classroom, there are some challenges that teachers reported with regard to its use in education. The following section expands on this notion.

### **The challenges of African languages**

The results of the ANOVA test by demographic information reveal that Grade Four teachers differ significantly by age in their views about the African languages challenges, but there is an agreement when compared by qualification, experience and subject taught. The results are as follows: Age= $F(4, 390) = 4.944, p = .0001$ ), Qualification =  $F(2, 378) = 1.468, p = .232$ ), Experience= $F(4, 380) = 1.508, p = .199$ ), Subject taught =  $F(4, 382) = .812, p = .518$ . Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, in the sense that age has an impact on the language attitude of Grade Four teachers with regard to the African languages challenges.

The Post hoc test (Bonferroni t-test) reveal that Grade Four teachers with an age between 20 to 29 years [younger teachers] ( $M = 27.6$ ,  $SD = 4.72$ ) differ significantly from those who are 40 to 49 years [middle aged] ( $M = 24.9$ ,  $SD = 5.43$ ) where  $p = .010$  and differ strongly from those who are 50 to 60 years [older teachers] ( $M = 24.9$ ,  $SD = 5.28$ ) where  $p = .001$ . The younger teachers agree while the older teachers disagree with items loaded in factor 3 (see Table 5.8). These are, firstly, that many African learners whose home language is an African language cannot speak, read and write the standard versions of African languages. Secondly, that it will be difficult to replace English as the only official language in its status where most stakeholders in education regard it as the international language. Thirdly, that teaching through African languages as LoLT will not be practical.

The first and the second statement above are consistent with English linguistic imperialism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2017). As alluded to in Chapter Two, this situation is not unique to South Africa. English has dominated most countries of the world and shifted indigenous languages to the background. For example, Rezaeifard and Chalak (2017) in Iran reported positive attitudes amongst teachers and learners towards English. (Cavallaro & Serwe, 2010) report a decline in the use of traditional languages amongst the Malayalam. Krizsan and Erkkila (2014) report the dominance of English over multilingualism in Brussels.

The responses of younger (20-29 years) Grade Four teachers could indicate their exposure to English and to its role in curtailing African languages during their own schooling education. These teachers understand the current situation where English language has “become the first choice as a second language, when it is the language in which so much is written and in which so much of the visual media occurs, it is constantly pushing other languages out of the way curbing their usage in both qualitative and quantitative terms” (Pennycook, 2017, p. 14). Hence, because of the latter notion, the use of African languages as LoLT encounters a challenge because of the pressure exerted by English with its perceived status as the language of economy. In this regard some parents also prefer English as LoLT (Scrase, 2004; Figone, 2012). The perception that one will have limited opportunities if he/she cannot speak English well also contributes to the difficulty in using African languages effectively as LoLT in education. Consequently, most African learners whose mother tongue is an African language are not able to acquire the necessary skills in reading and writing of the standard original version of these languages, as was indicated in the evidence from document analysis.

This has a serious implication for the development of a second language since language skills learnt in the mother tongue form the basis for the acquisition of a second language. The version of African languages currently used in most South African societies is diluted with English vocabulary. The middle age (40-49 years) and older (50-60 years) Grade Four teachers could be more conservative, and intending to preserve the African languages and culture, which are threatened by the dominance of English language in education. The

third notion that teaching through African languages as LoLT will not be practical, is in line with the perceived disadvantage of using African languages in education, which is consistent with the hegemony of the English language in education (see section 2.2.).

### **Status and identity of African languages**

Some Grade Four teachers' (N = , M = 20.7) survey responses to Factor 4 (see Table 5.8) affirm that all languages enjoy equal status, that the mother tongue plays a vital role in identity formation and that the speakers of African home languages are the ones with the responsibility to develop these languages for teaching. However, evidence from the qualitative data gathered during focus group sessions indicates a disjuncture between teachers' attitudes towards LoLT and their actual practice within the classroom. This could happen, as a result of some teachers beliefs that they are required by the education system to move to English. Thus some may in certain circumstance choose to act on contradiction to their own views. The point at stake is that teachers within the classroom use English as LoLT while most of African learners do not understand it and are battling with the English second language, which is detrimental to African learners' education. The finding is that under this situation most Grade Four teachers resort to bilingualism (codeswitching) since the classroom communication breakdown prevail because of the use of English as LoLT for African learners.

Taken with the quantitative data, it is clear that teachers are implementing the use of English as LoLT but at the same time opting to code switch from English to IsiZulu to enable learners to understand the concepts that were presented in English. Teachers are compelled to contradict in practice the views they espouse (views that are evident in the quantitative data).

### **Development of African languages**

Grade Four teachers (N = 396, M = 25.3) in their response to factor 3 (Table 5.8) indicated that there are challenges associated with the use of African languages as LoLT. Evidence from focus group discussion sessions suggests that African languages are not promoted within the African speaking communities where most learners come from. African languages spoken in these communities are laced with English vocabulary. As a result, some participating teachers asserted that learners do not understand the standard version of the African languages that the Department of Basic Education requires them to learn. They point out that when the original IsiZulu words are used, the learners get confused. It is likely that the interpretation of these teachers indicates the knowledge that the teachers have about languages and language issues since languages have varieties and dialects. The current discourse of language varieties is that no language variety and/or dialect is supreme. However, the discussion about varieties is beyond the scope of this thesis. The above discussion tells us that the challenges of African languages as LoLT are perpetuated by the fact that the thoughts of most policy makers,

teachers, and parents of the South African population are still influenced by Eurocentric thinking and ways of knowing. The next section expands on this notion through the discussion of English as LoLT.

## **THEME 2: English Language as Language of Learning and Teaching**

The results of the descriptive statistics (see Table 5.11) indicate that, some teachers (N = 394, M = 34.3) prefer the English Language as LoLT because English is perceived as the economic language, it is the language that gives access to higher education (see Factor 2, Table 5.8). The results from the ANOVA test by demographic information [Age=F (4,388) = 1.064, p = .374, Qualification = F (2,376) = 1.019, p = .362, Experience = F (4, 378) = 1.229, p = .298, and Subject taught = F (4, 380) = 1.896, p = .110] indicate that there is no significant statistical difference in all groups. Most participating Grade Four teachers who prefer English as LoLT at Grade Four have similar views.

The findings suggest that teachers who prefer English as LoLT for African learners whose home language is an African language agree that, using English only in teaching and learning is a way of keeping standards high; one needs English to understand academic ideas, one needs English to make money, and that South Africa will be united in education through English. (See Table 5.8, Factor 2) These teachers show a positive attitude towards English as “an enabling tool” (Kyeyune, 2003; Rezaeifard & Chalak, 2017) for learning at Grade Four. However, literature reveals that there is a strong relationship between the use of European languages and poor performance of learners in

schools (Clegg & Afitska, 2011; Early & Norton, 2014). The continuous use of English to teach African learners is arguably a form of neo-colonialism that alienates the African learner from his/her reality. It splits the worldview that exists in the mind of the African learner into two, by introducing a Eurocentric worldview that is foreign to the learner.

To elaborate, in most instances where colonisation occurs, the intended outcome is the expansion of the culture and civilisation of the colonisers. This has been a long-standing debate in the South African context (Heugh, 2005; Foley, 2009; Alexander, 2011; Figone, 2012). In this sense, English as LoLT is one of the elements of coloniality. It could currently be regarded as the remnant of colonisation that serves the interests of the colonisers. In other words, coloniality refers to the aftermath of colonisation that has remain in place after colonial rule was “displaced” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) Language as the cultural artefact contains cultural values, norms and the civilisation of particular population groups and is a powerful tool used in most cases to exert control and domination of one group by another.

However, the findings from the lived experiences of the participating teachers reveal that the use of English as LoLT for the African learner whose home language is an African language has serious consequences regarding the learning of most African learners. It is highly likely to cause a communication breakdown in the classroom between teachers and learners and amongst learners themselves, and it leads to low learner-literacy levels.



## **Breakdown in classroom communication**

In this study, most Grade Four teachers reported that the majority of learners whose home language is an African language are struggling with English second language and they are failing it. This situation has resulted in a communication breakdown within the classroom. Classroom communication refers to the use of a language for learning and teaching purposes during the learning process. Language as a tool for communication is therefore vital for both teachers and learners because it can either promote or impede the teaching and learning process. The English language as LoLT for African learners is problematic in most schools, as the qualitative data has demonstrated.

African language learners in Grade Four, according to these findings, do not understand English. They are battling to decode the meanings of subject knowledge and related concepts using the English language. Furthermore, teachers are also having trouble when giving learning instructions since learners do not understand English. This could result from the fact that the world view and the home language that learners bring into the classroom are disregarded in favour of the English language (Probyn, 2017), which represented a different culture with a different worldview. In this regard, learning becomes a complicated and difficult process for most African learners, since they have to approach learning from a new reality and a new language. It is argued here that language gives the learner access to knowledge in the sense that it contains codes that are pregnant with meanings regarding

the existing wealth of knowledge within the cultural context (see section 2.5). In other words, language and thought is intertwined (Boroditsky, 2001) and should be understood as one leading to the other. To enable learners' full access to knowledge the language used in the learning process needs to be in line with the cultural knowledge of the learner and the content knowledge within the curriculum. Batibo (2015, p. 100) concurs with the latter statement that, "a language is tied up with distinct cultural values and worldview". To achieve the latter mother tongue education is the "effective pedagogy and legitimate knowledge" (Pradhan, 2017, p. 381).

