

**SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS  
IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM**

by

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**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**in Educational Psychology**

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**2021**

### **Supervisor's authorization**

As the candidate's supervisor, this thesis is submitted with my approval.

Signed:



Date: 31/12/2021

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before I take off my hat to all individuals for their sterling support and contributions throughout this long walk, I feel indebted to God for having given me the courage to get past the pitfalls I have faced to reach this mainland. Yes, I felt the omnipresence of God when in my research journey I lost some of my close relatives one after the other, and suffered from severe blood pressure resulting in some instances of blackouts. Were it not for God's purpose over me I would have fallen by the wayside.

First, it would be unfair to pass with silence on the immeasurable support I received from my supervisor. Doctor Visvaranie Jairam, emerged as mentor, inspirer, and igniter at the moments of life's hardships. She was patient with me, and built confidence in me to realise that perseverance and believing in oneself are the key building blocks of success in everything. This study would not be where it is if it was not for you, Doctor.

Second, at the foundation, there were school principals and officers from various other government departments who allowed access to their schools to conduct interviews. The voluminous data I generated from the research sites are largely the result of my participants' willingness to participate in this study. In this regard, each of them shaped my degree.

Thirdly, to Dr. D. Zireva, my critical reader, and Genevieve Wood, my language editor, I give my sincerest thanks for putting shape into my thesis by proofreading it to meet the degree requirements. I understand how hard it is, to fit in somebody's bulky pages into one's tight schedule, moreover this comes during family quality time.

I wish to acknowledge the support and motivation I got from my family. Overseer Guvakuva and our mother Farai, I really thank your support and being there for the family when sometimes I fail to attend crucial family gatherings due to the demands of the study. I know, it is because of your prayers that this study is where it is now.

Finally, I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to my husband, Zack, my four beautiful daughters, Rejoice, Precious, Makanaka and Samantha. At times, they were ignored of their precious time in the interests of this doctorate. May this degree be inspirational throughout their career, thoughts and wisdom.

## DEDICATION

To my cheerleaders, unfortunately you could not wait to see this through, and I believe you are in a better place now, continue to rest in peace. Your words of motivation kept me going even when sometimes the road seemed steep, rocky, and thorny. This is for you my sisters in love: Regedzai Magumbo, and Veronica Mauya Kuwengwa.

My late parents, Samson and Annia Mhike, you told us to follow our dreams and here I am now. Thank you for instilling in us the spirit of hard work and believing in ourselves. You always say “*Kudzidza hakusi kwevarume chete mwanangu, ini mai venyu uterera hwakandishaisa chikoro, imi mune mukana dzidzai kusvika pachinogumira*” (Education is not meant for men only my child, being an orphan deprived me of the chance to go to school, if you have the chance, utilize it fully). Your words motivated me to this far. My parents, here I am with my dream of having a PhD Degree in Educational Psychology.

My heart bleeds because one of our children could not wait to see this through. Rest in peace Mufaro Asher Guvakuva, tragically taken from us on 29/11/2021. This was meant to show all of you, my children, that the sky is the limit in following your dreams. All the Guvakuva sons and daughters, I dedicate this to you.

My sisters, Alice, Sarah, Vimbai and my beloved twin sister, Rumbidzai Mafushe, you diligently always kept the home and my children alive and ensured that I kept in touch with my research. Thank you for enthusiastically standing in for my parental duties and sharing in my dreams of being a doctoral student. My gratitude to you lies beyond expression. This is also for you, my sisters.

For my husband, Zakariah Guvakuva, you inspired me as I passed through each of this momentous research journey. Your support, guidance and belief in my academic abilities will forever be remembered and appreciated. Thank you all for walking this inspirational journey with me.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights of the Child
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CER	Critical Emancipatory Research
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
FAL	First Additional Language
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
LoI	Language of Instruction
NCESS	National Committee for Education Support Services
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SACE	South African Council Of Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
SGB	School Governing Body

## ABSTRACT

The study was set in KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa at a multilingual primary school and investigated immigrant learners' experiences on sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom. The study's research participants comprised of seven immigrant learners, four local learners, one school principal, three local teachers, one immigrant teacher and two immigrant parents who were homogeneously purposive sampled. The study's sub-questions investigated the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The questions sought to determine hindrances for sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. Lastly, the views of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom towards the support needed in sustainable learning were revealed.

Critical emancipatory research and *ubuntu* theory constitute the theoretical frameworks for this study. CER supports the emancipation of research participants so that they are enabled to change their lives. This was seen to link with the aim of this study, which saw immigrant learners as the driver of initiatives aimed at experiencing and supporting their sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

Qualitative, Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was employed. The research study employed purposive sampling in selecting the research participants. The study made use of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis in generating data. The teachers and the learners took part in the interviews as well as the Focus Group Discussions. Strong ethical principles were followed. Analysis was done through critical discourse analysis.

The findings showed that when immigrant learners are exposed to sustainable learning, they become empowered, and face any life challenges. With regard to the current situation of immigrant sustainable learning, the generated data presented showed that although learners benefit from the curriculum as it stands, there is a gap in the provision of practical subjects. Subjects like Agriculture, Music, Building, and Home Management ought to be taken seriously in primary education. The data indicated that these subjects equip immigrant learners with hands-on skills that saw them starting their own businesses, thereby becoming independent and empowered, hence gaining skills that will sustain them throughout their lives. Language, discrimination, lack of

support and financial difficulties came as major hindrances to immigrant sustainable learning which cause most immigrant learners' to experience sustainable learning in a negative way. To support the immigrant learners in multilingual classroom, workshops were conducted with teachers, learners and the parents to elicit suggested modes of implementation. The meetings served to induct teachers on dealing with immigrant learners in an inclusive multilingual classroom. The study recommends that immigrant learners need to accept who they are first and then try to equip themselves with lifelong skills they gain in the host multilingual classroom. The study also recommends the need for locals to show acceptance, love and friendship to the immigrants. Above all, the study saw the need for teachers to be well equipped in dealing with learners from diverse backgrounds in their classes.

### **KEY TERMS**

Sustainable learning, immigrant learner, multilingual classroom

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

Schools are meant to bring sustainable learning to everyone, regardless of gender, race, ethnic group, or citizenship status. My current study explored immigrant learners' experiences on sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom in an effort to create an enabling environment. The study's main interest was to explore the experiences of African immigrant learners in accessing sustainable learning, and how immigrant learners adapt to the host multilingual classrooms, given that they will not be using their mother tongue in class and with host friends, including in this discussion ways of supporting them achieve sustainable learning easily. As their numbers in schools is continuing to increase yearly, it is assumed that the immigrant learners are exposed to some challenges such as language barrier, learning difficulties, discrimination, stigmatization and lack of support in schools. All the languages they are exposed to at school are new to them, while they are expected to participate in class and learn skills that will help them tackle life's challenges in future. Additionally, the curriculum to which they are exposed is different from what they used to have in their home countries. Besides all of the challenges they face, the immigrant learners need to have a sustainable education that will help them in the near future in order for them to stand on their feet. For this reason, the researcher felt the need to explore sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners who are in multilingual classrooms.

The study concerned sustainable learning, immigrant learners, and the multilingual classroom, where multilingual classrooms may affect immigrant learners in the proper and efficient acquisition of sustainable learning. The main focus was on primary school immigrant learners between the ages of eight and fourteen, who were once enrolled in their home countries before migrating to South African Schools. This research mainly focused on one school in Pinetown District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Firstly, for this research to unfold, there is a need to understand the operational concepts of the thesis. These are: sustainable learning, immigrant learners, and multilingual classrooms.

### **1.1.1 Conceptual terms**

The definitions of the major terms as they are used in this research study are explained in order to have the same understanding and meanings as used by the researcher.

### **1.1.2 Immigrant learner**

Migration refers to when people or individuals move from one country, place, or locality to another (United Nations, 2006). Webster Dictionary (2018) describes an immigrant as a person who has relocated from his or her country of origin to an alien country for permanent residence. In this study, immigrant learner refers to a learner who comes from a foreign country to stay, either permanently or temporarily, and attends school in South Africa. My research study concentrated on Black African immigrant learners, who are from African countries, and who are enrolled in the primary school in South Africa.

### **1.1.3 Multilingual classroom**

Owing to recent global migration, most people are now exposed to multiple languages. Language plays an important role in one's life as it is used as a communicational tool (Martin-Jones & Martin, 2016). Language is more than a system of signs, it is a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated (Norton, 2013).

A multilingual classroom, according to Coelho (2012), is a space where students of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds study together, where some or all of the students are not the first language speakers of the language of instruction, and where teachers and students do not all share a common language, or cultural background. Makoni and Pennycook (2012) concur with Coelho when they argue that multilingualism refers to the knowledge of separate languages. Most schools in South Africa are multilingual, due to the country's wide range of the use of both indigenous and non-indigenous languages. South Africa boasts of eleven official languages, which are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, isiXhosa, and isiZulu (Broeder, Extra & Maartens, 2012). Teachers are often confronted with different challenges in these kinds of classrooms. In particular, situations in which students speak languages of which teachers have no knowledge in (Ticheloven, et. al, 2021). For any effective learning to take place in this kind of setting, Axelsson (2013) pointed out the need to have a socially

and culturally supportive environment that promotes identity and cooperation. The most favorable situation is if the teachers organize lessons and use teaching strategies that lead to learning settings where pupils feel accepted by their teachers and are included in the class's teaching community (Torpsten, 2018).

The Department of Education promotes multilingualism in schools when it gives importance on schools to follow a policy centered on the principal of upholding home languages, while providing access to the effective acquisition of additional languages. Thus, from primary grades onwards, every learner is expected to learn at least two languages as subjects which are the language of instruction (LoI) and the first additional language (FAL), (The Education White Paper 2, 1996). It is against this background that an immigrant learner with his or her own first language is expected to belong into this classroom environment and is helped in achieving sustainable learning. This research sought to explore the immigrant learners' experiences in acquiring sustainable learning whilst in this multilingual classroom.

#### **1.1.4 Sustainable learning**

Sustainable learning involves acquiring knowledge on how to live with the environment limits of our world and to shape a just, unbiased, and non-violent society (UNESCO, 2013). They further highlighted sustainable learning as an essential tool for the welfare of all and as such is viewed as a global priority. In support of UNESCO, Taggart (2007, p.11) defined sustainable learning as those diverse life skills that are needed by learners to empower them during their lives. Based on Tsotetsi's (2013) ideas, it includes but is not limited to formalized transfer of knowledge from the teachers to the learners. When looking closely at the above ideas, I view sustainable learning as being able to transfer knowledge and skills learned in formal school to life situations in the outside world of family, community, and work. Sustainable learning, in other words, involves making sure that human development energies produce life-long or enduring progress in immigrant learners' lives, in their careers as well as communities, without causing destruction or conceding their well-being or that of others in the present or in future (Salamao, 2011, p.14). In this present study, sustainable learning is understood as the learned basic skills that will enable individual learners to tackle life's future challenges without giving in to the needs of others. For the purpose of this study, in other words, it is any meaningful learning achieved through the interaction with diverse

social beings in primary school contexts to enrich intellectual, emotional, psychological, and physical states of an individual's well-being.

This chapter presents a background to the study, followed by an argument of the rationale for the study. The statement of the problem is also presented, as well as the objectives and the critical questions guiding the study. The importance of the study, overview of the research design, research methodology is also presented. Lastly, the structure of the research is detailed.

## **1.2 Background**

Nowadays most people in the world find themselves living in a country or culture beyond their native homeland. This is as a result of global migration, which is seen to be on the rise. Global migration means that now, few people in the world to spend their lives in one unified culture (Bakker & Ruane, 2009). Global migration is a large-scale topic (United Nations, 2020). Currently, there are an estimated 272 million international migrants, which account for 3.5% of the world's population (UN Report, 2020). While the percentage may seem relatively low, the number of migrants already surpasses some projections for 2050. This widespread immigration drift does not spare the African continent. In Africa, South Africa as a country has seen an escalation in internal African immigrants. People fleeing conflict zones, human rights violations, and government persecution are asylum seekers that desire international protection and a safer region. Individuals who are forcibly displaced because of external factors, such as war, are refugees (Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), 2021). According to Kaziboni (2019), the perspective of migration has generally focused on material conditions and life circumstances, and from this, migration debates have centred largely around: conflict and violence on the Horn of Africa; poor governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Somalia; political instability in Burkina Faso; and socio-economic inequalities and a lack of solid economic opportunities in countries like Zimbabwe and Malawi. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) states that the majority of immigrants who enter South Africa are children or youths (UNHCR, 2010). Vandeyar (2010) notes that for immigrants, the country's democracy policies, and the simplification of both legal and unofficial entry, which has seen a subsequent rise in asylum-seekers, those buying and selling businesses, students, and so me professionals. As compared to other African countries, South Africa has a more stable political economy, that results in many job opportunities as compared to its other countries like Democratic Republic of Congo

(DRC), Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, to mention but a few. This flooding of immigrants has caused most South African schools to be composed of learners from diverse backgrounds, culture and languages. Beside their diverse languages, these learners are supposed to achieve sustainable learning in these schools.