### **English literacy level**

Another finding from qualitative data obtained from Grade Four teachers is that most African language learners have low literacy levels in English. They cannot speak, read and write in English, which is LoLT. Such a situation has a serious implication for the quality of learning and is very likely to hinder learners from acquiring deep learning. The following extracts from the qualitative data give evidence:

*They (Learners) do not read as much as they used to, that also affects the way they should write. (FG-3: Lulu)*

*We also find that with the reading, specifically some learners might be able to read fairly well but they do not understand what they are reading. They seem to battle with comprehension. Others, (learners) do not read. They do not go to libraries. They are not interested.*  
(FG-1: Kune)

*They (learners) do not have the vocabulary; they do not have the understanding. They do not have that background knowledge of how to communicate.* (FG-2: Mbili)

*Kwa Grade Four abafundi sekufanele baqale babhale ama essays, kodwa izingane azazi ukuthi ziqalephi ngoba yilento yokuthi ivocabulary abanayo eyanele ukuthi baqale babhale ngisho sebesazi besiqonda isihloko. [At Grade, Four, learners have to write essays but they do not know where to start writing because they do not have enough [English] vocabulary to start writing even though they might understand the topic.]* (FG-5: Zodwa)

The excerpts above express the notion that African learners are unable to read English texts and this affects their writing skills. Some learners who can read battle with comprehension of the text they are reading in English. Such a situation is not unique South Africa situation, it also occurred in Ethiopian where learners could not understand what teachers were saying and could not read, write and speak English (Stoddart, 1986; Bachore, 2015) This is because

learners do not have the English vocabulary and this affects their communication skills in the language. In addition, Grade Four learners are unable to write essays due to the lack of English vocabulary. With reference to teachers' responses, it is evident that teachers are faced with challenges in teaching African learners using English as an enabling tool for learning. Moreover, Grade Four teachers indicate the existence of a linguistic mismatch (Wigglesworth, Simpson, & Loakes, 2011) between LoLT and the language spoken by most African learners at home as well as their cultures, which they bring to schools.

In this situation, the African learners have a dilemma of learning new ways of knowing that are foreign to them and understand new concepts and knowledge from that perspective. This is understood in light of the argument by Lee (2000) that language serves as a conceptual organiser and a primary medium through which thinking occurs. For the Grade Four African learners, learning for them is a complicated process. To clarify the researcher would like to refer to language as a 'tunnel' that is a 'transporting agent' of knowledge from the social context to the brain. This tunnel is designed to carry specific symbols rooted in culture and understandable to the individual within a particular social context. However, when there is a replacement of the 'tunnel' with another 'foreign tunnel' in terms of culture and symbols contained the transportation of knowledge becomes blocked. Hence, creating difficulty for learners to learn and complications for teachers to teach.

## **Implication for the use of English as the language of learning and teaching**

The dominance of colonial languages and their use in most African Education systems have resulted in African languages shifting to the background and become underdeveloped (Olajide, 2010; Prah, 2010; Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014; Mohr & Ochieng, 2017). The English language carries the culture and the Euro-centric worldview. The use of English to teach the African learners as expressed by Grade Four teachers in qualitative data are arguable an extension of neo-colonisation and a factor of coloniality. The concept of coloniality refers to the aftermath of colonisation that has remained in place after the colonial rule had been “displaced” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 13). The qualitative data from focus groups sessions reveal that, the African learner has to abandon his/her language at school and even at home in order to get ‘good’ education. This is an extension of the imperialist agenda to spread the Euro-centric culture and languages, which the education system promotes within the curriculum. The following excerpts from the qualitative data gives evidence to the hegemony of English that still prevails in the South African context:

*I think many of our different learners have parents speaking to them at home in English. They (learners) are getting more of English at home. Apparently, the IsiZulu learners speak IsiZulu at home. They talk IsiZulu on the playground. They also speak English to their parents. It is a big mixture of everything. (FG-3: Ndodo)*

*They (learners) watch TV, and everything is in English on social media. They are confronted and exposed to English from an early age. (FG-4: Nke)*

*When they (learners) are switching from mother tongue,(sic) we are fortunate that currently demographically in this school that many of the IsiZulu learners have English before. They chose to start in this school from grade R where the language of learning is English. There is no big switch from the outset. (FG-3: Thabzolo)*

**4FG:** *They are speaking English and a lot of the parents nowadays I am sure you are aware of the demographics when living in the central city they are speaking English at home. The IsiZulu speaking parents are no longer speaking to their learners in Zulu at home. (FG-4: Nde)*

The excerpts above indicate that learners, particularly those living in the cities, are socialised to inculcate Euro-centric cultural values and life style by parents, media and school through immersion into English language. Most research have indicated that the use of English as LoLT to teach the African learner does not have any educational benefits besides the alienation of the African learner from his/her own reality, and creating a barrier to access to knowledge (Webb

et al., 2010; Chivhanga & Chimhenga, 2013; Sibanda, 2014). In the process, the idea of western culture being perfect, and its life styles and civilisation becomes something to pursue and aspire to achieve success is injected into the minds of African learners. Language is not neutral; it is a carrier of beliefs, cultural values and worldviews. In other words, indoctrination of the African learners with the Euro-centric cultural values, beliefs and civilisation occurs with English used as LoLT. In this regard, when the African learner is deprived of the use of mother tongue in education, he/she does not only lose the language but also the cultural values, belief systems and ways of knowing and the products of such education system may lack nationalism and the nationalist spirit .

### **THEME 3: Parental involvement in education**

Drawing from Grade Four teachers' responses from the focus group sessions, it is evident that parents of most African learners participate minimally in their children's educational programmes, such as assisting them with homework. Teachers highlighted the following:

*The learners' parents do not do enough to assist us. (FG-1: Bone)*

*You need to have the support from parents, because they (learners) are going home to do homework. If they are going home with the wrong attitude and not have the support of their parents academically, then they think academic programmes are not*

*important, because their parents are not showing their support.*

(FG-2: Mbili)

*I think if they (learners) have a happy home life with their mother and father with them, and they feel happy and comfortable at home then they come through to school. We have many learners that come from backgrounds that are not always good and that affects them, so I would say a child needs a good environment at home. However, parents leave them here and expect us to teach them everything. The involvement with the parent and child is so important.* (FG-3: Lulu)

*Parental involvement is important since parents have to do homework with their children. Sometimes they (parents) send them (learners) to school and they say go learn and that is it.* (FG-3: Ndondo)

The teachers in the above excerpt posit that a home environment plays a significant role in the learners' education. The parents' cultural beliefs and values shapes the learners' attitudes towards learning and the learners' self-esteem as well as self-confidence are boosted when parents show support and approval of whatever the learners are doing (Ule, Živoder, & Du Bois-Reymond, 2015). According to most Grade Four teachers a happy home life and a comfortable home is a necessity for learners in order for them to cope with learning activities. However, teachers express concerns that parents are not helping with the learners' school-homework. They expect teachers to do



everything and most parents believe it is the responsibility of the teachers to teach learners. In this regard, a number of underlying issues may cause parents of most African learners to have minimal participation in assisting learners with school- homework.

One of them might be that the parents do not understand LoLT used in the schools. In this light, LoLT excludes most parents of African learners from participating in learners' school-homework. It is imperative to note that language carries cultural beliefs and norms and this shape the worldviews of the individuals within a particular society. Hence, there is a disjuncture between the worldview presented by English language, with the worldview held by African speaking parents, which may be one of the major causes of minimal parental involvement in their learners' education.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings from quantitative data, which were the results of the descriptive and inferential analysis. These results provided an indication that the majority of Grade Four teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of African language LoLT compared to English. The chapter also presented the results from the qualitative data where most Grade Four teachers expressed difficulty in teaching African learners using English as LoLT. Similarly, a study by Kirui et al. (2017) at Tanzania indicated that English as LoLT is a challenge for both teachers and learners. In this study, the

teachers also elaborated that the majority of learners whose Home language is an African language battled with understanding and decoding meaning in English text. Such learners exhibited low-literacy level in English to such an extent that most African learners at Grade Four level are unable to read write and speak English. In addition, the qualitative findings indicated that most parents of African learners participated minimally in their children's education programmes. The next chapter proceeds by presenting the analysis and synthesis of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 6**

## **ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter expands from the presentation of the findings in the previous chapter and elaborates on the analysis of the findings. The argument presented is that when the language of learning is the mother tongue of both the teacher and the learner, it allows the meeting of minds as both the teacher and the learner have the similar worldviews, thus enabling better teaching and deep learning. Two themes are discussed with regard to the analysis of the findings in this chapter. The first theme is the preference for African language as the language of learning and teaching. The second theme is the challenge of African languages in education. Thereafter, the chapter presents a discussion on how the findings answer the research questions and relate to the hypothesis. The chapter ends by providing the conclusion on the analysis of the findings.

### **THEME ONE: Preference for African languages as languages of teaching and learning**

The finding that the majority of Grade Four teachers prefer the use of African languages as LoLT to teach the African learners is loaded with meaning regarding to the worldview learners bring to the classroom. Primarily, it is imperative to understand the worldview in the context of this study and the role of language in this setting. To illustrate, the worldview is a conception that

resides in our mind and carries the cultural values and beliefs with which human beings interpret the world around them. Cultural norms and stereotypes that are held by societies are internalised by the individual through the process of mediation, where the knowledgeable others within the society transmit these cultural norms and values to the individual through modelling and practice by the individual. When cultural knowledge, values and belief systems are internalised, they reside in the mind as thought, which literature describes as an agent that regulates human behaviour (Rogoff, 2003). It is the ‘thought’ or the ‘cognition’, or the mental picture of the world rooted in a culture within the human mind that the researcher will refer to as the worldview.

Furthermore, language is a crucial cultural artefact that forms a link between the worldview in the mind and the interpretation of the world around us. Language is a combination of symbols based on cultural values to explain the world around us. These explanations or perceptions about our worlds become our worldviews; that is, our reference point when one explores how we exist and live in harmony with the universe. In this sense, Batibo (2015, p. 100) posits that language is tangled up with diverse cultural values and a particular worldview. This means that human beings access and use cultural knowledge through language, which contains cultural values that connect with the worldview in the mind.