Surveys conducted by International Organisations have concluded that currently over 175 million people are living in foreign land for reasons such as poor living conditions, and the economic meltdown and instability in some countries due to civil war (United Nations, 2006). Ramjathan-Keogh (2011) added that some people just choose to migrate voluntarily like those who move to another country for better career opportunities. He further revealed that global forced displacement increased to record high numbers in 2015. He made it clear that by the end of year, 63, 5 million individuals had been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalised violence or human rights violations. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Global Trends (2016) also states that by the end of 2015, about 3,2 million people were waiting for decisions on their application for asylum.

South Africa of late has experienced an influx of immigrants mostly from Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, to mention but a few. The 2011 census found that there are at least 2 199 871 immigrants in South Africa. Thus this number is more likely to have doubled since then, because of recent influx of undocumented immigrants from neighbouring countries, especially Zimbabwe. Some of these immigrants have school-going children, who are supposed to be enrolled in the host country schools.

In reviewing the available census findings of 2011, it is of great importance to note that study permit documented 16 928 learners. Fortunately, for immigrant learners in South Africa, education excludes no one. This is in line with the United Nations High Commission for Refugee (2010) guidelines, which states that education is a right for every child. In this regard, all people should attain it regardless of their status, nationality, or socioeconomic background. South African Constitution and its Bill of Rights, which is in line with the wishes of the UNHCR protect the rights of all children in the country, irrespective of whether they are immigrants or citizens. It states that all children are entitled to education and have a right to quality education (Isseri, 2015). In support of this, the Basic Education Handbook states in section 5(1) of the SA Schools Act that

a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements, without unfairly discriminating in any way (Basic Education Rights Handbook, 2012). Despite this, the current study exposes that little exploration has been done on how immigrant learners in primary schools should be helped in their navigation to sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. Although research on immigrant learners had been carried out globally, this research shows there to be very little evidence of studies of immigrants' sustainable learning in South African primary school multilingual classrooms. In trying to fulfill the global and South African mission of quality education for immigrants, this study looked at lived experiences of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom towards attaining sustainable learning and ways of improving their chances of attaining sustainable learning.

Little is known about sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners who find themselves in multilingual classrooms. According to Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001, p.67), "immigrant learners experience a particular constellation of changes that have lasting effects upon their learning." The question remains, do these effects have a positive or negative impact on immigrant learners' experiences of sustainable learning? Sustainable learning involves approaches to teaching and learning that integrate goals for conservation, social justice, cultural diversity, as well as appropriate development and democracy into a vision and a mission of personal social change. This involves developing the kinds of civic values and skills that empower all citizens to be leaders in the transition to a sustainable future (Australian Department of Environment Heritage, 2005 p.13). Mahlomaholo (2010) notes that such skills may be required to face life's challenges. Sustainable learning, in other words, involves making sure that human development efforts yield life-long or lasting improvement in immigrant learners' lives, in their careers including communities, without causing harm or compromising their well-being or that of others in the present or future (Salamao, 2011, p.14). This can happen through interactions when adults help learning at a higher level of understanding (Department of Education 2016, p.19), and through collaborative inquiry, as teachers engage with other stakeholders for critical reflection, discussing ideas, theories, and learning methodologies (Ministry of Education, 2014, p.22).

According to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (2014), actions that promote sustainable learning in primary schools call for individuals to put into account the

environmental, social, cultural, and economic systems, and their interdependence. Sustainability is regarded as important due to its promotion of quality of life and the way it struggles to make future generations survive (Taylor et al., 2015, p.3).

Despite research among primary school teachers indicating an above-average level of concern for the environment, a great number of teachers are not well prepared for enhancing sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom in primary schools (Miles, Harrison & Cutter- Mackenzie, 2006). Due to a lack of awareness of national policies on immigrant sustainable learning, it is common that the concept of sustainable learning is poorly understood. These in turn brings about lack of confidence to teachers in face of immigrant sustainable learning. Another contributing factor is the fact that mostly teachers would be unaware of how to integrate sustainable learning effectively into their teaching, and as a result, consider it to be unnecessary extra work in an already crowded curriculum.

To make sure that sustainable learning is realised by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom, there is a need for communities to be empowered about livelihood; self-reliance skills; and strengthening capacity, so as to deliver services that are needed most through learning. To make this possible, there is need for individuals to stand up for themselves and self-analyse in order to empower themselves. It is of great importance that they see a need for change so that they have positive self-esteem and feel compelled to transform, which then will be impressive in a way. For sustainable learning to be realised, this calls for the cooperation between teachers, learners, parents and stakeholders (Mapasela, Hlalele & Alexander, 2012).

Basing on the above explanations of sustainable learning, it is clear as to why primary school learners need to realise sustainable learning. They need the activities to tackle problems they might face, and this might help them in tackling and making decisions and actions in resolving them. Taylor et al. (2015) view education as something that plays a pivotal role in facilitating the kind of knowledge and skills that is needed by individuals to achieve this goal. However, the question remains as to how this can be realised by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, where the study tried to explore their experiences in sustainable learning. Thus, this research sought to explore sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom, searching for ways of overcoming any hindrances.

The study aimed at exploring experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom towards sustainable learning at a chosen primary school, which enrolls a significant number of immigrant learners from different African countries. Of particular interest were the immigrant learners' experiences of sustainable learning in their host country, South Africa. The study's main focus of participants were those immigrant learners who have at least a year's experience of education in their home country and have transferred to the selected school in KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa.

### **1.3 Rationale of the study**

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. As a foreigner in South Africa, the researcher has observed that immigrant learners face many challenges in trying to adapt to a new environment. The researcher, as a Shona-speaking person from Zimbabwe, faced some challenges in trying to fit into a new community in South African schools, the major challenge being that of the language barrier. This made one a misfit in everywhere one finds herself or himself in. This is in line with Osman's (2009, p.23) observations that "immigrant learners are exposed to some challenges such as language barriers, discrimination, stigmatisation and name-calling that will result in social and learning difficulties". Motha and Ramadiro (2005, p.19) concur with Osman when they reveal that "immigrants are imagined and treated as despicable others." This was seen when immigrants experienced the segregatory comments from locals at a certain school in KwaZulu-Natal. The children were heard saying that the teacher was not one of them, but a foreigner. They were using the derogatory word "Kwerekwere", to be specific. Peterson (2010) is of the view that these de-humanising comments and cultural differences not only further the social exclusion of immigrant learners, but also increase their economic barriers, as they would not be able to easily pursue a livelihood in the host country. For this reason, this research aimed to gain insight on sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, in the face of all those myths that arise from being an immigrant, especially African immigrants, who in particular, are seen as a burden by locals.

The researcher chose this area of research because immigrant learners face greater challenges in trying to fit into the education system than their South African counterparts. As the young children

are regarded as the future leaders of tomorrow, they need to safeguard their environment, societal values, and economy, and transmit this knowledge to the next generation (Mohamed, 2015). They also need to realise sustainable learning at an early stage, so as to gain skills to tackle problems they may encounter and to be able to make decisions and taking appropriate actions in dealing with life's challenges that concerns the environment, society and their economy. However, this may not be the case for learners who are in a foreign land, like immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom in South African schools.

#### **1.4 Statement of the problem**

Most immigrants from the African continent who are in South Africa fled their countries due to their country's economic free-fall, intense political persecution, or both. Some migrated in search of better job opportunities or pursuing higher education in universities. This situation has affected many families with school-going children who are then required to attend school in the destination countries. The prevalence of immigrant learners is continuing to increase all the time, and when these immigrant children are enrolled in school, they are expected to adapt to the new environment with a different language of instruction, different school culture, and different curriculum. In the end, they expect to receive quality continuity and life-long education, which they will use throughout their lives. In school, these learners would be expected to deal with two cultures and languages at the same time, without fully identifying with either group. As a result, immigrant learners may find it difficult to grasp the curriculum content well. The issue of different language of instruction used in class and a new culture may hinder immigrant learners in realising sustainable learning in class. Thus, in this study, I wanted to explore lived experiences of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, particularly those in primary school, regarding their understanding of how to attain sustainable learning.

#### **1.5 Focus and Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in attaining sustainable learning using participatory action research. The study resulted in proposed actions to improve immigrant sustainable learning in multilingual primary schools in the Republic of South Africa in an attempt to create an enabling environment for immigrant sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

## **1.6 Objectives**

In exploring experiences of immigrant learners in attaining sustainable learning in a multilingual primary school in KwaZulu-Natal, the study sought:

- to explore the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom;
- to examine the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom;
- to examine the favorable conditions of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom;
- to identify and discuss hindrances for sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom; and
- to propose, based on the findings, ways of overcoming hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

## **1.7 Key research questions.**

In line with the objectives, the study sought to address the following critical question: How is sustainable learning experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom?

Apart from the critical question, the research study sought to unveil these sub questions also:

- Why is there a need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?
- What is the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?
- What are the hindrances of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?
- How can hindrances be overcome and support be offered for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?

## **1.8 Significance of the study**

The study may offer some important insights on sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The knowledge and information gained from this study might provide an understanding on how immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom encounter challenges on their road to sustainable learning. This will enable the DBE to find ways of providing support structures and/or training so as to equip teachers and schools with skills they require to create a home far from home for immigrant learners. The findings will be of great use to school principals, teachers, curriculum officials, parents and learners. Above all, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge by filling in the identified gap as far as support for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom is concerned. Immigrant learners will be equipped with lifelong education that will boost their confidence and enable them to tackle life's challenges in future. Other researchers are also most likely to benefit from this research as they may find scholarly research literature as well as gaps in the findings, leading to novel research under different conditions.

## **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

The term theoretical framework refers to the plans that assist one to make clear one's assumptions about the interconnectedness of the way things are associated in the world, which in other words is the lens through which the world is observed. The theoretical framework I found suitable for this study was critical emancipatory research (CER). Critical emancipatory research is a process of deconstructing the world for the purpose of freeing human beings from the constraints of limiting ways of thinking (Henning; Rensburg & Smith 2004, p.22; Merriam, 2009, p.22). The theory, according to Habermas, calls for democracy in the education system (Merriam, 2009, p. 366; Osborne, 2001, pp. 172-173). Its basis is on socialism, and the emancipation of the individuals from various directions.

CER is a brain child of Adorno, Habermas, and the broader Frankfurt school, where it emerged in 1924 (Held, 1983, cited in Mahlomaholo, 2009). Adebajji, Hartell and Phatudi (2014) confirm this. In a more focused sense, critical theory comes from the German Frankfurt School, as has been said, who called it critical theory of society or critical social theory, which holds that all knowledge

is historical and biased, and that objective knowledge is illusory (Abebanji et al., 2014). It seeks to critique and thereby change society, as a whole as opposed to traditional theory, which seeks only on understanding or explaining it. Critical theories dig beneath the surface of social life and uncover the assumption that keeps us from a full and true understanding of how the world works.

As has been mentioned above, emancipation is one principle of CER. To emancipate according to the American Heritage Dictionary is to free oneself from bondage, oppression, or any restriction. In other words, it means to liberate oneself from societal constraints or beliefs in favour of one's own, to build a strong self-esteem and exercise your thoughts and beliefs in a positive way without any fear of judgment.

For this study, I opted for the critical emancipatory research (CER) because CER as a theory examines the kind of power people have over others, as well as their submissiveness, and it allows people to voice their feelings, and empower themselves. In this research, I looked at the power relations brought about by different nationalities and backgrounds as some nationalities seem to see themselves as superior and privileged as a result possess power and dehumanise those regarded as powerless, in this case immigrant learners. Also, in a multilingual classroom, those learners with the dominant language will seem to possess more power when compared to immigrant learners, who are required to first learn the local languages for communication. As a result of the language barrier, the immigrant learners will be powerless to express themselves fluently and freely without being judged. Power relations are also manifest between teachers and teachers, teachers and children, and between immigrant children and citizen children.

As a CER researcher, I validated, recognised and tried to understand these power relations and worked towards neutralising them. Transformation of the immigrant learners depends on them socialising, mediating, talking, and opening up, questioning previous assumptions, and revealing their strengths and weaknesses in a positive way for their success. In Braune (2013, p.18), Habermas's idea is read as a process to explore the hidden relation between knowledge and interest, which contributes towards free individuals, thus free society with the aim of generalised and personalised empowerment. CER theory is not a set of already decided claims, as is the case with the traditional theory; instead, it questions new ideas for easy adaptation. Therefore it means the purpose of CER would be to liberate, in the event that new ideas appear to be oppressive and shows unequal power relations.

CER therefore in this research study helped me in questioning power differentials in the classroom, and learners who seem to be worth more than others as these are aspects lead to social inequalities and the aspect of looking down upon others. From these questions, people will learn to be rational, thus normal development of their minds for critical, universal thought, and moral responsibility that can be learned from the family (Braune, 2013, p.16). All this might prove to be a challenge to immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. CER looks at the concerns that are subjective, objective, positive, negative, sociological, and aesthetic at the same time.

CER's main objective in this research would be emotional freedom and education as immigrant learners learn that it is their right to be introspective, identify an obstacle, voice it, and become free. Mertens (2009, p.12) and Piper; Piper and Mahlomaholo (2009, p.12) point out that both marginalised learners in this case the immigrants, and teachers will correct the imbalances and power relations amongst themselves. It is the responsibility of the society, in this case the school, to internalise and reflect on practices of injustice that exist between curriculum officials and teachers, and between teachers and teachers, teachers and learners, and lastly immigrant learners and local learners. Self-reflection is seen as a tool of self-understanding and personal knowledge, leading to emancipation. In this regard, immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom will be required to practice self-introspection and develop a positive self-image, thus transforming and empowering themselves in trying to bring about change towards sustainable learning.

I found CER most relevant in this study because it offered participants a chance to interpret their sustainable learning lived experiences. Another reason is that it allowed them to be engaged in the study through communication with the researcher, together rather than to be studied. Another relevant aspect of CER relevant to this study, is its idea of looking into the lives of those pushed to the margins in society, such as immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, with the aim of allowing them to introspect, and in so doing, to value themselves. CER as a theory has the strength of in-depth understanding of oneself, community, power relations, critical transformation, and change, with the aim of empowering oneself. It also gave participants a chance to interpret for themselves their experiences. Furthermore, it allowed them to engage in a study through communication with the researcher, instead of them being studied. In other words, it is important for the marginalised to first appreciate what they have, so as to think of creating a positive vision of improvement (Mertens, 2009), empowerment, and a feeling of liberty.

This CER has the above strengths, but does not cover the aspects of embracing, respecting, accepting, valuing, and sharing resources. In order to fill in the gap, I incorporated *ubuntu* as a complementary theory.

In the South African context, *ubuntu* refers to close community ties in a situation where the good of one is the good of all, according to Obama's words, "ties that bind the human spirit" (2012). So when there are ties in the spirit, there would be a feeling for one another, avoiding mutual harm, so in this case the immigrant learners would be embraced as family by fellow citizen learners thereby developing a feeling of belonging. In order to reach their full potential, children need to feel the ties that bind them to their families and friends; ties of love, kinship, and loyalty. People with *ubuntu* would try by all means to make peace with their visitors, and this will create a conducive learning environment for sustainable learning for migrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

## **1.10 Overview of Research Design and Methodology**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2004), a research design is a layout of how the research is going to take place. The researcher points out how the research problem would be structured, and how he/she focuses on the type of the study not forgetting the desired results. Durrheim (2006) pointed out four principles that contribute towards design coherence, as well as assisting in the answering of research questions as, purpose of the research, context in which it takes place, research paradigm as well as the techniques used.

### **1.10.1 Research Approach**

Research methods are ways a researcher generates and analyses data. These methods have been developed for acquiring knowledge by reliable and valid procedures (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). In dealing with the topic of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, I adopted a qualitative research approach. The approach was preferred because it is designed to provide an in-depth analysis of a specific study or setting (Mertens, 2010). The qualitative methods are appropriate when studying vulnerable people as they allow the participants to express their feelings and experiences in their own words. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2005, p. 74) hold that the researcher attempts to gain a first hand, holistic understanding of phenomena of interest by means of flexible strategies. MacDonald (2012) argues that when a

researcher employs qualitative research, his /her main goal would be of trying to find deeper truth while studying things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p.270) concur with MacDonald in stating that qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves. In so doing, qualitative features of one's feelings, views and patterns are revealed without manipulation or control from the researcher (MacDonald, 2012).

In this study, learners were able to give detailed narratives of their experiences and engaged in meaningful discussions when using qualitative approach. Thus, it was of great importance, because it allowed us to generate data by interacting closely with participants. This is supported by Leedy and Ormond (2010), who note that qualitative research enables the researcher to interact with respondents in order to gain insight about the nature of a particular phenomenon. The study explores immigrant learners' experiences of sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom such that the researcher had to interact with and generate data from immigrant learners, their teachers, and the school principal. By using the qualitative approach, I argue that knowledge is constructed socially by use of "language consciousness and shared meanings" as stated by Maree and Pietersen (2007, p.56).

### **1.10.2 Research Paradigm**

Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p.22) defined a paradigm as "represent[ing] a particular worldview that defines what is acceptable to research and how this should be done". If a researcher adheres to a certain worldview, that will guide him or her in the questions that are to be asked, issues to be observed and investigated, how to generate data, as well as how to interpret the findings. When these questions are answered, their answers give a certain belief about the nature of the world, what we can know about it, and how we can come to know it (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

This research was guided by the critical paradigm that observes reality to be shaped by social, political, cultural, and economic dynamics. In this regard, what people claim to know about the

world is always subjective, and is influenced by one's own place in society and one's values. The paradigm was chosen as the aim of the research was to bring about some kind of change for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom concerning sustainable learning. This was in line with the focus of the critical paradigm that aims to "bring[...] some kind of social change that will benefit those groups who are understood to have little power, or fewer opportunities or choices open to them" (Bertram & Christiansen 2014, p. 28), thereby emancipating them.

### **1.10.3 Research Design**

A research design refers to a plan of how one should systematically generate and analyse the data that is needed to answer the research question (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p.40). In the research design, the researcher employed participatory action research (PAR). According to Watters, Comeau and Restall (2010, p.5) "PAR is a type of research that combines two different approaches which are participatory research and action research." Babbie and Mouton (2004, p.314) concur with these authors where they argue that it is one of the mostly widely used research approaches that are characterised by a participatory element.

This type of research calls for equal involvement from researchers and participants in the research process. PAR is unique because participants are regarded as experts due to their lived experiences related to the research topic, ensuring that relevant concerns are being studied (Comeau & Restall, 2010). It encourages collaboration between the participants and the researcher referred to as a change agent. In PAR, the researcher and the research participants' work as a team, thereby as a result participants are being referred to as co-researchers instead of research objects as with other methods. Freire (1968), cited in Bertram and Christiansen (2014), is of the belief that solutions should not come from the oppressors helping the oppressed, but from the oppressed themselves. Based on this line of thought, I found PAR suitable, because the immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom would be given a chance to tell their experiences of sustainable learning and propose ways they wish to be employed to support them, thereby solving their own problems.

#### **1.10.4 Sampling Techniques**

Field (2005) sees a sample as a smaller collection of units from a population used to determine truths about that population. Different sampling procedures can be used in research depending on the availability of the resources (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the sampling technique that was chosen was purposive sampling. According to Creswell (2008), purposive sampling is a qualitative sampling procedure that allows one to deliberately select participants, research site, and research techniques based on the purpose of the research.

#### **1.10.5 Selection of participants**

I used purposive sampling to select the research participants. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects certain participants from the population that will provide information about the topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The participants included six immigrant learners, two local learners, one immigrant teacher, two languages teachers, one school principal, and a school counsellor, who provided rich information in order to have an in-depth understanding of the case under study. According to Cohen et al. (2011), purposive sampling involves a researcher who handpicks cases to be included in the sample on the basis of his or her judgment of their typicality. Here, I chose the research team who possessed the particular characteristics or attributes I was looking for, such as immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, a multilingual school with a school principal serving immigrant learners as part of its cohort, and all those who work directly with immigrant learners. In case of immigrant learners, participants were selected from the immigrant learners registered in the school taking into consideration the age, country of origin, ethnicity, home language and length of stay in South Africa. Russell (2011) purports that purposive sampling is used in interviews, case studies or meetings to select participants who serve the purpose of the study. In this study, a research team was necessary to work closely with the immigrant learners in school and off school.

#### **1.10.6 The Sample**

The sample size was comprised of six immigrant learners from at least two different nationalities, school principal, one immigrant teacher, and two local teachers, one from sciences and the other

one from languages, two immigrant parents, and a school counsellor. By having a research team that worked directly with immigrant learners and the immigrant learners themselves, it allowed me to obtain in-depth information on their experiences of sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

### **1.11. Data Generation**

Data in research can be generated by diverse methods (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). It is always important to see to it that the data generating tools are appropriate for the research and also aligned to the research approach, paradigm and design. In this study, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis were used.

According to Lahey (2009), an interview is a subjective method of personality assessment that involves questioning techniques designed to reveal the personality of a client. People use interviews to determine a person's thoughts on a given subject (Best & Khan, 1993). As such, interviews have become an important part of getting to know the attributes of the research team. Informal conversational interviews were used as learners are young and do not prefer some reactions of some sort. In this study, I used controlled interviews to generate data from immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, as well as from their parents. The duration was between one and one-and-a-half hours, depending on the deliberations. I carried out the process after school hours, when both learners and teachers were free, in order not to interfere with school programming.

Secondly, I used focus group discussions (FGD). Focus group discussions, as noted by MacDonald (2012), are a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between the research-participants in order to generate data. Mertens (2010) confirms that FGDs are group interviews that rely, not on a question and answer format of interview, but on interaction within the group. FGDs are conducted in a way that a researcher asks questions and encourage responses through discussions (Creswell, 2008). The interaction between participants is designed to provide more of the participants' point of view than would be evidenced in more researcher-dominated interviewing.

In PAR, dialogue is a key element in generating data (Babbie & Mouton, 2004), so I found focus group discussions suitable. Through engaging in dialogue, participants are helped in the development of knowledge when they learn from their own reality as well as by learning to critically analyse their own particular situations and problems. In this research study, FGDs were suitable because they allowed respondents to embark on an extensive discussion of a particular subject in this case sustainable learning for immigrant learners learning in a multilingual classroom, thereby helping the researcher to obtain collective and rich information on learner's experiences. Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2005) purport that FGDs can yield a vast amount of information within a short period of time. With focus group discussions, I had the opportunity of observing a large amount of interaction in this research topic in a limited period of time. In this research study, the discussions were recorded.

Thirdly, the researcher employed document analysis as a method of generating data. Here, documents like children's autobiography were used. According to Punch (2009, p.158), documents are seen as a rich source of data for education and social research. Creswell (2009) supports the idea when he argues that documents represent data, which are thoughtful as participants would have given attention when compiling them. School records and profiles were also used to give statistics of migrant learners' information about the curriculum, learners' performance over a specific period of time and some contextual information about the school. Information from documents is useful to support a particular argument (McCulloch, 2004). In this research study, all the discussions were recorded.

### **1.12 Data analysis**

Data analysis is viewed as an unceasing process, where, as such, findings are gathered and thoroughly put up as pieces of work in the discourse during the research process. According to Mertens (2010, p. 427), data needs to be processed gradually through the relationship between the principal researcher and co- researchers as team participants. In this study, I settled for critical discourse analysis (CDA) in the analysis of my data.

CDA, according to Stubbs (1997, cited in Babbie and Mouton, 2004) is concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a given sentence or utterance, recognising Freud's idea that every word or utterance has a hidden meaning, including even the slip of the tongue. This method is concerned with the interrelationships between language and society, and also with the interactive dialogue properties of everyday communication. Thus, discourse analysis, according to Blanche and Durrhelm (1999, cited in Babbie and Mouton, 2004) is the act of showing how certain discourses are deployed to achieve particular effects in specific contexts. Critical as seen by Wodak (1989), means not taking things for granted, opening up complexity, challenging reductionism, dogmatism and dichotomies and being self-reflective in research (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). All these processes make it possible for dense structures of power relations and ideologies to manifest. Thus, critical theory looks at the hidden meaning, and does not imply the common usage as such, but instead it proposes some alternatives.

I found CDA necessary because it observes issues of power and its implications in wider society. Power relations are observable amongst teachers and the school management, teachers and other teachers, curriculum and teachers, teachers and the learners, and other learners over migrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The implications thereof are better understood through CDA (Mertens, 2010, p.427). According to Fairclough (2013, p.3) the importance of a discourse is to use language for meaning making focusing on the way of life of a specific society. Furthermore, discourse analysis critically describes the elements of power relations and social identities by explaining and evaluating existing realities of human wellbeing in society. CDA was seen as relevant to critically evaluating sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom and the best way to maneuver through.

I found CDA to be suitable for this study since the real life experiences of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom and their well-being was analysed to find a deeper meaning as it is concerned with studying and analysing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. Additionally, it concerns how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts (Foucault, 2004). Discourse analysis is used in order to view the opportunities created through language use not as a tool for communication alone, but also as a tool for building reality (Desai, Qorro & Brock- Utne, 2010).