Drawing from an argument by Halliday (1993), learners learn the foundation of learning when they learn a language; it means that culture that is embedded

in a language is the foundation for learning, since symbols do not have any meaning in themselves but gain meaning through interpretation within a particular culture. It is also significant to note that learning is a social activity (Wersch, 1991) that takes place through a language. The mediation process between the learner and the knowledgeable others (teachers, parents and peers) occurs through a language. For deep learning (Lehti-Eklund, 2013) to take place, the LoLT needs to be aligned to learners' worldview to allow the process of internalisation to occur smoothly.

Returning to the analysis of the findings in this section, most Grade Four teachers think it is appropriate to teach using mother tongue languages because this is a reflection of the link between of teachers' worldviews and the ways of knowing that exist in learners' minds. The link of the worldviews is possible through a language that is culturally loaded. For example, when one is born, one is socialised and raised within a culture and a particular worldview inculcated into one's minds through a language. The issue at hand is not only about communication skills in a language, but about deep seated cultural knowledge and ways of knowing that reside in one's minds and control our behaviour. How one respond in a particular situation depends on the worldview that is in the mind of the person who interpret the situation. Therefore, learners come to school with cultural knowledge, ways of knowing and a language. The learner navigates and learns new concepts using the worldview as a reference point. Hence, it is paramount that the methods used to teach align perfectly with the learners' ways of knowing and the language that the learners bring into the classroom.

In other words, the use of mother tongue in education connects the learners' worldview and new knowledge by facilitating the understanding and deep learning that lead to learners' full academic potential. The latter is evident in comments by teachers that when the teacher codeswitches to the mother tongue, the learners understand better. In this manner, learners get the opportunity to approach learning from a position of strength within the language they are familiar with and the language that is in line with their worldview. In other words, the learners' background knowledge and language assist them to understand new knowledge.

In addition, it is evident from the teachers' responses that teachers are quick to codeswitch to mother tongue language when learners do not understand. It is arguable that when teachers codeswitch they are not only responding to the learners' language problem but to their own language difficulty with the language of instruction. In this regard, the fact that learners understand well when teachers codeswitch implies that teachers can fully explain the concepts using his/her language. The use of the mother tongue language connects the teachers' worldview with the worldview of learners. The latter promotes the free expression and full explanation of subject content knowledge by the teacher and learner's deep understanding of new concepts. When a foreign language or language that is unfamiliar to both the learners and teachers is used as LoLT within the classroom, it leads to communication breakdowns in the classroom (Sibanda, 2017).

### **Subtheme 1: Breakdown in classroom communication**

Most Grade Four teachers attested that the majority of African learners are unable to speak, read and write in English. Hence, there is a breakdown in communication within the classroom. These learners are at the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in terms of language because they are unable to decode meanings communicated in English by themselves. They need the assistance from those (knowledgeable others) who understand the language to assist them in decoding the meaning of concepts and knowledge presented in English. (Vygotsky, 1978). This implies that most African Grade Four learners are unable to use the LoLT as a tool for learning within the classroom. It is imperative to understand what is learning in the context of the study and what is meant by the breakdown in classroom communication, using the perspective of sociocultural theory as basis for the discussion. What are the implications of this communication breakdown for learning and teaching within the classroom?

Firstly, the researcher used the concept of learning based on the description by Wertsch (1985) that it is a social process through which human intelligence develops (see section 3.2). This process involves interaction in a language and coming into contact with a particular culture embedded in a language used LoLT. In this light, it is significant to point out that the worldview and the language that a learner brings into the classroom are of paramount importance

in this case. To illustrate, the issue at hand is not only about learners' communication skills in a language but it needs to be understood with reference to deep-seated cultural knowledge and ways of knowing that reside in a human mind as a worldview that serves as the reference point to interpret the world around us. The worldview can be accessed through a language containing similar cultural values and norms. The paradox is that the IsiZulu speaking learner brings into the classroom IsiZulu language and culture to use for learning; while on the contrary, within the classroom the language of learning and teaching is English. The language, IsiZulu, that the learner brings into the classroom is curtailed and the result is a communication breakdown within the classroom.

Regarding this communication breakdown within the classroom and the sociocultural perspective of learning, primarily, it is vital to understand the meaning of communication as used in the context of the study. The researcher will describe it as the meaningful use of symbols that carries cultural meanings, which describe the world around us. In this sense, if the symbols carry the same cultural norms and values as the worldview in a human mind it is able to pass on messages for the sociocultural context into the mind through the process of internalisation (Kozulin, 1990). When the latter happens, communication has taken place in the context of this study. However, the breakdown in communication refers to the removal or the inability of a language to transmit cultural knowledge from the sociocultural context of the learner to the mind through internalisation to contribute to the development of higher mental functioning. In this sense, the preference for African languages alluded to by



the teachers in the above section is justified since it calls for the alignment of LoLT with the worldviews of the African learners. The next paragraph expands on this notion by focusing on the implications of the communication breakdown for teaching and learning within the classroom.

Learning, in this context, means active engagement between the learner's worldview and the sociocultural context using mother tongue language with the intention to internalising the cultural knowledge and skills to develop higher mental functions. Teaching in the context of this study means the mediation (Vygotsky, 1987) or facilitation done by the teacher or the capable others using their worldviews and a common language to give explanations and instructions that leads to the internalisation of skills and knowledge that will develop higher mental functions.

Furthermore, the collapse of classroom communication implies a failure of both the learning and teaching processes. Interactions during the learning process occur between learners and teachers through a language. As explained in the above discussion, language connects the sociocultural context and the learners' worldview so that learning takes place. If language is a barrier to learning, it means no deep learning is occurring in that situation. On the other hand the role of teachers and capable others is to assist the learners to move out of the zone of proximal development (see section 3.2.1) towards the zone of actual development where learners are able to do tasks on their own without assistance by capable others. Therefore, language in this case is invaluable,

since without learner and teacher-proficiency in a language, no effective teaching takes place. Knowledge transmission from the social context to the mind occurs through a language. Hence, a situation where there is a cessation of classroom communication indirectly means no effective learning and teaching are taking place. Such a situation in most cases results from the use of the language they are not proficient in it, such as English, to teach an African learner within the classroom. A further discussion on this issue follows in the next subtheme.

### **Subtheme 2: Implication of the use of English as LoLT**

The use of English to teach the African learners, as expressed by Grade Four teachers in the qualitative data, is arguably an extension of neo-colonialism. The English language carries the related culture and Eurocentric worldview. Therefore, when it is used to teach African learners it destroys the worldview they bring into the classroom and inculcates Eurocentric cultural values into the minds of the African learner, thereby devaluing the strength of the sociocultural context and the role of the home language of the learners in the education process. Such a situation results in unequal access to the curriculum and gives an unfair advantage to English speaking learners over African language speaking learners. To illustrate, the researcher uses the following cartoon as a metaphor artefact, which he will call the unfair race, where the two athletes get the instruction that they have equal chances to win the

marathon, while one athlete runs freely and the second competitor's legs get tied up with ropes.

**Figure 6. 1 Unfair race cartoon**



Source: <https://www.shutterstock.com>

The competitor with legs tied up represents the African learners and the free running athlete represents the English-speaking learners in an educational race. The legs are the significant and enabling tool to win the sprint. Similarly, in education language is an enabling tool and a crucial cultural artefact needed for academic success. Hence, non-implementation of African languages as LoLT in education and using English instead is tantamount to tying up one athlete's legs and leaving the other to run free, while telling them that they have equal chances to win the race. It is likely that the tied athlete runs the race in great discomfort and his chances to win the race are slim.

Correspondingly, when the African learner uses English as LoLT the chances of succeeding academically are very slim. The learner is approaching the learning of new concepts from a weaker and uncomfortable position where the medium of learning is unknown. Hence, the continued use of English as LoLT implies the continuation of the imperialist agenda of promoting Eurocentric cultural values and ways of knowing, and the curtailment of African languages and cultures in education. Paradoxically, most teachers currently operate as agents of colonisation promoting the hegemony of English by instilling in the minds of African learners Eurocentric values and the related worldview by using English in education, which leads to the destruction of African languages. Thus, the English language is used as one of the elements of coloniality, which continue to colonise the minds of the current generation in South Africa and the rest of Africa. The latter is likely to influence African parents' involvement in education.

### **Subtheme 3: Parental involvement in education**

Another finding deduced from Grade Four teachers' data is that most African parents participate minimally in their children's educational programmes, such as assisting them with homework. Primarily, one needs to understand the role of parents in education as viewed within the sociocultural perspective.

Parental involvement is a crucial element of the learners' social context in education, in the sense that the parents cultural beliefs and values shape

learners' attitudes towards learning, and the learners' self-esteem and self-confidence (Quane & Glanz, 2005) are boosted when parents support or approve of what learners are doing (Ule et al., 2015). To clarify, the social context where the education of a learner takes place involves the school where teachers and the learners' peers are important capable others, and the home context is where parents and other family members are the knowledgeable others and assist the learner to cope with the learning tasks.

The critical matter in this situation is, if parents are so significant in the learners' learning process, why do they have minimal participation in their children's education? It is imperative to explore the kind of education system they are engaged in; that is, the type of curriculum and the language used for learning and teaching. The researcher will base his argument on the fact that every learner has acquired a particular worldview, based on a certain cultural values and a language within the context in which he or she grew up, which often matches that of their parents. In this regard, the subject content knowledge promoted within the school curriculum is Eurocentric and is presented in English. Therefore, it is most likely that the majority of African parents do not understand the LoLT used in schools. Moreover, the parents' worldviews and ways of knowing differ to the Eurocentric ways used in schools. Thus, this scenario presents a situation where the African learners' parents' role as the knowledgeable other diminishes. In this way, African parents are eliminated from the education process of their children, in the same way as their learners are alienated from the curriculum and denied access to knowledge.