The analysis was carried out in three forms. Firstly, the spoken word was used, namely the text, in order to confirm a finding. This was followed by discursive practices. Lastly, it was necessary to make use of social structure to get to the bottom of the meaning to understand the text even better. According to Creswell (2009, p. 183) the process of data analysis involves making sense out of a text and image data. In using CDA, I listened to the recorded discussions and transcribed findings. I then read through the documents two or three times to make sure I understood clearly what they were all about. Finally, I arrived at conclusions with regard to all documents. Fairclough (2004) points to three levels of analysis. The first level is where I used the spoken word or text in trying to conform a fact or finding. The second is the discursive practices level, which unearths those not so obvious moments and inform and ground utterances and behaviours. Lastly, is the social structure aims to get to the bottom of the meaning-making repertoire to understand the text on an even deeper level. I found this suitable for my study since the real life experience of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom and their well-being was analysed.

### **1.13 Ethical considerations**

Ethics are considerations one should address to safeguard the good of the profession and the participants in a study. Makore and Rukuni (2001) define ethics as a branch of philosophy relating to rightness or wrongness of certain actions and morality of the motives and ends of such actions. Chiromo (2006) argues that there are principles of right and wrong that govern the operations of researchers during the research process. As such, ethical considerations are important aspects in any research that ensure that you do not hurt or harm others. The researcher adhered to ethical guidelines as a standard to ensure honest and trustworthy of data to be generated and how it would be used for educational purposes.

The researcher demonstrated acceptable behaviour for the respondents to feel protected. The researcher sought informed consent from the children's guardians as the legal channel in relation to anyone under the age of eighteen. Additionally, the researcher put into consideration the principal of cost or benefit ratio and greater consideration was given to the risks to physical, psychological, human cultural values than to the potential of research to knowledge. All names of participants will be protected from publication to safeguard privacy and confidentiality and any

confidential information treated as such especially from home. The researcher sought access to participants through the guardians and the school administration.

### **1.13.1 Informed consent**

The researcher demonstrated acceptable behaviour for the respondents to feel protected. The researcher sought informed consent from the children's guardians as the legal channel in relation to being protected from publication to safeguard privacy and confidentiality and any confidential information treated as such especially from home. The researcher sought access to participants through the guardians and the school administration for anyone under the age of eighteen. The researcher also put into consideration the principle of cost or benefit ratio and greater consideration was given to the risks to physical, psychological, human cultural values than to the potential of research to knowledge. All names of participants will be protected and pseudonyms used.

Cohen and Manion (2013) view informed consent as the procedures in which research participants are free to choose to take part or not after being adequately supplied with the relevant facts that have a high probability of influencing his or her decision. In this research, the participants were told the purpose of the study, the procedures involved as well as their rights such as freedom to decline or prematurely withdraw from the research study.

### **1.13.2 Anonymity**

The principle requires that names of the respondents should not be divulged. This means the researcher must gather data without attaching the names of the individual respondents to the data generation forms. In this research, the researcher used numbers and colours to identify participants, for example pupil A from school Red. In some cases pseudonyms were used.

### **1.13.3 Confidentiality**

The generated data should only be accessed by the researcher and probably the research supervisor. Secondly, the names of the respondents were removed from the data generation forms so that the researcher would not be able to link the data with a particular respondent.

In this research study, the researcher and the research supervisor will be the only ones who will have access to the generated data. After the study it would be kept under lock for at least five years and then destroyed later.

#### **1.14 Organisation of the research report**

The way the report is arranged gives the reader a road map for the journey ahead. This report is comprised of seven chapters that spells out the thoughts and ideas gathered throughout the research journey.

Chapter One provides the introduction, background and the significance of the study. The aims and objectives of the study as well as the critical questions are also outlined in the chapter.

Chapter Two in this research report deals with the theoretical framework. In the beginning the researcher conceptualised the theoretical framework. The discussions on critical emancipatory research and *ubuntu* are presented here. The relevance of the theory is also discussed and a reflection on it given in the end.

Chapter Three contains the review of the relevant literature. The main purpose of the chapter is to explore and examine some other research studies conducted before which explores the same interest as mine. It begins by defining operational concepts of the study. Secondly, I review the studies on sustainable learning focusing on immigrant learners. This chapter closes with some concluding remarks.

Chapter Four deals with the research design and methodology used in the study. The main focus where the study is located is the critical paradigm. Participatory action research, purposive sampling, data generation tools, and the method of analysing data are presented. Last but not least, ethics and trustworthiness are discussed.

Chapter Five focusses on data presentation and discussions based on the objectives of the study.

Chapter Six is concerned with the interventions made. It discusses the workshop held in support of immigrant sustainable learning. It also provides participants' reviews on the effectiveness of the workshops in helping immigrant learners overcome the hindrances they encounter.

Chapter Seven is the reflection chapter and concludes the study. It provides answers to the research questions and also gives the contributions of the study as well as summarising the research journey before giving concluding remarks.

### **1.15 Conclusion**

The chapter was concerned with the background of the study, critical questions, and the brief research methodology used. The study was set in KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa at a multilingual primary school and investigates immigrant learners' experiences on sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom. The study's sub-questions investigated the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The questions also tried to unveil any hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. Lastly, the views of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom towards the experiencing of sustainable learning were revealed. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework used in this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework utilised in order to understand sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom. For the researcher to have a clear understanding of the phenomenon, two theories, namely critical emancipatory research (CER) and *ubuntu* were utilised. The chapter begins with the definitions of operational terms first before the conceptualisation of the term ‘theoretical framework’. It then further lays out the theoretical dimensions of the research and looks at how the framework chosen was relevant to the study. The overall structure of the chapter consists of ten subheadings including this introductory chapter. Finally, the conclusion gives a brief summary where reflections are given.

##### **2.1.1 Overview of the research**

Immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms in primary schools have been disregarded of late and where they are noticed, inadequate attention has been rendered to them (Mohamed, 2015; Mahembe, 2012; Meda, 2014; Ngema, 2013). According to Ngema (2013), most schools fall short equipped in giving attention to the immigrant learners. As a result, the immigrants manoeuvre their way through educational challenges in primary school, especially in the multilingual classroom. In most cases, a teachers’ main concern will be to cover the syllabus, unaware or not paying special attention to finding and solving the plights of immigrants. In addition, the language policy by the Department of Education (DoE), in primary schools is not sensitive to these vulnerable learners. In most cases, as observed by Ngema (2013), focus is centered on immigrant learners in secondary education. The primary school immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, due to their resilience, penetrate their way out in achieving sustainable learning fully. This research study was an attempt to respond to the calls of other researchers, who include Ngema (2013), Meda (2014), Mohammed (2015), and Mahembe (2012), for the need to explore immigrant learners’ experiences of sustainable learning in order to find a solution of improving their own performance.

Be it descriptive or analytical, scientific research holds hypotheses against evidence (Buckingham & Saunders, 2007, p. 20). Bouma and Ling (2010, p.19) argue that “a theory is a guess about the way things are or an idea about how something works,” going on to establish that theories are ideas about the way other ideas are related, which can be abstract notions about the way concepts relate to one another (Bouma & Ling, 2004, p.47). McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.74) similarly make it clear that a theoretical framework provides for a basis for the research questions. Furthermore, a theoretical framework enables the description of the academic perspective in which in which the problem is embedded.

Buckingham and Saunders (2007, p.23) further explain the purpose of a theoretical framework, having this to say, “the way we observe realities about people’s conduct, beliefs and characteristics must to some extent mirror the philosophies that we already hold about the representativeness we are observing or researching.” More so, the theoretical framework serves not only to guide where researchers have an interest, but will at the same time assist to shape what they see (Buckingham & Saunders, 2007). In a way, the phenomenon under study will depend on its early conceptualisation, where researchers concurrently derive the meaning of things by fitting their previous experiences into present conceptual frameworks.

Based on the above facts, the researcher saw it necessary to employ critical emancipatory research (CER) as the suitable theoretical framework in this research study. This was considered after identifying some common aspects between the goals of CER and the issues that seem to contribute towards sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The proceeding section will examine CER by outlining the definitions from various authors.

## **2.2 Defining Operational Terms**

The next section provides a critical discussion of operational terms to this study. This is important in the sense that most of the operational terms used may have different meanings. The debate leads to approved definitions of these terms for this study.

### **2.2.1 Sustainable learning**

Sustainable learning refers to learning to live with the environment limits of our planet and to build a just, equitable, and peaceful society (UNESCO, 2013). They further highlighted that this is essential for the well-being of all and as such is regarded as an international priority. In support of UNESCO, Taggart (2007, p.11) defined sustainable learning as different life skills that are needed by learners to empower them throughout their lives. Based on Tsotetsi's (2013) ideas, it includes but not limited to a formalised transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the learners. He points out that the child's learning is not confined to the classroom alone, but notes that a child also learns at home. Sustainable learning involves approaches to teaching and learning that integrate goals for conservation, social justice, cultural diversity, appropriate development and democracy into a vision and a mission of personal social change. This involves developing the kinds of civic values and skills that empower all citizens to be leaders in the transition to a sustainable future (Australian Department of Environment Heritage, 2005, p.13). Agreeing with this view, Mahlomaholo (2010) is of the idea that such skills may be required to face life's challenges.

Taking this into consideration, I consider sustainable learning as the ability to transfer knowledge and skills learned in formal school to life situations in the outside world of family, community, and work. Sustainable learning, in other words, makes sure that human development efforts yield life-long or lasting improvement in immigrant learners' lives and in their careers, including communities, without causing harm or compromising their well-being or that of others in the present or future (Salamao, 2011, p.14). This can happen through interactions when adults help learning at a higher level of understanding (Department of Education 2016, p.19), and through collaborative inquiry, as teachers engage with other stakeholders for critical reflection, discussing ideas, theories and learning methodologies (Ministry of Education, 2014, p.22). According to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (2014), actions that promote sustainable learning in primary schools calls for individuals to take into account the environmental, social, cultural and economic systems, and their interdependence. Sustainability is regarded as important, because of its promotion of quality of life, and the way it struggles to make future generations survive (Taylor et al., 2015, p.3).

### **2.2.2. Immigrant learner**

Migration by definition is the movement of individuals from one country, place or locality to another (United Nations, 2006). Surveys conducted by International Organisations have concluded that currently over 175 million people are living at some distance from their native countries. They give reasons of migration as those that include poor living conditions, economic meltdown, and also instability in some countries, due to civil war (United Nations, 2006). Ramjathan-Keogh (2011) added that some people just choose to migrate voluntarily, like those who move to another country for better career opportunities. He further revealed that global forced displacement increased to record high numbers in 2015, where, by the end of year, 63, 5 million individuals had been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Global Trends (2016) also states that by the end of 2015, about 3,2 million people were waiting for decisions on their application for asylum.

South Africa has recently experienced an influx of immigrants mostly from Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe to mention but a few. The 2011 census found out that there are 2 199 871 immigrants in South Africa. Thus, this number is more likely to have doubled since then due to recent intrusion of undocumented immigrants from neighboring countries, especially Zimbabwe. Some of these immigrants have school-going children who are supposed to be enrolled in the host country schools. In reviewing the available census findings of 2011, it is of great importance to note that study permit documented 16 928 learners. Fortunately, for immigrant learners in South Africa, no one is excluded from education.

### **2.2.3 Multilingual classroom**

Owing to recent global migration, people are now exposed to multiple languages. A multilingual classroom, according to Coelho (2012), is a place where students of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds are studied together, where some or all of the students are not the first language speakers of the language of instruction, and or where teachers and students do not all share a common language or cultural background. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) define multilingualism as the knowledge of separate languages. Most schools in South Africa are multilingual ones. This is because of the country's broad spectrum use of both indigenous and non-indigenous languages. South Africa boasts of eleven official languages which are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati,

Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, isiXhosa, and isiZulu (Broeder, Extra & Maartens, 2012). The Department of Education likewise promotes multilingualism in schools when it places emphasis on schools to pursue a policy based on the principal of maintaining home languages, while providing access to the effective acquisition of additional languages. Thus, from Grade One onwards, a student is expected to learn at least two languages as subjects. It is against this background that an immigrant learner with his or her own home first language is expected to belong into this classroom environment and helped in achieving sustainable learning.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what a theoretical framework is, and to give its relevance in research. According to Anafara and Mertz (2006), a theoretical framework is any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and or psychological processes at different levels that can be applied to the understanding of phenomena. Neuman (2000), Middlebrooks and Allen (2008) and the Oxford South African School Dictionary (2010) define a theoretical framework as the frames of theories that encapsulate untested ideas, experiences, propositions, hypothesis, assumptions as well as the objectives that inform a research study. A further clarification comes from Neuman (2000), who outlines that theories are applied in an effort to test a hypothesis, where the confidence to announce the truth of the proposition emerges after applying theories to test a hypothesis. In other words, Neuman's (2000) notes that unless otherwise tested, ideas remain hypothesis. In this regard, it is a mere proposition that sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom needs to be enhanced, until research to find empirical evidence has been conducted. In this regard, a theoretical framework employed in this research worked as a tool that assisted the researcher to understand immigrant learners' experiences in a multilingual classroom.

Tavallaei and Abutalib (2010), in similar fashion, purport that a theoretical framework exists to enable the researcher to examine and point out useful portions of the events under investigation despite other aspects of the events being hidden. In support of this, Dusick (2011) asserts that a theoretical framework is linked to the collection of similar concepts that are not yet so well worked out in one research. By using a theoretical framework, the researcher would be trying to learn more on a topic or issues that he or she knows a little about.

Anafara and Mertz (2006, p.68) state the purpose of the theoretical framework to be making sense of the data, as well as providing some coherent explanation regarding people's actions and behaviour. The major aim of the theoretical framework is that of moving the research study beyond the realm of descriptive into the realm of explanatory. Henning et al. (2005, p.25) termed this the lenses through which the world is viewed. As noted by Creswell and Garrett (2008), theoretical framework acts as lenses that then become a scaffold in the structuring of research questions asked, as well as informing ways of generating data and how to analyse it, and lastly in providing a solution. In qualitative research, there are a variety of theoretical frameworks one can use. The researcher is at liberty to choose the one applicable to his/her research, and in so doing ,is allowed to see in different ways issues that may seem to be ordinary and familiar.

In trying to understand the sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom phenomenon, I made use of critical emancipatory research (CER). I found CER most relevant in this study because it offered participants a chance to interpret their lived experiences. Another reason is that it allowed them to be engaged in the study through communication with the researcher together, rather than to be studied. Another relevant aspect of CER relevant to this study is its concern with the lives of those pushed to the margins in society, such as immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, with the aim of allowing them to make introspection and value themselves. CER as a theory has the strength of in-depth understanding of one self, community, power relations, critical transformation and change with the aim of empowering oneself. Furthermore, it also gives participants a chance to interpret for themselves their experiences. In other words, it is important for the marginalised to first appreciate what they have so as to think of creating a positive vision of improvement (Mertens, 2009), empowerment and a sense of liberty.

CER has the above strengths, but does not cover the aspects of embracing, respecting, accepting, valuing and sharing of resources. In order to fill this methodological gap, I incorporated *ubuntu* theory.

Thurmond (2001, p.254) suggests that the use of theoretical triangulation helps in ensuring that approaches will give each other support, and the triangulation in this study is detailed as the discussion progresses.

### **2.3.1 What is CER?**

Critical emancipatory research (CER) is a process of deconstructing the world for the purpose of freeing human beings from the constraints limiting ways of thinking (Henning, Rensburg & Smith 2004, p. 22; Merriam, 2009, p.22). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p.34) CER's most distinctive feature is its insistence on research becoming an emancipatory and transformative force in society. They further argued that understanding and interpreting human experiences alone is not sufficient, but the end product of a research process ought to change it for the better. Transformation of individuals is realised while they socialise, meditate, discuss, and open up in dialogue, questioning prior assumptions and their strengths and shortcomings, and showing concern for the success of individuals. Braune (2013, p.18) made it clear that Habermas argues for and unveiling the hidden relation between knowledge and interest, which in turn contributes towards free individuals and a society with the sole mandate of empowerment.

Meko (2013, p.16) defines empowerment as the awareness of attempts that may not include one in decision-making and taking a position to counteract such an attempt. On the other hand, Cornwall (2014, p.2) sees this as changing power relations in favour of those who exercised little power over their own lives. Empowerment is a process of providing people the opportunity to feel that they understand and have the power to change their world, in other words, having liberty in making decisions. In this regard, immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom have to critically look at their daily life, its psychologically and emotionally factors, and the influence it has on their sustainable learning. They are obliged to do something to change the prevailing conditions in order for them to fulfill and enjoy their sustainable learning, whilst in a multilingual classroom together with their teachers and significant others (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012, p.42).

Empowerment and emancipation all have the mandate of freeing individuals from the constraints limiting ways of thinking (Henning et al., 2004, p.22; Merriam, 2009, p.22). Immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom revealed their decisions in-as-far as achieving sustainable learning is concerned; and the teachers voiced those issues that affect their day-to-day duties of teaching.

Mahlomaholo and Nkoane (2002) chronicled CER as its emphasis is on advancing the agenda of quality, social justice, freedom, peace, honesty, as well as methodological consistency. Carr and

Kemmis (2005, p.350) argues that research ought to consider how power and society inequalities have made an impact on the way individuals view themselves in relation to the world. The aim of CER is to liberate individuals or society from their state of alienation through the process of self-reflection (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p.36). This research study was concerned with immigrant learners who are regarded as second class citizens, and who experience xenophobia, who face dehumanizing comments, and who are seen with a different eye by locals (Mahembe, 2012; Vandeyat, 2012; Meda, 2013; Ngema, 2014), the use of CER is likely to lead to a positive self-image and emotional freedom, transforming the human condition and empower in individuals to emancipate themselves.

Furthermore, CER points out ways in which traditional education has been defined by the dominant order, which lacks the ability to address inequalities. According to Truman, Mertens and Humphries (2000) CER asserts that oppressed as well as marginalised groups need education for liberation, which is an opportunity to develop an understanding brought about by critical thought and action towards achieving ‘critical consciousness’, where the learners are empowered to think and act to the conditions around him or her, and later relate these conditions to the larger contexts of power in society.

In this research study, CER was chosen as the suitable theoretical framework. Special attention was given to its origins and its claims. CER emerged as a suitable framework in this study due to its aim of helping participants investigate reality so as to change the stereotypical view of seeing immigrant learners in life.

### **2.3.2. Historical Origins of CER**

Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) was formulated by Adorno, Habermas, Horkheimer and the Frankfurt School, and was formulated (Mahlomaholo, 2009, p.224). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) the origins of CER can be traced back to the work of Karl Marx in the nineteenth century. CER originated from the Frankfurt School as a philosophical and sociological movement which spread across many universities around the world starting in the early 1920s in Germany. The Institute was formed with the aim of developing Marxist studies. This was made a dream come true due to the donation of an inheritance by Felix Weil, with the intention of starting an Institute meant to offer studies of Germany society in line with the Marxist approach. It was meant to offer

studies on the labour movement and the origins of anti-Semitism which during that time were not recognised in Germany's intellectual and academic life.

The school is seen as a philosophical movement spread across many universities in the world. Originally, it was based at the Institute for Social Research, an attached institute at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany in 1923, established with the intention of developing Marxist studies. The philosophical preoccupations of the school were that of challenging the capitalist society and social emancipation, as well as the detection of the pathologies of society to which Marx was reacting, along with his criticism of the intellectuals of his time, about whom he wrote, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:34). In Marx's view, the aim of research is not only to explain and/or understand society, but to change it for the better.

Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse as well as Benjamin and Frommer respectively, are considered some of the most prominent people of the first generation of the School. It was with Habermas that the Frankfurt school turned global and have continued to influence methodological approaches across the European academic contexts and disciplines. During this phase, the philosopher Bernstein, a contemporary of Habermas, embraced the research agenda of Critical Theory and assisted in its development in American universities beginning at the New School for Social Research in New York. At inception, the Social Research Institute becomes formally recognised by the DoE as an entity attached to Goethe University Frankfurt. In the 1960s, Goethe University Frankfurt received the title "Karl Marx University". In the period from 1923 to 1929, the officially appointed director of the Institute, Carl Grunberg, was also a Marxist professor at the University of Vienna. He made numerous contributions including that of creating a historical archive that was meant for the study of the labour movement.

Horkheimer followed as director after Grunberg from 1930 onwards. He also continued under a Marxist focus, and went further to interpret the Institute's aims of being more directed towards an interdisciplinary integration of the social sciences. During that time, Grunberg's historical archive ceased to publish, with the launch of an official organ named the *Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung*, which had much greater impact. Besides not officially aligned to any party, the Institute entertained intensive research exchanges with the Soviet Union. The members of the Institute were able to

address a wide range of economic, social, political and aesthetic topics, including empirical analysis and philosophical theorisation under Horkheimer leadership.

In executing its aims, the Institute faced some of the hardest confrontations including the criticism of Grossman's standard view on the pauperisation of capitalism by Pollock, which led to the former leaving the Institute. It was Pollock's critical reinterpretation of Marx that received support from the intellectuals who later contributed to the developments of the school. The institute faced a massive turning point, which characterised all its future endeavors, under Horkheimer's directorship. Intellectuals like Lowenthal, Adorno and Fromm also supported the Institute and made valid contributions. Fromm's psychoanalytic trend combined with Horkheimer's influential philosophical contribution, clearly made a positive change to the Institute.

The Frankfurt School also considered psychoanalysis due to Horkheimer's encouragement. It was Fromm, however who achieved a considerable advancement of the discipline when he pursued his central aim of providing the missing link between what he called ideological superstructure and socio-economic base (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The 1930s saw a radical shift, with Adorno's engagement with the School, and Fromm leaving. This nevertheless did not have any negative impact on the School's interest in Freud's psychoanalysis, especially with regards to the instinct theory. This interest in psychoanalysis came at the same time with Marxism marginalisation, as well as Fromm's insight into the psychic role of the family. In the 1940s, the interest became great in empirical studies that resulted in Adorno's partnership work of "The Authoritarian Personality", released in 1950. The main emphasis of the work was to explore it using the empirical research, with the use of questionnaires to define the authoritarian personality, which according to them, was a new anthropological type.

It was Horkheimer's leadership that provided a distinct methodological direction and philosophical grounding to the Institute's research interests. Horkheimer criticised the fetishism by arguing that it lacked consideration for materialist conditions of living and subjectivity. Horkheimer argued against Cartesian and Kantian philosophies, and used dialectical mediation in an attempt to rejoin all dichotomies encompassing the divide between consciousness and being, theory, and practice, as well as fact and value. The dialectics he adopted were different from that of Hegelianism or Marxism, in the sense that they required him not to be a metaphysical principle or historical praxis. In contrast, Horkheimer's dialectics worked as the battlefield for overcoming over rigid

classifications and unhelpful dichotomies and oppositions. In this way, CER originated from the criticism by Horkheimer of the orthodox Marxism's dichotomy between productive structures and ideological super-structure, as well as positivism's immature separation of social facts and social interpretation.

The second generation started with Habermas, as he contributed to the dialogue between the continental and analytic traditions. In a similar fashion, Habermas informed a transformative and emancipatory motif in the 1960,s and Brian Fay took it further in the 1970s and 1980s. Due to Habermas' contributions, the Frankfurt School emerged globally and as a result influences its methodological approaches in other European academic contexts. During this phase, Bernstein, a modern day Habermasian philosopher, subscribed to the research agenda of CER, which led to its subsequent development in American universities.

Either Habermas' research students in the United States and at Frankfurt (Main & Sternberg (1971-1982) or the unprompted merging of independent scholars contributed to the third generation of the theory. The third generation of the theory therefore is seen as consisting of two groups with the first one including scholars like Andrew Feenberg, and Albrecht Wellmer who was Habermas' assistant in 1969 after Adorno's death. The second group of the generation consists of American Scholars who were influenced by Habermas' philosophy during his visit to the United States for the mentorship and academic monitoring and support programme.

These proponents of CER shared the view that research is not supposed to only acknowledge the lived experiences of the participants and provide the objective truth, but instead needs to also be critical of human conditions (Carr & Kemmis, 2005). Authorities like Carr and Kemmis (2005); Ledwith (2007); Esposito and Evans-Winters (2007); Mahlomaholo (2009); Mahlomaholo and Natshandama (2010); and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) all agreed that being critical includes:

- understanding how individuals and groups within the society who have been oppressed by social injustice strive for their emancipation in an overloaded society;
- making the effort to understand phenomena and be persistent in changing them;
- adjusting discrimination and stimulating individual freedoms within an independent society;

- encouraging a research novelty that aims at identifying and breaking ‘false’ one-sided awareness;
- being natural, questioning our thoughts, and challenging our assertiveness and preconceptions; and
- challenging repression, prevailing philosophies and overriding power, whilst encouraging the neglected voices by ensuring mutuality of all and catering for interests of the beleaguered.

### **2.3.3 Objectives of CER**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p.44) the main objective of CER is to uncover the suppressive or repressive conditions that leave people both bound and withdrawn. Babbie and Mouton (2001) went on to argue that CER transforms the human condition and empower individuals to emancipate themselves. This theoretical framework calls for an approach that privileges the lived experiences of people especially the vulnerable groups in order to understand how they have become victims of a patriarchal order. CER researchers also argue for a new approach to social research that would eliminate the androcentric bias that is evident in much of contemporary social research.