The above discussion indicates that although African parents have the best interests at heart for the education of their children, the continued use of English as LoLT and its accompanying Eurocentric ways hinder their active participation in education. Unless strong measures are taken to align the language of learning and ways of knowing of learners and their parents, the status quo is likely to remain. In line with this is another report by Grade Four teachers that there are also challenges with the use of African languages as LoLT. The issues pertaining the latter are discussed at length in the next section.

## **THEME TWO: Challenges of African languages in education**

One of the findings from the quantitative data is that there is a widely held attitude by younger Grade Four teachers that most African learners at Grade Four cannot speak, read and write the standard version of African languages. Drawing from the theory of planned behaviour it is evident that the younger teachers have evaluated the use of African languages as LoLT unfavourably. An analysis of the attitude in question within the theory of planned behaviour enables one to predict the likelihood of younger Grade Four teachers to use the African languages as LoLT. To understand the attitude mentioned above, it is relevant to explore it in relation to other determinants of behavioural intention such as the subjective norms and the perceived behavioural control as they lead to behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Considering the unfavourable evaluation (attitude)

of younger teachers on the use of African languages as LoLT, it is likely that the subjective norms related more to the status of African languages in the community and the hegemony of English in education.

One of the influential factors in this case is that some parents and other stakeholders in education still believe that English is the language of economy and it has the power to give people access to a better life (Ngidi, 2007; Barnard, 2010; Van Wyk, 2014). Therefore, there is a likelihood that this societal belief will exert pressure on teachers, learners and other stakeholders in education to give priority to English instead of African languages. Moreover, the social media, for example, television, and some powerful places of administration such as the parliament, educational institutions and other social sectors in South Africa, use English as a language of communication more than African languages. In this regard, the current generation is being socialised into the English culture and language. Hence, the latter might be the driving force that persuades the younger cohort of Grade Four teachers to acknowledge the challenges associated with the use of African languages as LoLT. In this regard, it is arguable that these teachers have anticipated the difficulty in using African languages due to their reflecting on their own experiences, as well as the impediments and obstacles.

Younger teachers are likely to be the product of the education system that is dominated by the hegemony of English, and in which African languages were disregarded to the extent these teachers completed their education unable to

speak, read and write the standard version of the African languages. Hence, it is likely that the issue at hand might not be about the learners' language problem with the standard version of African languages but more on the teachers' (in)ability and expertise (or lack of) to use the standard version of African languages. It is more likely that these teachers have insufficient African language skills to use these languages LoLT. The general rule is that, "the more favourable the attitude and subjective norms with regard to a behaviour, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be an individual's intention to perform the behaviour under consideration" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188).

Considering the above discussion, it is evident that the main challenge facing the use of African languages is rooted in their status within society and education sector. In this regard, it is also imperative to explore the possibilities in which the status of the African languages can be elevated. It is significant to note that a language per se does not have power; it is just symbols used to communicate meanings. What gives power to English is the use by speakers in decision-making positions, its utilisation as LoLT in education, and its use as the language of administration in all public service sectors, despite the fact that the African population in South Africa is 80.5% compared to 10.8% for the combined White and Asian population (Statistic South Africa, 2015).

Moreover, the researcher argues for the use of all African languages in education and in the administration sector of the societies as the medium of



communication since, if not used by the elite, people do not see the importance of the language and that is what entrenches the hegemony of English. In other words, if African languages are not used, such a situation enables the worldview and the culture that is embedded in English language to be ingrained into the minds of the African learners. Thus, the hegemony of English will stay with us if it remains the sole language of learning and of administration.

To illustrate, the responses of teachers that still prefer English as LoLT to educate an African learner is not for cognitive reasons. They have not considered the benefit of mother tongue education, since people think in a language and the use of the mother tongue enables the alignment of the learners' worldview with the subject content. The views of these teachers about English as LoLT might not be stemming from their concern on the language issue so that African learners can learn better, but could be a reflection of their positions regarding the English LoLT, which is influenced by social pressure, that are inherent in a society. For example, the belief that English is the language for tertiary education and that one needs English to be able to compete in a job market. These are social pressures, which in the theory of planned behaviour are referred to subjective norms that exert pressure on the behavioural intentions of the teachers in question.

Furthermore, when the hegemony of English was entrenched in society, it brought about identity confusion, as Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1994, p. 12) express that, "language and literature were taking us further from ourselves, from our

world to the other world” and the African people started to accept that English is the better language for them. The latter led to the destruction of the sense of Africanisms, an identity with the rich African cultures and the wealth of knowledge embedded in it. The worldview and the language that the African learner brings into the classroom shifted to the background as the Eurocentric culture and language instilled into the minds of the young African children took centre stage. The challenge in this case is that African languages are on shaky ground, they are not promoted. The refusal of African learners to use their language in education indicates that they have limitations and cannot develop fully into their academic and intellectual potential. Furthermore, the survival of a language depends largely on the support provided by culture; in this case curtailment of African languages and the use of English as LoLT in education means the loss of African culture and African identity.

Moreover, it is evident in teachers’ responses that, despite the fact that the learners are not accessing knowledge, some teachers still feel they need to teach learners through the medium of English. It is vital to note that a number of research done on the mother tongue (Chumbow, 1990; Ball, 2010; Bachore, 2014) have pointed out the benefits of using mother tongue in education, in that it forms the basis for the acquisition of second language and has a sociocultural significance (see section 2.6). Hence, the South African language in education policy implements the ideas of the school of thought that learners should learn the mother tongue first as the base for the acquisition of the second language. However, there is non-implementation of this policy. We do not know the reasons for non-implementation of the policy but it is likely that, if

we have teachers and parents who believe in the hegemony of English, the situation of non-implementation will deteriorate further.

Moreover, the non-implementation of the language-in education policy (Madiba & Mabiletja, 2008; Pluddemann, 2013) further accelerates the challenges related to the use of African languages as LoLT (see section 2.4.2). There is an urgent need in South Africa to take the language in education policy seriously and implement its principles fully to ensure the protection of the basic language rights of all learners. Central to the policy is the maintenance of mother tongue as LoLT in education through the principle of bi/multilingualism. In this regard, it is imperative to note that the solution to the problem of quality teaching and learning in South African depends largely on the proper implementation of the language in education policy of South Africa. Most importantly, the use of mother tongue to teach the African learner promotes access to knowledge through its alignment with the learners' worldviews and their cultures. In this manner, learners are able to approach new concepts from the familiar language and through the lenses of their culture inculcated into their minds during their socialisation.

Although teachers say it is the Department of Education that requires the teaching of the standard version of the African languages, the truth is the opposite of what the teachers say. This statement is a reflection of what these teachers want, since they are the experts of the subject and the Department of Education give guidelines to the curriculum. The latter statement speaks to the

knowledge the teachers have of language teaching. In this case, it implies that the language teachers lack knowledge on language varieties. This issue needs further research by linguists and researchers in language education. In this case, if teachers were aware that language has its own varieties then as experts of the language they would know these varieties, and would not talk about the original version of African languages since they have varieties. The current discourse is that there is no incorrect language variety; all languages have their own dialects that develop due to the contextual needs for that language – for example, ‘tsotsitaal’ and ‘isicamtho’(Saohatse, 1997) which are IsiZulu dialects. The next section discusses how the findings of the study answer the research questions.

### **How the findings answer the research questions**

In this section, the researcher present a discussion on how the findings answer the research questions and respond to the hypothesis.

#### **Research question 1:**

*What are Grade Four teachers’ attitudes towards the language of learning and teaching in the management of the transition from Grade Three to Grade Four, in English second language schools?*

The findings from the quantitative data revealed that the majority of Grade Four teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of African languages ( $M = 39.30$ ,  $SD = 9.822$ ) over English ( $M = 34.27$ ,  $SD = 9.312$ ) to teach African learners. The positive attitudes towards African languages revealed in the responses of the teachers has its basis in the notion that African languages will enable the African learners to show their intelligence, to access content knowledge provided in the curriculum and to express themselves freely during interaction that occurs within the classroom. However, some of Grade Four teachers still believe that English is the best language for use in education as LoLT. The latter attitude has its basis in the idea that using English only in teaching is a way of keeping standards high; one needs English to understand academic ideas and that South Africans can unite in education by using English. An interesting feature in these findings is that there is no significant relationship between African language preference and English language preference ( $r = 0.27$ ,  $n = 394$ ,  $p = .588$ ).

**Research question 2:**

*How do Grade Four teachers interpret their lived experiences in managing the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four?*

An overall expression of Grade Four teachers on their lived experiences in managing the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four is that teachers are having trouble in teaching the African learners using English as

LoLT. This is indirectly implied in their expression of the view that learners are struggling and do not understand English. Learners' responses, according to the teachers, result in a classroom communication breakdown, meaning that learners participate minimally when communication is in English. Some of the teachers expressed that it is difficult to give instructions to learners in English. Sometime it takes about ten minutes to explain an instruction and teachers will often resort to codeswitching. Furthermore, the teachers have spontaneously resolved the problem of communication breakdown by codeswitching to IsiZulu for learners to understand subject content. Grade Four teachers also point out the negative effects of the lack of parental involvement in helping learners with their homework.

**Research question 3:**

*How does age, qualification, subject taught and teaching experience influence language attitudes of Grade Four teachers?*

The findings of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the influence of demographic factors; age, qualification, subject taught and teaching experiences indicated that most Grade Four teachers have the same attitudes on African language preference, English language preference, African languages challenges, and African language identity and development with regard to their qualifications, subject taught and experiences. The null

hypothesis was accepted. However, there was a significant difference ( $p < 0.01$ ) with regard to African languages challenges. This implies that most Grade Four teachers have a different opinion regarding African languages challenges. The mean score between groups is also the highest (Mean=154.203). In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected. A post hoc test (Bonferroni t-test) was conducted to determine this difference and the results indicated the mean score for those aged 20-29 years ( $M=27,63, SD=4.722$ ) was significantly different from those with 40-49 years ( $M=24,93, SD=5.430$ ) at  $p = .010$ . The 20-29 year-old Grade Four teachers also differed significantly from those aged 50-60 years ( $M=24.26, SD=5.275$ ) at  $p = .001$  and there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between those of 30-39 years ( $M=25.58, SD=6.612$ ) and all other groups.

## **Hypothesis**

*Grade Four teachers prefer English as LoLT to teach African learners, teachers are well equipped to manage the language transition and demographic information does not influence teachers' language attitudes.*

It is of prime importance to note that this hypothesis, in the context of the study, is not purely used in a post-positivist (Ryan, 2006) way of conducting research but is utilised in a broader context which takes into account qualitative findings. It could be argued that within this context the hypothesis reflects the assumption of the study and captured the three research objectives indicated in section 1.4. The findings from qualitative indicated that the majority of Grade

Four teachers prefer African languages as the LoLT to teach an African learner as indicated in research question 1 above. Further, the qualitative data showed that teachers are having trouble in teaching African learners using English as LoLT. The question is; what do we learn from these findings?

It could be argued that the results from qualitative and quantitative data point to a disjuncture between teachers' attitudes towards LoLT and their practice, as they prefer African languages as LoLT to teach African learners and actually use English as LoLT. In as much as teachers have realised and experienced unofficially the use of mother tongue education as the solution to the South African languages problem, they are forced to use English as LoLT due to non-implementation of the language in education policy (Madiba & Mabiletja, 2008; Pluddemann, 2013) by teachers and other stakeholders in the education sector. In this regard, the lived experiences as expressed by Grade Four teachers suggest that the existence of language change from mother tongue to English as LoLT at Grade Four is pedagogically incorrect (Kamwangamalu, 2004), in the sense that it destroys the worldviews and ways of knowing that African learners bring to the classroom. This makes learning difficult for African learners and teaching complicated for the teachers. Language change is a problem and is not in line with the language in education policy, which promoted mother tongue education through its bi/multilingualism concept, which provides for the use of mother tongue as LoLT alongside strong teaching of the second language.



## **Conclusion**

Finally, in this the chapter I argue that humans interpret and make sense of their own world through the worldview that exists in their mind. The worldview is the product of the cultural values and norms that the individual derive from the society as one learns the first language. In this way, language is a useful cultural artefact that connects the sociocultural context and the worldview that exists in the mind of an individual. Approaching the education of the African learner from a worldview perspective is the first step to the right direction since the findings indicate that teachers are experiencing difficulty in teaching these learners using English as LoLT. The next chapter discusses the conclusions of the thesis and makes recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter extends on the issues from the analysis of the findings that were discussed in the previous chapter by elaborating on the thesis contribution, presentation of the Worldview Based Mother Tongue Education Model (WB-MTEM), the discussion of the thesis conclusions and lastly, presenting recommendations based on the findings.

## **Thesis contribution**

The language issues in education have been thoroughly debated for decades in the education sector. The main issue for debate is that African learners still receive their education through the medium of a language foreign to them, particularly English and this negatively affects their academic achievement (see section 2.5). Although in some South African higher education institutions the mother tongue is in the process of its introduction (Madiba, 2010; Ndimande-Hlongwa, Balfour, Mkhize, & Engelbrecht, 2010), less focus has been given to this language issue at primary school, more particular at Grade Four. Despite these challenges, some of the African learners manage to pass through the education system and succeed in life. The question is: What makes these learners to continue to succeed in such a schooling system? The findings in this study reveal that, in many classrooms, when learners do not understand the subject content during the learning process, teachers' codeswitch to the learners' mother tongue and then the learners understand better. This indicates that the mother tongue is a perfect link between the subject content knowledge and the learner's worldview and ways of knowing. In this sense, it is important to note that in the classroom teachers identify the language problem and spontaneously solve it for a short time by codeswitching to the home language of the learners that is often familiar not only to the learners but to the teachers as well.

The code switching in classrooms is spontaneous because the teachers' worldview and language match that of the learners. Teachers see where the

problem is and solve it by code switching. This solution is short-term and done unofficially since the teachers later return to English as LoLT. Hence, the language problem continues to trouble the learners and the teachers within classrooms. The study acknowledges this solution and argues for a permanent solution to be sought regarding the issues of language and access to knowledge by connecting the minds of the teachers and learners using the mother tongue and African ways of knowing in a decolonised curriculum. The following section presents an educational model that will ensure the quality of learning and teaching for the African learners whose home language is an African language.

### **The Worldview Based Mother Tongue Education Model [WB – MTEM]**

Language, culture and worldview are three inseparable aspects of human activity. To illustrate this notion, it is vital to note that human beings are continuously engaging themselves in search for meanings and the process of redefining the world around them. To achieve this level of high mental function, the three factors used interchangeable during the process of mediation and the internalisation of knowledge and skills from the social context into the mind. Language is the main driving cultural artefact in this process. In the context of this study, the researcher defines language as a combination of symbols developed within a particular culture to render meanings about the sociocultural context of the person acquiring knowledge.

However, if the learners' language is the prism through which we see the world, the language becomes more than just the symbols that we use to communicate, but it also shapes how we think, noting that thoughts control our behaviour. In this sense, when one learns the home language, it gives one a worldview that is based on a particular culture. This worldview becomes the reference point from which a human being interprets the world around them through the language (see 6.2 theme 1). In this regard, African learners, when they learn their mother tongue language at home, develop an African-culture-based worldview. This is a powerful cultural tool the African child brings into the classroom to navigate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. For example, within the African worldview knowledge is seen as interwoven into the lives of the people, meaning that education is integrated with life, one learns knowledge and skills as part of the growth process.

On the contrary, knowledge in schools is compartmentalised and based on Eurocentric worldviews that are particularly interwoven with the English language. In this regard, for the African learner to learn the school knowledge, he/she must be able to see things the way the English speaking people see them in order for him/her to access the knowledge. Hence, the way of knowing in English becomes a gap for the African learner, that is, to see the world the English-speaking people see it. In this sense, the researcher would like to express that the ways of knowing takes the subject content knowledge and make it coherent with the learners' worldview through their language. If

African learners use a language foreign to them during the learning process, access to knowledge becomes difficult because they are unable to decode the English language meanings, while at the same time learning it as a new language. In this light, it is evident that an educational model that will align the learners' worldview with the subject content knowledge is necessary to enable African learners' full access to knowledge. Figure 7.1 below provides a model based on the mother tongue as an attempt to bring about a solution to the problem of quality learning and teaching for African learners.