David and Keinzler (1999, p.272) claim that CER’s aim is not only to understand societal concerns, but also to change them for the better. As such, this study sought not only to understand the sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, but to enhance it in order for the learners to benefit fully from it. This was made possible through the engagement of the immigrant learners, teachers, parents and the school principal as participants through participatory action research (PAR) discussed fully in Chapter Four.

This research study found participants identifying their experiences and determining how such experiences could be improved in order to realise sustainable learning without any difficulties thereby improving the immigrant learners’ attainment of it. CER seeks to free human beings from the conditions that yoke them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In this research study, CER will help immigrant learners develop their self-confidence and stand up for what they believe in, without any impediment. As this group of learners are seen as the second class citizens (Ngema, 2014),

citizens may regard them with disdain, and may express this, leading immigrant learners to become demoralised. CER will help immigrants' learners in regaining the confidence, in an emancipatory way, and be able to experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

#### **2.3.4 What does CER say to us?**

CER was chosen as a research lens as it is concerned with ending inequality in education supporting the oppressed and marginalised (Truman, Mertens & Humphries 2000, p.6). Babbie and Mouton (2006) point out that the distinctive feature of CER is its insistence on science becoming an emancipatory and transformative force in society. According to these authors, the research science's aim is not only to comprehend society, but to change it for the better.

CER guides us about nature of knowledge where Habermas (Babbie & Mouton, 2006, p.34) understands it in the contextual of man's efforts to produce and reproduce himself. Thus it is through cognitive interests that are embedded in the material being of humanity that underlie and stimulate our search for truth and the production of knowledge. In CER, humans are viewed first and foremost as both tool-making and language-using animals, where as a result, they must create from nature what is needed for material existence, through the manipulation and control of objects, and communicate with others through the use of inter-subjectively agreed symbols. In this case, humankind has a curiosity in the construction of knowledge, which enables it to control processes as well as maintaining communication. The latter interest in CER is its reflective understanding of human life. This interest relies heavily on the reasoning that it human capacity involves self-reflexivity, self-determination, and rational action. That's through this last interest that knowledge is generated, which in turn enhances autonomy and responsibility, terming this an emancipatory interest.

Additionally, CER holds the idea that knowledge is controlled by existing sets of social associations, and it aims to challenge the dominant, unjust collective constructions. Truman et al. (2000, p.6) point out that CER does not struggle with common sense, but rather with the social reality that underlies it. It assumes that all social associations are unjust, and are maintained through the influence of political and economic powers, and manifest through ideology. These constructions provide an environment for investigation of group manipulation. It is through a systematic questioning of how ideology camouflages control that it aims to disclose the nature of the unjust relationships within concepts such as work or education. It is through this process that

knowledge, which gives insight into such unjust structures, is produced. The produced knowledge facilitates strategic planning towards the emancipation of oppressed groups.

CER believes that knowledge has no objective status, but pays attention to the production of knowledge. At the same time it claims that critically informed knowledge is truer or more objective than prevailing knowledge systems, where it uncovers the hidden aspects of reality around which other kinds of knowledge collude in order to conceal. CER sees knowledge as a process of moving towards an understanding of the world and of the knowledge, which structures our understanding of that world (Truman, Mertens & Humphries, 2000, p.6).

This theoretical framework holds that knowledge is not only about finding out about the world, but about changing it. In this case, not only are the participants of any inquiry analysed in terms of their potential for developing group action, but CER researchers themselves engage oppressive social structures and their modes, thereby addressing praxiological concerns. According to CER lenses, knowledge exists in our everyday lives and it is dynamic, where the activity of engagement is at the root of further development and the transformation of knowledge.

Most researchers stress the importance of education and social action as two important pillars in CER. A critical pedagogy, according to Freire, identifies ways in which traditional education has been domesticated by the dominant order and does not address inequalities. The notion asserts that marginalised and oppressed groups need education for liberation, as an opportunity to develop a dynamic understanding informed by critical thought and action towards the goal of critical consciousness where a person is empowered to “think and act on the conditions around her or him, and relates these conditions to the larger context of power in society” (Truman, et al. 2000, p.7). With CER, people start to recognise the ideologies that are the myths, values, languages which serve to mislead and cloak reality, and which reinforce the status quo, where some social groups have power over others. Thus, through a critical education process, by reflecting on one’s situation, an individual or group can move towards ‘conscientisation’ and action for transformation.

### **2.3.5 The Researcher and the Researched**

Esposito and Evans-Winters (2007, p.225) argue that, “any research that claims to be critical should be driven by an intention not to confirm or embrace privileged ideologies, but rather it should address power and injustices through questioning individuals’ domination in the society.” The main concern of CER is how individuals make a just society in which there are open discussions with all voices heard. It was therefore necessary to understand learners and immigrant parents’ understanding of researchers and or academics. Mahlomaholo (2009, p.225) observed that in most cases, people associate academics with ‘bourgeoisie power’, which they access through association with advanced educational institutions. Ali (2002, p.235) notes in this regard that “we cannot consider knowledge without also considering the power-based relations and mechanism of society that has constructed it.” As the purpose of this study was to produce knowledge that is relevant to all conversational partners (participants), it therefore became applicable to use a theory that could yield knowledge that, according to Ali (2002, p. 235), “discloses the ideals and tendencies of a given society and can thereby explain the nature of the power/knowledge connection.”

This research study was therefore embedded within the CER framework in order to guarantee that I addressed the power that I might possess by being a member of a higher education institution (HEI). The relationship encouraged closeness between the researcher and all conversational partners (researched) (Mahlomaholo, 2009, p.225), whilst disempowered immigrant learners, teachers and immigrant parents could work against the stopping of their dominated forms of knowledge and neutralize any overriding form of knowledge (Ali, 2002, p.236). The research partners could thus treat one another with reciprocal respect and appreciation of equal opportunity (Mahlomaholo, 2009, p.226).

According to Ali (2002, p.239) closing the gap between partners and the recognition of equality helps in addressing power differentials in knowledge construction. CER in this study also helped in explaining how, through equal connections, one can recognise the power of teachers, immigrant learners, immigrant parents, and other school members in knowledge construction. This was significant in this case as the immigrant learners in question were trying to enhance sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, where much has happened in an effort to experience sustainable learning. However, many suggestions have been following the top-down approach,

whereby the DBE will make recommendations as to how the school can implement sustainable learning.

The relationship required here is the one that acknowledges the power that local people or the researched have over their context and how they can change themselves for the better. To create this relationship, there was a need for the researcher to be trusted by all the core-researchers, where, as a result, I decided to spend four months in the field so that I could build a good relationship and become part of the community through taking on some of the workload in the research school. This earned trust from most of the school members included immigrant learners and parents and ultimately they regarded me as part of the community. They were then able to treat me as someone equal to them.

### **2.3.6 The Immigrant Learner Context and CER**

The study sought to gain insight into sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom in the Pinetown district of KwaZulu-Natal in the Republic of South Africa. The study made use of a CER lens with the aim of creating a space for immigrant learners to have knowledge on sustainable learning and create a conducive learning space towards attaining it whilst in a multilingual classroom in their primary schooling. By using CER as a theoretical framework, the researcher hoped that the participants would be empowered as they would be involved in each activity of the research and as a result would gather the skills and strengths for sustainable learning.

CER as a theory promote equity, social justice, transformation, closeness between researcher and participants, room for dialogue, and the questioning of unequal power relations in the society. Locating the study within the CER framework accepted that gaining an insight into sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom would not be possible without highlighting or considering the voices of the marginalised. It is recognised that because of their migrant status, which causes them to face dehumanizing marks, as well as political, economic and social malice, the immigrant learners as a result accepted their subjection, and become powerless. Thus, CER stands for emancipation, empowerment, liberation, as well as creating equality through democratic spaces, characterised by open discussions with the intention of

addressing societal suppressions (Carr & Kemmis, 2005, p.353; Mahlomaholo & Natshardama, 2010, p.76). The power of the voices of the groups concerned may be used to pinpoint such insights and thereby construct an enabling space for their sustainable learning.

Daniell and Woodhams (2005, p.284) are of the view that an emancipatory research ought to produce knowledge that is relevant to beleaguered participants, and supports them. In order to initiate a participation space from immigrant communities in question and draw on their voices to produce knowledge that was sensitive to their needs, there was need for democratic and open dialogue. This could have also been of help in finding hindrances to sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom as it would have been developed by participants themselves in an emancipatory process. The open dialogue here held the advantage of preventing the researcher's views she may have from dominating the study. In the event of the researchers' views dominating those of the participants, this would lead to bias. Furthermore, open dialogue could have also challenged the adopted subjection that is associated with being an immigrant and created awareness as to what the participants could do within their immigrant context to experience sustainable learning in host multilingual classrooms. Through their contributions, it is possible that this research will satisfy my research partners (the participants themselves) and also contribute to challenging the claims that immigrants are unable to contribute to deliberations aimed at changing unjust situations within their context.

### **2.3.7 The Aims and Objectives of the Study and CER**

As indicated in the aim and rationale of the study, the attention was to realise sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom from the insider perspectives. As also highlighted as the key attention of CER, namely not only to understand the societal issues but also to change them for the better (Truman et al., 2000, p.7). In the same vein, this current study aimed not only to understand sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, but also to address any power challenges and any hindrances in order to offer support that help in creating an enabling environment. For this study, I opted for the critical emancipatory research (CER) theory because CER as a theory looks into the kind of power people have over others and at their submissiveness to it, and it allows people to voice their feelings. Hence, neutralising the power relations. In this research, I looked at the power relations between teachers and teachers, teachers and children and between immigrant children and citizen children.

Transformation of the immigrant learners depends on them socialising, mediating, talking and opening up, questioning previous assumptions, and revealing their strengths and weaknesses, in a positive way for their success.

In Braune (2013, p.18), what Habermas proposes is seen as a process to explore the hidden relationships between knowledge and interest that contributes towards free individuals, and thus, a free society, with the aim of empowerment. CER theory is not a set of predetermined claims as is the case with the traditional theory; instead it questions new ideas for easy adaptation. Therefore, this means the purpose of CER would be to liberate in the event that new ideas become oppressive, and lead to unequal power relations. CER therefore in this research study helped in questioning relations that are more powerful than others in the classroom situation and learners who seem to be worth more than others as these aspects lead to social inequalities and social judgement and bigotry. The aim of this is that through examining these questions, the learners in question will learn to be rational, ensuring normal development of their minds for critical, universal thought and moral responsibility that can be gleaned from their family (Braune, 2013, p.16), which might be challenge immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. CER examines the concerns that are subjective, objective, positive, negative, sociological, and aesthetic at the same time.

CER's main objective in this research was emotional freedom, and education, as immigrant learners learn that it is their right to be introspective, identify an obstacle, voice it, and become free. Mertens (2009, p.12) and Piper and Mahlomaholo (2009, p.12) have respectively pointed out that both the marginalised learners in this case the immigrants, and teachers will correct the imbalances and power relations amongst themselves. It is the responsibility of the society, in this case the school, to internalise and reflect on practices of injustice that exist between curriculum officials and teachers, and between teachers and teachers, teachers and children, and lastly children themselves. Self-reflection is seen as a tool of self-understanding and personal knowledge, leading to emancipation. In this regard, immigrant learners in multilingual a classroom are required to have self-introspection, develop a positive self-image, thus transforming and empowering themselves in trying to bring about change towards enhancing sustainable learning.

Through engaging in a participatory action research (PAR) (see Chapter Four), the study brought the immigrant learner community in question to the center of identifying hindrances and determine how the hindrances may be overcome to enhance sustainable learning. This was followed by a

closer examination of how the multilingual classroom and the school may be of help in enhancing sustainable learning for immigrant learners.

Mahlomaholo and Natshandama (2010, p.78) are of the view that social change can be realised through dialogue. The aim of this study included the goal to ensure that there is involvement of conversational partners (participants) in order to translate the findings from multiple viewpoints. CER is an ideal framework because it is based on the concern for holistic involvement that aims to create collectiveness towards knowledge constructions (Ali, 2002, p.235).

I found CER most relevant in this study because it offers participants a chance to interpret their lived experiences. Another reason is that it allowed them to be engaged in the study through communication with the researcher together rather than to be studied. Another relevant aspect of CER relevant to this study is the idea of looking into the lives of those pushed to the margins of society, such as immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, with the aim of allowing them to become introspective, and value themselves. CER as a theory has the strength of in-depth understanding of self, community, power relations, critical transformation, and change, with the aim of empowering oneself. It also gave participants a chance to interpret their experiences for themselves. Furthermore, it allowed them to engage in a study through communication with the researcher instead of them being studied. In other words, it is important for the marginalised to first appreciate what they have so as to think of creating a positive vision of improvement (Mertens, 2009), empowerment, and a sense of liberty.

### **2.3.7.1 CER and the transformative agenda**

The purpose of the study was to gain insight into sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, and raise awareness amongst immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom of their ability to find ways of enhancing it by finding their own challenges. CER, from its transformative viewpoint, examines the ways of changing things from their present situation to what they ought to be.

Mertens (2009, p.43; 2010a, p, 470; 2010b, p.11) claims that a transformative research may better be illustrated through its basic beliefs and ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological assumptions. Malcolm, Gobal, Keane & Kyle (2005, p.1) also added that, “the driving force behind the above transformative agenda is to have a research outcome which is producing a

more just and equitable world.” Rivet (2006, p.578) and Trevors, Pollack and Saier (2012, p.118) made it clear that at the heart of the transformative agenda is the will to restructure, revolutionise and improve existing knowledge through communicative practice that allows for the emergence of transformative ideas that according to Kemmis (2008, p.127) is reached through agreement.

Mertens (2003, p.139) argues similarly that transformative ideas arise through collaborative research processes grounded on the trust that there are various realities, which cannot be understood in isolation in the absence of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gendered beliefs that influence their construction. According to Malcolm et al. (2005), research with a transformative agenda embraces the view that all participants, including the researcher, are helpful in framing the purposes, design and interpretation of research and thus the creation of knowledge should be such that it recognises others that have been discriminated against, and try to create space for democratic practice that will ensure full participation of such groups (Mertens, 2003, p.140).

There is need to deploy a relevant, systematic form of inquiry in trying to make sure that the process of knowledge construction acknowledges that power is subverted and also those formerly downgraded or marginalised voices are respected (Mahlomaholo, 2009, p.226). In this regard, in order to ensure that there is participation, collaboration and prioritisation of all voices, the research settled on participatory methods conducted through discursive oriented and free attitude interviews in form of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). In support of this, Mertens (2009, p.48) notes that, “methodologically, there should be an interactive link between the researcher and the participants in defining a problem, and also that method should address cultural complexity and power issues clearly.”

The issue of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom will be socially unjust if it is discussed and concluded without the concerned parties, such as the immigrant community, as they constitute those who ought to benefit from it, thus another part of promoting justice and equity was the inclusion of immigrant learners. This practice is crucial and also makes room for participants, as is expected in a participatory research.

The transformative nature of CER, through its focus on participation and subversion of power, is a change of mentality regarding sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The study was conducted with immigrants learners and parents and the teachers who

work with this marginalised groups, so as to avoid a deficit paradigm that tried to explain unfriendly social and psychological environment resulting in poor accessing of sustainable learning whilst linking it to poverty, not so conducive learning and living environments, prejudice and other “half-realities” associated with immigrants, CER was used. This is so as to ensure that the research procedure was participative, collaborative, and of help, and shifting from deficit models, participatory action research (PAR), was embraced as an appropriate design for this study.

### **2.3.8 Reflection on the use of critical emancipatory research**

CER was a perfect framework for this research, but like any other theory, it has relevant limitations. Firstly, as raised by Danieli and Woodhams (2005, p.287), the process of destabilising power and creating reciprocity is thought-provoking. Again, as observed by Ledwith (2007, p.600), becoming critical do not create any critical action, thus placing in question whether identified matters are dealt with critically. In this research study, the issue of power was not a challenge for some reason. Having associated with the same community in which this study was conducted, the researcher also had the privilege of working at the school in question, and was part of some social, sporting and cultural groups around the area as a player and also as an immigrant parent and educator. People in the community, especially immigrants, regarded me as one of their own, and teachers and learners regarded me as part of the school family, which made an impact in ensuring that they did not regard me as harbouring more power than them. This in a way contributed to an ability to neutralise power, while at the same time generate social trust that is obligatory for participatory research to run efficiently (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p.47).

Secondly, Cohen et al. (2007, p.30) in similar fashion argued that, CER “has a deliberate political agenda and as such the duty of the researcher is not to be detached, fair-minded and objective.” As an immigrant, I was interested in ensuring that immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom experience sustainable learning, and also that ways of enhancing it are established. In doing so however, I was careful not to dictate or dominate my conversational partners. The point was not fully neutralise or undermine my views, but for the process to be emancipatory.

The inspiration to guarantee that those concerned become active participants also originates from the confidence that they have a deeper understanding of their challenges and needs, and thus,

through this, an understanding that then it is assumed that they can draw on their own plan of experiencing sustainable learning.

This CER has the above strengths, but does not cover the aspects of embracing, respecting, accepting, valuing, and sharing of resources. In order to fill in the gap, I incorporated *ubuntu* theory.

## **2.4 Ubuntu Theory**

This unit will concentrate on the development of *ubuntu*, which is an African philosophy. *Ubuntu* theory would be defined through the understanding of the immigrant learners, as they are known to be those who needed to feel loved and embraced in this research study so as to experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

In the South African context, *ubuntu* refers to close community ties in a situation where the good of one is the good of all, according to Obama's (2012) words, "ties that bind the human spirit." So when they are tied in the spirit, they would be a feeling for one another and you won't do anything that would harm your brother. So, in this case, the immigrant learners would be embraced as family by fellow citizen learners thereby developing a feeling of belonging and as a result the name-calling and negative comments on immigrants will be the thing of the past.

Swanson (2007) clarifies *ubuntu* as an African concept in South Africa that comes from the proverb '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*', which means that a person is a person through their association with others. *Ubuntu* can only be realised amongst people's collaboration with one another and the understanding they pass on to one another. *Ubuntu* advocates for people's common humankind, commitments, connections and relations in their communities (Stiebert, 2012). Metz (2007) in the same view argues that *ubuntu* shows purely some vivid assertions about the reliance of a child on other human beings for his/her survival or for the course her life takes. In this case, *ubuntu* can work as an instrument to bring together characters and also as a form of community development. Immigrant learners would be united to the rest of the learners and belong to the group and thereby feel free to contribute with the rest of the class and or community towards their success in experiencing sustainable learning. According to Bell and Metz (2011) *Ubuntu* encourages assurance to the good of the community in which peoples' uniqueness were shaped,

and a need to practice their lives as designed up in that of their community. Here, the immigrant learners reflected on themselves as essential elements of the entire school community. The learners were socialised to think of themselves as indistinguishably bound to others. In order to reach their full potential, learners need to feel the ties that bind them to their families and friends; ties of love, kinship, and loyalty. People with *ubuntu* would try by all means to make peace with their visitors, and this will create a beneficial space for sustainable learning for migrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

#### **2.4.1 The principles of *ubuntu***

Malunga (2006) sees *ubuntu* as made up of five interconnected principles, which include “sharing; collective ownership of opportunities, responsibilities and challenges; the importance of people and relationships over things; participatory decision making; patriotism and reconciliation.” All these principles are of great significance in dealing with sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The principle of sharing in this research played a pivotal role in ensuring that the available resources were shared equally in experiencing sustainable learning. In a classroom situation, ideas were also shared as to how immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom may be supported towards sustainable learning. In collective ownership of opportunities, the teachers, parents, and learner together, they thrive in seeing to it that the responsibility they have together of realising sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom is achieved. Collaborative participation in decision making will help in combating any hindrances towards sustainable learning.

#### **2.4.2 The values of *ubuntu***

According to Broodryk (2002), *ubuntu* values stress personal traits such as humanness, survival, spirit of solidarity, compassion, respect, and dignity. In a school situation, and in light of this research study, school leaders, teachers and fellow learners must show humanity towards other teachers, native learners, and immigrant learners, by being kind and being sincere towards them. Humanness can be also be shown by being there for the immigrant learners in times of distress.

According to Bertsch (2012), the survival value of *ubuntu* entails that collective will to survive emanates from the dependence on the group, community, and brotherly care essential to overcoming challenges. Dependence and shared trust results in the view that survival is only possible through collaboration rather than independence. It is through the collective and collaborative life that individuals have established a shared will to live. In this case, for sustainable learning to be achieved successfully, there is a need for school communities to work together with the teachers and parents. They need to rely upon and support one another in sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

The most important central values of *ubuntu* are respect and dignity. Theletsane (2012) purports that the values specify the social situation of an African society, at the same time conveying and stressing a complete set of established authoritarian and categorised associations. Poovan et al. (2006) view respect as “objective, unbiased, consideration and regard for the rights, values, beliefs and property” of the public. These two values, namely respect and dignity, are thoroughly linked and are regarded as important values in most societies. Theletsane (2012) and Poovan et al., (2006) believe that affiliates of the society develop dignity when others respect them. One of Batho Pele principles of courtesy is expressed amongst these values. The principle entails for citizens to be treated with courtesy and consideration. In support of the above view, the Constitution of South Africa, founded on *ubuntu* values, highlights the need to respect and protect human dignity. In the case of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, the immigrants need to be respected by school leaders, teachers, and fellow learners by being treated fairly and equally. Respect can also be shown by allowing them to make decisions that concern the school community and their sustainable learning.

#### **2.4.3 Integrating CER and *ubuntu* theory**

*Ubuntu* theory and CER, through their features, share several aspects that are important in guiding this study and are thus suitable to be used. CER is guided by the goal of emancipating society and to change life conditions of those involved in this research. This is achieved through critical prioritisation of the voices of the neglected, in this case immigrant learner’s community. CER is promoted for its ability to produce research findings applicable to the people concerned and

suitable in changing the general public. Moreover, within CER, there is hope for sustainable livelihood, since problems are solved *by* people and *for* people. On the other hand, *ubuntu* theory underpins CER where it claims that improving the community and finding pleasure depends on the happiness of others, and should be brought about *by* the community and *for* the community. This in a way is calling for the prioritisation of community wellbeing and attention to be paid to its neglected voices. As with CER, *ubuntu* theory has been presented above as a framework that ensures all research participants are partners in the entire research process, and are treated with respect and dignity in all instances where equal treatment is promoted. This challenges the power of researchers and the internalised powerlessness of immigrants. *Ubuntu* theory further sees every humanity as partners and promotes that everyone should be engaged in problem-solving and decision making not as experts but as collaborators together with those facing the problems so as to conquer the challenges together as a team.

The above is seen as crucial in creating societies that are empowered to respond to their societal problems and also devise sustainable strategies in sustaining locally initiated programmes. It is therefore apparent that CER and *ubuntu* theory have an attachment based on the assumption that all people are capable to drive their own process of change, equal power relations, sustainability, empowerment and people-oriented problem-solving. Thus, the theoretical triangulation of these two frameworks was regarded as a perfect approach for this research study.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to present the theoretical frameworks of this study and to give a critical description of literature with a distinct attention on what is known about *ubuntu* theory. Critical emancipatory research and *ubuntu* theory are highlighted as the theoretical frameworks for this study. The predominant principle of CER as presented in this chapter is that it is a framework which supports the emancipation of research participants so that they are enabled to change their lives. This has been seen to be linking with the aim of this study which saw immigrant learners as the driver of initiatives aimed at experiencing and enhancing their sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, through examining how *ubuntu* perspectives can be used to improve their realisation of sustainable learning. On the other hand, *ubuntu* as a framework linked

with the critical emancipatory research has as a central principle making sure that people-centered and immigrant sustainable learning is experienced which again corresponded with the objective of this study. The debate recognised a link between the two frameworks, followed by the drive for theoretical triangulation to understand the phenomena.

The next chapter discusses the related literature on sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The researcher is guided therein by the aims of the research and research questions.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented CER and *ubuntu* as the theoretical lenses for the study. These have been chosen so as to interrogate the power dynamics typical of xenophobic situations of marginalisation and intolerance, in this case between citizens of South Africa and its immigrants, as may prove relevant to the empowerment of immigrant learners. The current chapter presents a review of literature relevant to the research study, with the phenomenon of sustainable immigrant learning, where every study draws upon a weave of extant research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). I therefore collated relevant international as well as local literature, in order to assess trends and gaps in my own research area of immigrant sustainable learning.

#### **3.2 Relevance of literature review in a research study**

The purpose of reviewing literature can be taken as that of detecting, assessing as well as synthesising the related literature in a specific area of study. A literature review also enlightens the way in which knowledge has progressed within the area by pointing out what has earlier been done, what is documented, what is developing, and the current state of thinking on the phenomenon under study. It is also the function of the literature review to determine unexplored or under-researched areas and elaborate on how the present study addresses the gap. Putman and Rock (2018, p. 45) note that “a review of the literature serves a vital function of showing whether the topic is well researched or whether it is a new area of study.” Hart (2018) shares the same sentiments when noting that reviewing relevant literature enables one to understand one’s research topic as well as determine what relevant work has already been done. Apart from knowing what has been researched before, the literature review unveils the methods that were used in the

research, while at the same time helping the researcher with the key problems that remain unresolved. When reviewing literature, there is need for the researcher to determine:

- previous establishments accepted in the field of study;
- any controversy among various schools of thought;
- the unresolved issues or problems to pursue further;
- developing novel methods; and
- above all how one's research study extends, shapes, and proceeds from previous research studies.