**Figure 7. 1 Worldview Based Mother Tongue Education Model [WB-MTEM]**

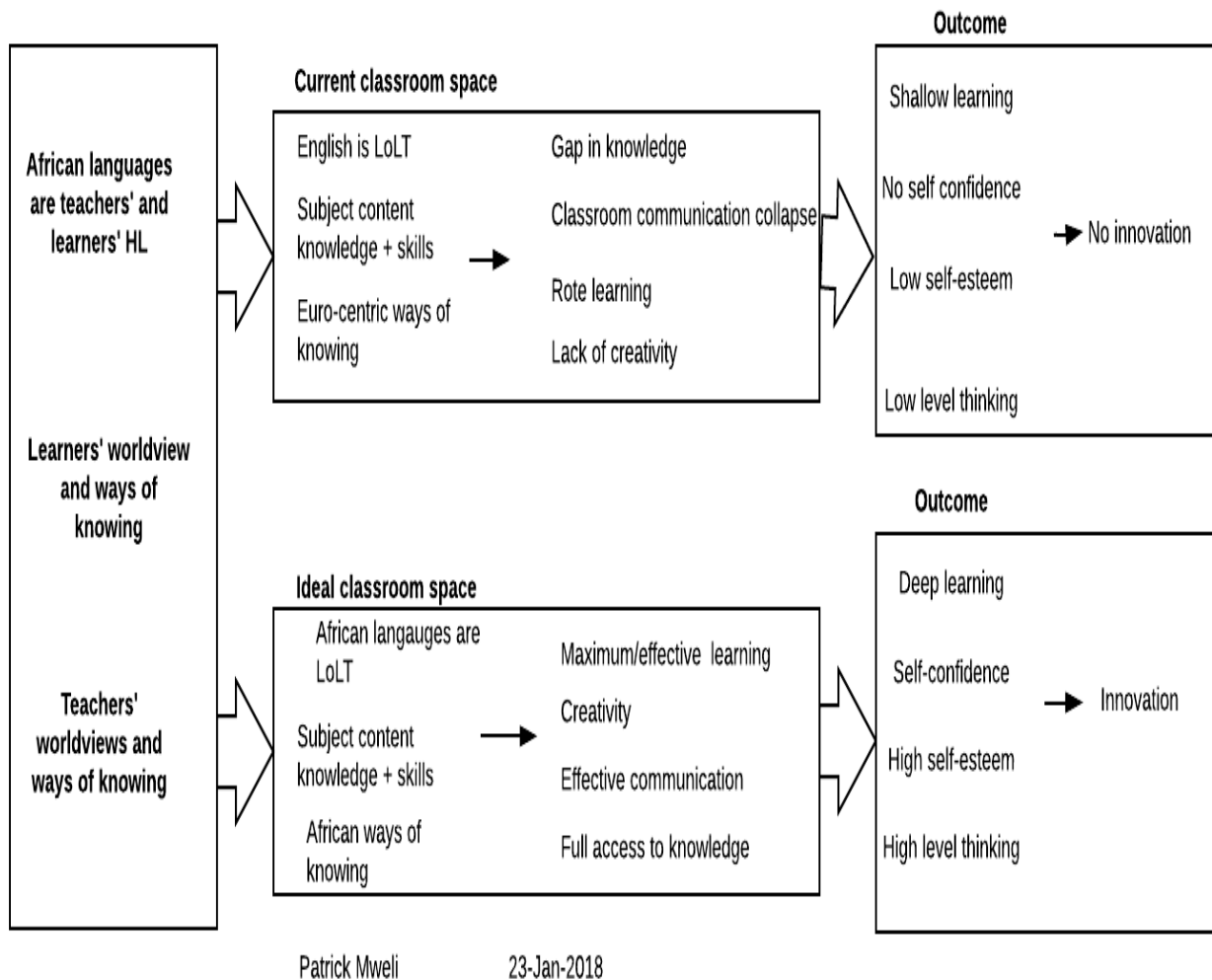


Figure 7.1 presents the current classroom space and the ideal classroom space where learning takes place. The ideal classroom space is an appropriate educational model that will bring about quality learning and teaching in South African schools. The basis for the model is the meeting of the learners and teachers' worldviews using mother tongue as LoLT represented in the first vertical block above Section 6.2. In theme 1, the researcher discussed this idea

in detail. In the sense that, when the language of learning and teaching is the mother tongue of both the teacher and the learners, their worldviews connect and enable better understanding of the subject content knowledge by the learners since teachers are able to explain the knowledge and skills that are acquired better. In line with this, most research in mother tongue education points out that programmes that are based on the use of mother tongue are likely to result in greater academic achievement (Graham, 2010; Bachore, 2014; Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014; Machombo, 2017). However, this idea can be realised by following the ideal classroom space as presented by the model above. Hence, the current classroom spaces in South African schools indicate the opposite to the ideal classroom space and contradict the main intentions of the education system to develop learners' critical thinking ability.

Within the current classroom spaces, English is LoLT. This means that both the teacher and the learners whose home language is one of the African languages approach the subject content knowledge and skills in an uncomfortable language and using Eurocentric ways of knowing (see section 5.6.2) that are foreign to them. To illustrate this, there is no way that a pigeon can learn the skills of an owl from a pigeon perspective unless the pigeon sees the world the way the owl sees it. If the African learner uses English as LoLT, the incidents result in the existence of a gap in knowledge, classroom communication collapse, rote learning and lack of creativity (see section 5.6.2.1). Thus, the learning that takes place in such an environment is shallow. In most cases, learners who are exposed to this type of learning environment often lack self-confidence, have low self-esteem and low-level thinking. It is

unlikely that learners who went through this kind of education will produce innovations needed to improve the life, the society, and their participation in our national economy and that they will be competitive in the global economy.

On the contrary, an ideal classroom space is where both the teachers' and the learners' mother tongue is the same and in this manner, their minds meet within the same worldview (see section 6.2, Theme 1). In this context, the African language is LoLT, (figure 7.1) meaning that both the teachers and learners approach the subject content knowledge from a position of strength using African ways of knowing to engage with subject content. It is likely that under this condition learners using the familiar language get full access to knowledge. In addition, the maximum/effective learning, creativity, effective communication and full access to knowledge are likely to take place. Hence, the outcome of this kind of learning is deep learning, development of self-confidence, high self-esteem and high levels of thinking that result in innovation. Drawing from the ideas mentioned in the above discussion, the next section expands on the thesis conclusion.

### **Thesis conclusion**

The researcher would like to conclude by stating that it is necessary that the language issue in education is resolved. The argument in this case is that, before we sort out the language issue in this country we are not going to get quality education for African learners. The more delay we have on this issue



the more we are missing out on the potential skills of millions of South African learners whose talents could have been utilised to better our lives and effective participation in our national economy and competitiveness in global economy.

It is imperative to note the point, that an amount of body of knowledge that has been developed on mother tongue based education both internationally and locally in South Africa (Graham, 2010; Bachore, 2014; Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014; Cabansag, 2016; Machombo, 2017; Pradhan, 2017). Despite the knowledge that exists, the mother tongue education that we have in South Africa is not clear, it is pseudo in the sense that it is not aligned to the language policy that allow the use of mother tongue throughout the education system. In fact, the management of the language transition is a misnomer since according to the policy language transition does not exist. The policy refer to additive bi/multilingualism (Kamwangamalu, 2004; Heugh, 2005) where mother tongue is maintained as the language of learning and teaching and the addition of second language accompanied by its strong teaching is recommended. To address this problem we can use the lessons on how Tanzania promoted Kiswahili (Tibategeza & Du Plessis, 2012; Mohr & Ochieng, 2017) and Ethiopian case (Bachore, 2015) of Amharic, Oromia and Tigrinya languages (see section 2.2.1).

Most importantly the current pressure exerted on the education system to use English as LoLT is not supported by the language in education policy (Heugh & Prinsloo, 2013). The use of English as LoLT to teach an African learner is

promoting the imperialist agenda in a neo-colonial manner. In fact, it is the opposite of additive bi/multilingualism since it subtracts African languages as LoLT. Furthermore, it promotes Eurocentric knowledge over indigenous knowledge and instils a Eurocentric worldview and ways of knowing into the minds of African people. In this sense, it is vital that the subject content knowledge is decolonised to enable African learners to access knowledge through African ways of knowing and worldviews.

Furthermore, the findings that the majority of Grade Four teachers prefer the African languages as LoLT indicated that the teachers have realised the solution to the language issue in this country. It is evident from their report that they have tried to solve the problem by codeswitching to learners' mother tongue. They have done this unofficially, which indicates that, when the mother tongue is used, teachers explain better, leading to learners understanding more deeply the content knowledge.

Moreover, non-implementation of the language in education policy in South Africa is the root of the language problem in education and of poor teaching and learning. The solution to the problem depends largely on the proper implementation of the policy, as it promote the alignment of learners' worldview, ways of knowing and the culture using mother tongue languages. The researcher would like to invite researchers in linguistics and psycholinguistics to the debate that mother tongue education is not only about the communication aspect but involves deep-seated worldviews in the minds

of learners and teachers are vital in teaching and learning process. Hence, mother tongue education is view as the alignment of the worldviews, cultures and language to navigate education in a position of strength that lead to full access to knowledge.

Further, for the learners to succeed in the education process parental involvement is crucial. Their involvement ensures the completeness of the social context in which the learners learn cultural knowledge and skills. In other words, learning is about the holistic development of the child that comprises moral development, cognitive development and physical development. The achievement of the child's holistic development in education depends largely on parental involvement since their engagement promotes self-esteem, self-confidence and appropriate norms and values that society needs for healthy living, for humane values and tolerance among members of society.

Currently, schools are experiencing serious discipline problems due to the lack of cultural values and commitment to education by the learners, which makes it difficult for the teachers to teach effectively. This is an indication of the absence of parental involvement, in the sense that learners in most cases get more motivation and are eager to perform well if their parents show appreciation of what they are doing. Moreover, the cultural values that develop within the home context continue within the school context through the assistance of the parents. Hence, it is vital that we remove the language barrier

that blocks parents from participation in their children's education, to ensure the holistic development of the child and high academic achievement. In this sense, there is no way we can fully achieve this objective without using mother tongue-based education that aligns the cultural values of the child, parents, and teacher.

Lastly, most Grade Four teachers pointed out that most African learners are struggling with English and cannot speak, read and write the language. In this regard, the researcher argue that, it is not proper for us to speak about learners battling with the language of learning and teaching since the African language-speaking learner bring their home language to the classroom as a powerful cultural tool to navigate learning. The reality in this case is that we are forcing these learners to use the wrong communication tool and taking away the powerful tool that the learner can use successfully to achieve high levels of thinking and reach the level of innovation that will contribute towards making the lives of South African citizens better.

To illustrate the above argument, the researcher would like to point to the following scenario: there is no way that a house cat can learn and understand the lions' hunting skills and knowledge by using the lion's ways of knowing, primarily because the house cat do not see the world as the lion see it. For example, the lion is a carnivore, in this way it will approach its life in that manner. The house cat does not see the world as the lion sees it and does not understand the ways of knowing the lion use. Hence, it will be extremely

difficult for it to learn new knowledge using the lion's ways of knowing. However, it can understand and learn these new skills and knowledge if the house cat can approach the learning from its ways of knowing that will enable it to decode and understand the lion's hunting skills and knowledge. Finally, teaching African language speaking learners through the medium of an African language is of prime importance, as it contributes to children's holistic development and full access to knowledge with the assistance of all the knowledgeable others in the child sociocultural context.

The next section presents recommendations based on the findings of the study.

### **Recommendations**

The following points are the recommendations to all South African education stakeholders, policy-makers, researchers, and the entire citizenship of this country:

- There is a need in South Africa of an enabling policy to use mother tongue education in all levels of education from the foundation phase until university level with an emphasis on aligning learners' worldviews with subject content knowledge. To achieve this we need to review and fully implementation the language in education policy. Hence, the solution to the South African education problem of quality teaching and learning depends largely on the

proper implementation of the language in education policy that backs up the effective alignment of learners' worldviews, culture and language.

- It is of paramount importance that all stakeholders in education commit themselves to the issue of language in education from a decolonised perspective, where African languages are acknowledged as powerful tools to use as languages of instruction. The achievement of this objective requires a political will and commitment from the government by providing a large scale monitoring programmes to ensure the full implementation of the language in education policy.
- Funding is required for supporting programmes that intellectualize (build up African languages as academic languages) the African languages and develop teaching and learning materials for all subject contents using African languages as medium of instruction.
- As indicated by the findings that most African language speaking Grade Four learners do not understand and are unable to read, write and speak English, it is acknowledgeable that changing to mother tongue-based education might take some time. The interim measures would be to ensure the proper teaching of English as a subject by teachers who are experts in English language teaching, since the language, policy promotes a strong teaching of English as an additional language.

- The findings reveal that African language speaking parents participate minimally in the educational activities of their children. In this regards the researcher would recommend that the current recruitment system of SGBs used by the schools need revisiting, since it is not rendering the fruits it was established for. The South African Schools Act (1996) gives power to the parents to determine the language of instruction in the schools and most African language-speaking parents are less knowledgeable of the pedagogical and psychological importance of using the mother tongue language to access and impart educational knowledge. The researcher would recommend that the language issue should be the responsibility of the national government and education department since it deals with crucial matters of language policy and needs alignment with monitoring strategies designed to ensure that schools comply with the policy.
- Drawing from the analysis of the findings it is important to align the curriculum content knowledge with the worldviews and African language-speaking learners. Hence, the current curriculum content knowledge is Eurocentric. In this regard, I will recommend to the researchers and stakeholders in education to engage in more research and debates on finding ways to decolonise the curriculum and acknowledge the indigenous knowledge systems as crucial elements to develop the African child mentally, morally and physically.
- Learning is a cognitive process, in this sense, teachers needs more training in educational psychological theories to be able to access and identify the special language needs of African language-speaking learners and effectively

accommodate them in their teaching, using appropriate strategies that will allow learners' ways of knowing and thinking to be effectively used.

## **Summary**

The chapter has presented the contribution of the thesis, where the teachers identified the solution to language problem for African speaking learners; when teachers codeswitched to IsiZulu, learners understand better, which is the main aim of education. This indirectly points to the solution of learning in a comfortable language and understanding better the content knowledge. I also presented the Worldview Based Mother Tongue Education Model as an ideal classroom space that will realise the full academic potential of the African child. Then the conclusion of the thesis, followed by the recommendations, concluded the discussion in this chapter.



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# Appendix 1 Language Attitude Questionnaire

## Section A: Biographical Information

### 1. What is your age?

*Please tick the appropriate box*

- |                         |   |                            |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1.1. From 20 -29 years  | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 1.2. From 30 – 39 year  | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 1.3. From 40 – 49 years | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 1.4. From 50 – 60 years |   | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| 1.5. Other _____        | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/>   |

### 2. What is your home language?

*Please tick the box and add the language if 'other'*

- |                |   |                          |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| 2.1. English   | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.2. Afrikaans | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.3. IsiZulu   | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.4. IsiXhosa  | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.5. Other     | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**3. What is your highest academic qualification?**

*Please tick the box*

- |                        |   |                          |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 3.1. Grade 12          | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.2. Bachelor's degree | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.3. Honors degree     | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.4. Master's degree   | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.5. Doctorate         | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**4. Indicate the number of years you have in the teaching profession**

*Please tick the box*

- |                            |   |                          |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 4.1. Between 1 to 10 years | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.2. 10 to 20 years        | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.3. 20 to 30 years        | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.4. 30 to 40 years        | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.5. 40 and above          | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**5. What subject do you teach?**

*Please tick the box and add the subject if 'other'*

- |                       |   |                          |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 4.1 Languages         | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.2. Mathematics      | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.3. Natural sciences | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.4. EMS              | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.5. Other            | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## SECTION B

### YOUR FEELINGS

*Please place your mark under the heading (strongly agree, agree etc.) that is closest to your feelings about each sentence.*

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. Teaching with African languages at Grade Four will show the intelligence of African students					
2. It is a good idea to use the African languages to explain difficult English words in school books					
3. Teaching with African languages at Grade Four will not be practical					
4. People only need to get used to the idea of using African languages for teaching and learning for it to work					
5. Using only English for teaching and learning disadvantages African students					
6. Only some of the African languages should be used at South African primary schools to teach					
7. If African languages were used more for teaching at South African primary schools students would not have so many problems					
8. It will take too long to replace English as the only language of learning and teaching					
9. Afrikaans is an African language					
10. African languages cannot be used to explain academic ideas					
11. It is a student's human right to learn through his or her mother-tongue					
12. English is a language of unity					
13. African languages should first be developed before they are used at South African primary schools					

14. In South Africa we need to recognize different cultures and languages					
15. If African languages were used more at Grade Four students would be able to understand subject content better					
16. Using English gives one a feeling of belonging to the world					
17. People need to express themselves in the language that best suits them					
18. It is always possible to explain English words in the African languages					
19. English is busy killing the African languages					
20. At South African schools the majority African languages should be used to teach					
21. Government should do more to help develop the African languages					
22. It is difficult for African students to write and read in their own languages					
23. Primary school teachers must be made to learn African languages					
24. Afrikaans is a language of oppression					
25. English is a colonial language					
26. English is an international language					
27. It is not practical to translate from English into an African language					
28. If African languages were used more at Grade Four the pass rate would be higher					
29. Many African students cannot use the official versions of the African languages					
30. One will not be able to use the African languages in one's career					
31. If African languages were used more to teach in at primary schools it would help students whose English is not good					
32. The African languages should be developed in the same way that Afrikaans was					
33. English is the only language that we should use to teach in at schools and universities					
34. Your mother-tongue plays a big role in your sense of identity					
35. Using only English to teach in at South African primary schools would deny students their rights					
36. English must come first at South African primary schools					
37. One needs English to understand academic ideas					
38. It would take too long to explain difficult English words in the African languages					
39. If African languages were used more at Grade Four to teach in students could express themselves better					
40. Using the African languages to teach in at Grade Four will be in line with the new Constitution					

41. If African languages were used more at Grade Four students would not use English enough					
42. African languages need to be given a chance					
43. English cannot be replaced by African languages					
44. Using African languages for teaching and learning at Grade Four would cost too much					
45. You cannot use the African languages to get a job					
46. All languages are equal					
47. English-speaking students at South African schools have an unfair advantage over African students					
48. Grade Four teachers should use 'Fanakalo' for teaching and learning at South African schools					
49. English is the language for those who are ambitious					
50. It will be impossible to use all the official African languages to teach in at Grade Four level in South African schools					
51. English should be the only language of teaching and learning at primary school level					
52. It will be cheaper to use only English for teaching at Grade Four					
53. One needs English to make money					
54. South Africans will be united in education through using English					
55. There is a big difference between the spoken and written forms of the African languages					
56. No language is worse than any other					
57. Using only English in teaching is a way of keeping the standards high					
58. The speakers of the African languages are the ones who must develop these languages for teaching					
59. Afrikaans should be used for teaching and learning at South African schools					
60. Using only English for teaching is a way of remaining competitive					
61. It is difficult to learn things in English					
62. Using African languages for teaching is going to disadvantage learners at Grade Four level					



## Appendix 2 English version of teachers' informed consent

College of Humanities,  
University of KwaZulu-Natal,  
Howard Campus,



Dear Participant

My name is Patrick Mveli I am a Psychology Ph.D. candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, in South Africa. I am interested in learning about Grade Four teachers' language attitudes and lived teaching experiences. The University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities and Social sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSS/1373/015D) have ethically approved this study. Your school is one of my research sites. To gather the information, I am interested in asking you to share your attitudes and lived experiences in managing the language transition from Grade Three to Grade Four.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed, and your input will not be attributed to you in person but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in the secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by signing as applicable) whether or not you are prepared to allow the conversation to be recorded by the following equipment:

	willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

I can be contacted at:

Email: [mwelip@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mwelip@ukzn.ac.za)

Cell: 031-2603549

My supervisors are Prof. J.N. Mkhize, who is located at the School of Applied Human Sciences, Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: [mkhize@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mkhize@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: 031-2602006.

My Co-supervisor is Prof. T. Buthelezi, who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Contact details: email: [buthelzit10@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:buthelzit10@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: 031-2603471.

You may also contact the Research Office through:

Ms. Phumelela Ximba

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 3587/2381 E-mail: [ximba@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximba@ukzn.ac.za)

**DECLARATION**

I..... (Full names of participant) at this moment confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

### Appendix 3 IsiZulu version of teachers' informed consent



School of Applied Sciences  
, College of Humanities,  
University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Obambe iqhaza

Igama lami ngingu Patrick Mveli, ngingumfundi waseNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natali ngenza iziqu ze PhD kulesi sikhungo e Howard College campus, eThekwini. Ngenza ucwaningo ngemizwa (attitudes) no ukadebona walabothisha ekufundiseni ebangeni lesine lapho ulimi lokufunda nokufundisa lushintsha khona luba isiNgisi. Lolucwaningo lugunyazwe ibhodi lakwa Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committe enyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natali. Ukuthola imininingwane mayelana nesihloko socwaningo ngizocela ukuba unikele ngolwazi lwakho kulesihloko:

Nakhu okudinga ukwazi ngaphambi kokuba uvume ukuba inxenye yalolucwaningo:

1. Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza akuphoqiwe futhi ungayeka nanoma ngasiphi isikhathi.
2. Imininingwane yakho izohlala iyimfihlo kanti futhi ayikho imininingwane yakho ezosetshenziswa embhalweni wokugcina ozoveza ukuthi nguwe obambe iqhaza.
3. Ngizodinga ihora elilodwa ukuthi ngikubuze imibuzo.
4. Imininingwano eqoqiwe izobekwa ehovisi lweNyuvesi iminyaka emihlanu emva kocwaningo oluphelele.
5. Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kuyisihle akukho nzuzo nemali ezotholakala.
6. Ukuqiniseka imvume yakho, ngicela ufake uphawu (X), esikhaleni esifanele okuvumelana nawe nendlela engasetshenziswa ukuthola ulwazi lwakho kulolucwaningo.

	Uyavuma	Awuvumi
Isiqopha mazwi		
Ukuthathwa isithombe		
Ukuthweshulwa nge 'video'		

Ngiyatholakala ngezindlela ezilandelayo:

Email: [mwelip@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mwelip@ukzn.ac.za)

Cell: 031-2603549

Abeluleki kulolucwaningo yilaba abalandelayo:

Prof. J.N. Mkhize, osebenzwa kwi School of Applied Human Sciences, Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Utholakala ngezindlela ezilandelayo:

Email: [mkhize@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mkhize@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: 031-2602006.

Prof. T. Buthelezi, osebenzwa kwi School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Contact details: email: [buthlezit10@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:buthlezit10@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: 031-2603471.

Uma ufuna okuthola kabanzi ngalolucwaningo ungaxhumana nehovisi le Research ndlela elandilayo:

Ms. Phumelela Ximba

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 3587/2381 E-mail: [ximba@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximba@ukzn.ac.za)

### **ISIVUMELWANO:**

Mina

---

(igama eliphelele) ngiyaqonda leli phepha nesisathu salolu hlelo locwaningo Ngiyavumelana nemigomo ehambisana nokubamba iqhaza kulolu hlelo. Ngiyaqonda ukhuthi ngikwazi ukuhoxa kulolu hlelo noma nini uma ngifuna.

Isignesha umhlanganyeli

Usuku

## Appendix 4 Letter to the school



B165, Mageba Road

Mpumalanga Township

Hammersdale

3699

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

I at this moment request permission to conduct a study in your school. I am doing Ph.D. at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The topic of my study is Grade Four teachers' attitudes and lived teaching experiences.

The purpose of the study is to gather data from Grade Four teachers about second language acquisition and language across-curriculum. The aim of the study is to explore possibilities to address the problem of English language as a barrier to learning for most learners that uses African indigenous languages at home. The findings of the study will help to add to existing knowledge about second language acquisition and language across the curriculum and enable all learners to participate meaningfully in the curriculum.

Yours truly,

Patrick Mveli **Contact No:** 0722994420 **E-mail:** [mwelip@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mwelip@ukzn.ac.za)

---

My supervisors are Prof. J.N. Mkhize, who is located at the School of Humanities, Howard campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: [mkhize@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mkhize@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: 031-2602006.

My Co-supervisor is Prof. T. Buthelezi, who is located in the school of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Contact details: email: [buthelezit10@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:buthelezit10@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: 031-2603471.

You may also contact the Research Office through:

Ms. Phumelela Ximba

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 2603587/2381 E-mail: [ximba@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximba@ukzn.ac.za)

## Appendix 5 Focus group interview schedule for Grade Four teachers



### Questions:

1. Please, share with us your knowledge of the Language in education policy of South Africa
  2. How does your school implement this policy to ensure equity in the use of African languages as language of education?
  3. How do you feel about English as the language of learning and teaching to teach African-speaking learners at Grade Four level?
  4. How would you describe your learners with regard to their proficiency in English language?
  5. How would you describe your expertise in teaching language across curriculum?
  6. Can you share with us your lived experiences in teaching Grade Four African-speaking learners using English as the medium of instruction?
  7. Please share with us whether you teach language skills in your subject. If yes, how do you teach it? If no, why you do not teach it?
  8. Who do you think can play a role in improving learner performance and why?
  9. In your opinion would you regard language teachers as the only ones that are responsible for language teaching and language matters within the school?
- *Are there any issues that you would like to discuss that I have not covered?*

**Thank you for your participation.**



## Appendix 6 Ethical Clearance certificate



9 December 2015

Mr Patrick Mveli 203400955  
School of Applied Human Sciences-Psychology  
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr Mveli

Protocol reference number: HSS/1373/015D  
Project title: Teachers' attitudes and knowledge relating to second language acquisition and language across the curriculum in Grade 4 learners of selected schools in Pinetown district at KZN, South Africa

### Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 30 September 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)  
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Prof NJ Mkhize & Prof T Buthelezi  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

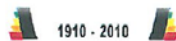
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/6350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za) / [snymam@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymam@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

## Appendix 7 Amended Ethical Clearance Letter



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

1 December 2017

Mr Patrick Mweli 203400955

School of Applied Human Sciences-Psychology Howard College campus

Dear Mr Mweli

**Protocol reference number: HSS/1373/015D**

**New Project Title: Grade Four teachers' language attitudes, and lived teaching experiences**

### Approval notification

**-Amendment Application** This letter serves to notify you that your application for an amendment dated 1 December 2017 has now been granted **Full Approval** as follows:

- **Change in Title**

**Any: 1 iterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its Implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years**

**The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.**

**Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.**

Your faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shenuka Singh', positioned above a dotted line.

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Cc Supervisor: Prof NJ Mkhize & Prof. T. Buthelezi

Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn

Cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [ximban@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximban@ukzn.ac.za) / [snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymann@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohunn@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunn@ukzn.ac.za) Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

## Appendix 8 Department of Education permission letter



### Education

Department:

Education **PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

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Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane Tel: 033 392 1004 Ref.:2/4/8/715

---

Mr P Mveli  
B 165 Mageba Road  
Mpumalanga Township  
Hammersdale  
3699

Dear Mr Mveli

#### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“TEACHERS’ ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE RELATING TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM IN GRADE FOUR LEARNERS OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN PINETOWN DISTRICT AT KZN, SOUTH AFRICA”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. He researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 18 February 2016 to 30 June 2017.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.

9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Pinetown District

UMlazi District

UMgungundlovu District



**Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD**

**Head of Department: Education**

**Date: 18 February 2016**

**KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa... **dedicated to service and performance** PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392

**Appendix 9: Teachers' Language Attitude Questionnaire (New shorter version)**

ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. If African languages were used more at Grade four to teach, students could express themselves better					
2. If African languages were used more at Grade four the pass rate would be higher					
3. At South African schools the majority African languages should be used to teach					
4. Teaching with African languages at Grade four will show the intelligence of African students					
5. If African languages were used more to teach at primary schools students would not have so many problems					
6. Primary school teachers must be made to learn African languages					
7. if African languages were used more to teach at primary schools it would help students whose English is not good					
8. Using only English for teaching and learning disadvantages African students					
9. Using African languages to teach at Grade four will be in line with the South African Constitution					
10. People only need to get used to the idea of using African languages for teaching and learning for it to work					
11. It is a good idea to use African languages to explain difficult English words in school books					
12. English speaking students at South African schools have an unfair advantage over African students					
13. Using only English in teaching is a way of keeping the standards high					
14. South Africans will be united in education through using English					
15. Using only English for teaching is a way of remaining competitive					
16. English should be the only language of teaching and learning at primary school level					
17. It is cheaper to use only English for teaching at Grade four level					
18. One needs English to understand academic ideas					
19. English should be the only language that we should use to teach in schools and universities					
20. One needs English to make money					
21. English must come first at South African primary schools					
22. You cannot use African languages to get a job					
23. African languages cannot be use to explain academic ideas					

24 One will not be able to use the African languages in one's career					
25. Many students cannot use the official version of the African languages					
26. It is difficult for African students to write and read in their own languages					
27. It will take too long to replace English as the only language of learning and teaching					
28. English is an international language					
29. Afrikaans should be use for teaching and learning in South African schools					
30. It is not practical to translate from English into African languages					
31. Grade four teachers should use 'Fanakalo' for teaching and learning at South African schools					
32. Teaching with African languages at Grade four will not be practical					
33. Afrikaans is an African language					
All languages are equal					
35. No language is worse than any other					
36. The speakers of African languages are the ones who must develop these languages for teaching					
37. You mother tongue play a big role in your sense of identity					
38. There is a big difference between the spoken and written forms of the African languages					
39 It is impossible to use all the official African languages to teach at Grade four level in South African schools					

## Appendix 10: Turnitin Report

Mr.

*by* Patrick Mveli

---

**Submission date:** 26-Jan-2018 02:56PM (UTC+0200)

**Submission ID:** 907072792

**File name:** ELI\_DECEMBER\_FINAL\_CORRECTED\_WRITE-UP\_Autosaved\_Recovered\_2.docx (2.16M)

**Word count:** 57 138

**Character count:** 328734

Mr.

ORIGINALITY REPORT

6%

SIMILARITY INDEX

5%

INTERNET SOURCES

3%

PUBLICATIONS

1%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Bekker, Ian. "An attitude scale for measuring language attitudes at South African tertiary institutions", Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, 2004. Publication	1%
2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
3	scholar.sun.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
4	ul.netd.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
5	alternation.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
6	www.laerskoollaeveld.co.za Internet Source	<1%
7	hj.diva-portal.org Internet Source	<1%
8	www.netreed.uio.no Internet Source	<1%



## Appendix 11: Editor's letter

Crispin Hemson  
15 Morris Place  
Glenwood  
Durban  
South Africa 4001  
  
hemsonc@gmail.com  
C: 082 926 5333  
H: 031 206 1738

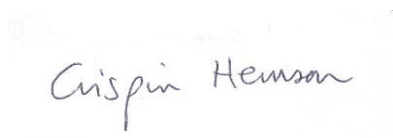
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7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to record that I have carried out language editing of the doctoral thesis by Patrick Mveli entitled *Grade Four Teachers' Language Attitudes and Lived Teaching Experiences*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Crispin Hemson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Crispin Hemson