Relevant sources ought to be evaluated as well as synthesised in order to reach a comprehensive view of the phenomenon. O'Leary (2010, p.81) notes that "not only do you need to engage with a body of literature, you also need to be able to compare, contrast, synthesize [sic] and make arguments with that literature in ways that indicate a readiness to contribute to the literature itself." A literature review can therefore be regarded as a serious assessment of sources related to a research topic under study, a blend of a variety of sources, a place to present an argument, a clear pronouncement of one's position in relation to relevant literature, and lastly, a room to brand clear connections between previous research studies and one's own.

I was able to determine what has been established across differing geographical spaces, and then to explore sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom. This chapter considers extant literature on immigrant sustainable learning in multilingual spaces, keeping in view the question as to how sustainable learning is experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom.

In this chapter, I argue that although efforts have been made to enroll immigrant learners in South African primary school's education system, insufficient effort has been made to consider their experiences in sustainable learning on their behalf, as well as making sure that they are assisted in fully in realising sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom as is characteristic of the South African classroom.

This chapter focuses on available literature on sustainable learning in light with immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. Apart from answering the critical question stated above, the chapter also attempts to establish why, according to extant literature, there may be a need for sustainable

learning for these learners, and lastly, how they will be helped to move past their hindrances in accessing sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

This research study was conducted in order to answer the critical research question regarding how sustainable learning is experienced by immigrant learners who find themselves in a multilingual South African classroom. The main objectives of the research included that of exploring the immigrant learners' experiences of sustainable learning, as well as examining their need for sustainable learning, the favorable conditions for sustainable learning, and hindrances to this form of learning, and ways of overcoming such hindrances. Before addressing these objectives, operational concepts are discussed below, with some additional background.

### **3.3 Definition of Operational Concepts**

The core operational concepts of this study are 'immigrant learner', 'sustainable learning' and 'multilingual classroom'.

#### **3.3.1 Immigrant learner**

According to the Collins English Dictionary, the learner is referred to as somebody who is being taught in order to gain knowledge and or skills. In this research study, it is used to refer to African immigrants who are either refugees, asylum seekers, and/or immigrants, who are foreign nationals from any (African) country enrolled in South African primary schools. In this study, the term does not differentiate between those who have applied for citizenship and those who are legally or illegally in the country. If a foreign national from an African country and in primary school, is either boy or girl between the ages seven to fourteen, for the purposes of this research study, they are defined as an immigrant learner.

#### **3.3.2. Sustainable learning**

Sustainable learning refers to a learning process that is based on the standards and philosophies that inspire sustainability. This approach is concerned about all stages and categories of learning aiming at providing quality education, as well as nurturing sustainable human development. In other words, it encompasses learning to know, learning to be, learning to live together, learning to do as well as learning to transform oneself and society (UNESCO, 2017). This type of learning

involves value education and learning, where its focus for concern is poverty alleviation/ reduction, sustainable livelihoods, climate change, gender equality, corporate social responsibility, and protection of indigenous cultures. Lansonen (2006) advocates for sustainable learning as a new concept of learning that has the aim of empowering learners of all ages in taking up responsibilities of generating and appreciating a sustainable future. In short, this researcher sees sustainable learning as lifelong education, where the learners acquire or are equipped with valuable survival lifelong skills useful in tackling any future challenges they may encounter in life, whereby immigrant learners would be equipped with the knowledge that would help them to define who they are and what they want to be, as well as how they will accept and tolerate difference, while behaving and living their daily lives without compromising the needs of others.

### **3.3.3 Multilingual classroom**

A multilingual class is a class where the learners speak a variety of first languages. Coelho's (2012) definition of a multilingual classroom seen as a place where learners of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds are studying or learning together. In this class composition, some or all the learners may not be the first speakers of the language of teaching and learning.

### **3.4 Conceptualisation of immigration**

Immigrants are defined as people living in a country other than the one in which they were born (UNICEF, 2016). In support of UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (2006) see immigrants as individuals who originate from all corners of the world, and journey through or reside permanently in a foreign land or country. Idemudia, Williams and Wyatt (2013), similarly define immigration as the movement of persons from their countries of birth or origins to the developed ones to overcome hardship as well as searching for better life opportunities. Grabianowski (2008, p. 6) observes that the cause of people migration across continents is their search for food, shelter, safety and favorable or hospitable conditions like weather and or political stability. These authorities further singled out poverty, unemployment, wars and in some cases political instabilities as the main force behind immigrants' movement to other countries.

The United Nations (UN) Secretary General has this to say on why individuals immigrate: “an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family” (United Nations, 2016, p.211). Gebre (2007) shares the same sentiments where he argues that the immigrants' hope of a better life in the host country warrant them to decide to migrate. The human longing for improved living conditions has brought about the movement which of late has become a global phenomenon. In as much as this trend has spread to almost every society, this study focuses on its impact on immigrant sustainable learning, with the desire to understand the experiences of the immigrant learners’ in a completely new environment in the host multilingual classroom.

### **3.4.1 International immigration literature**

The conception of the universal economy has seen the change of the 21<sup>st</sup> century labor force. Nowadays, many societies experience changes that range from industrial to informational, as well as from national to international (Artiles & Dyson, 2005; Fletcher & Artiles, 2005; Artiles & Bal, 2008). These changes especially in African countries have resulted in some countries losing their citizens, in search of better living conditions, better employment opportunities, as well as conducive environments for conducting business. Immigration in most parts of the world, including New Zealand, is seen to have increased of late, with most immigrants reportedly from Europe, the Pacific Islands, Asia and from Africa (Ward & Masgoret, 2008).

Global immigration is increasingly more characteristic of our times. Thee most affected countries are those that are characterised by poverty, political instability, economic meltdown, and/or natural disaster, which force their citizens to move to the countries they regard as safe and economically stable. The consequences of environmental calamities such as famine or floods can also force thousands to leave their home countries (Mundi, 2012). According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) statistical snapshot (2002), two thirds of the world’s population is regarded as living in economically poor countries which in turn compelled many to migrate.

A study done in Australia by Kasper (2018), notes geographic, economic, as well as demographic factors as the main push factors for immigrants. The same researcher also predicted a notable increase in the population for the next half of the century. This increase, according to the study, causes congestion and a strain on the environment. The predicted number of the increase populates

close to 150 000 yearly constituting 0, 8% of the country's population, up from 0,5 per cent. The study highlighted that, due to the enormous number of immigrants in Australia, what was once regarded as a remarkable and enriching process is now seen as a burden by many. Below are some of the reasons outlined in the study that cause Australia to have a cold foot on immigrants:

- the open Australia economy does not need to be populated for the sake of industrial development;
- Australia has seen a rise in criminal activities that include smuggling and the experiencing of international terrorism that resulted in borders to be secured, all directed to illegal immigrants;
- immigrant societies are seen as coming or belonging to fragile or shrinking home economies with different cultures, and as such, some show hostility towards Western values and morals, and as a result they stick to counterproductive modes of behaviours in western context; and
- illegal immigrants are a burden on or an expense to the country's taxpayers.

On a lighter note, the study revealed the need for communities to collaborate for smooth functioning, due to the shared cultural values and norms. However, some of the world's institutional systems do not offer a conducive environment for preparing individuals to face life in a modern, open, competitive society, due to a lack of cultural integration that can inflict high and sustained costs. For this reason, the present study aimed to seek to explore immigrant sustainable learning as experienced by the immigrant learner, whilst in a multilingual classroom where there is a diversity of cultures.

The global movement has in turn seen the increase in the diverse number of learners in the host destinations schools. Pettipher (2011) highlights the impossibility of schools to function on its own or in isolation. The author argues that schools are influenced by the developments in a country's political, economic as well as social changes. Most children in the world find themselves attending school in foreign countries (Muzawazi & Nkoma, 2013). This is because of their parents migrating to other countries due to some push and or pull factors. Many leave their home countries because there is not enough food, water, work or other fundamental economic factors, providing the main motivation behind global immigration. In fact, according to the International Labour Organization, approximately half of the total population of current immigrants have left home to find better jobs

and lifestyle opportunities for their families abroad (International Labour Office of the Director General, 2008). In some countries, jobs simply do not exist for a great deal of the population. In other countries, the income gap between countries is great enough to warrant a move. India for example, has recently experienced a surge in emigration due to a combination of these factors (Mundi, 2012).

### **3.4.2 National immigration literature**

South Africa's attainment of democratic rule in 1994 sees most African immigrants from different African countries invade South Africa in search of better living conditions, as well as better education for their children. Zondi (2008) attributes the Continental migration to South Africa to the collapse of apartheid, which had only allowed white immigrants into the country. Many African countries of late are experiencing macro-economic challenges, which leads to their people migrating to other countries. According to statistics, South Africa's (2011) census shows that 2.2 million foreigners live in the country, and the organisation's 2015 estimate places the number of undocumented immigrants to between 500 000 and 1 000 000. The number of immigrant learners in South Africa in possession of a study permit is 16 928 (STAT SA, 2015). Many researchers like Mahembe (2012), Mohamed (2015), Vandeyar (2012), Hemson (2011) and Matsinhe (2011) all point to a lack of employment opportunities in their home countries, political persecution, and the desire to further their studies in South Africa.

However, immigration into South Africa is not taken politely by those citizens who have the belief that the immigrants are taking away their jobs, as well as crippling their service delivery, especially when it comes to healthy service delivery, as seen by most Government officials' speeches during public addresses (Mashaba, March 2019 addressing mourners in Gauteng) and Hlatshwayo & Vally, 2014). Due to the belief that foreign nationals pose as a threat to the locals, xenophobic attacks have erupted in most provinces of South Africa. Hlatshwayo and Vally (2014) view xenophobia as a form of physical and psychological violence, which in most cases leave scars or wounds on immigrant families and their children. It is against this background that this research study sought to investigate sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in face of the prejudice and their powerlessness in face of the local citizens.

### **3.4.3 Immigrants' experiences of xenophobia in South Africa**

Intolerance of South African citizens of the African immigrants gave rise to the xenophobia attacks experienced in most parts of South Africa. Citizens' main grievances concerned poor service delivery, educational opportunities, employment opportunities, as well as weakening economic status (Nnadozie, 2016; Osman, 2009; Isseri, 2015; Zonke, 2014; Mbhele, 2016). Xenophobia can be explained as a powerful dislike or fear of strangers or people from other countries and their cultures (Rudolf, 2012). Sharing the same view, Tafira (2011) regards xenophobia as the fear of strangers or foreigners. In other words, xenophobia involves hate speech, negative attitudes, prejudices and unbecoming behaviours that depower, marginalise, reject or exclude individuals with a reason or perception of them being 'not belonging to us', outsiders to them and their community or national with different national identity (Adjai & Lazaridis, 2013). Hirshleifer (2007) added that the hate of foreigners by the host citizens in the end creates social insecurity and 'in groups' as well as 'out groups' referred to as the 'them' or the 'us' kind of groups.

In South Africa, it is likely that most African immigrants in one way or the other become victims of xenophobia and/or stereotyping. The researcher herself experienced xenophobic sentiments at one school where she was doing locum teaching, when other teachers referred to her as '*abantu vengalee*' with the derogatory meaning 'people who come from outside'. There is a strong evidence that immigrants studying and working in South Africa come across these harsh sentiments often meant to emotionally dehumanise. The reasons for this hate are the locals' belief that foreigners are draining the public resources, are criminals, and threaten their livelihoods (Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh, & Sing, 2005). This hate has resulted in physical attacks on African foreign nationals in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces in 2008, 2012, 2015, and most recently in 2019, targeting foreign nationals' truck drivers. These attacks affect how immigrant learners experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom in South African schools.

### **3.4.4. Immigrant learners' right to education**

According to Nicoli, Wales and Aiazzi (2017), almost 31 million children of school-going age are immigrants, and according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2016), this number is likely to increase due to the experiences in immigrant flows. As stated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education is considered as an important weapon that safeguards human dignity. Educating immigrant learners helps in meeting

SDG4, as well as achieving economic and social benefits that include improved livelihoods, improved health outcomes, gender inequalities reduction, and enhanced political participation. When immigrant children arrive at their destination host countries, it is not certain as to whether they would be able to fully attain this basic right as large and unexpected immigration flows are regarded as a disruption to the education systems, and as such, disadvantage immigrant children and create tension in host communities. According to the UNESCO courier (2018) receiving education helps immigrant learners to regard themselves as full members of their host countries. When immigrants attend school, they benefit intellectually and socially as a result of learning about the society in which they live.

The right to education is realised when Government provides proper infrastructure for accessing educational services and financial resources to make sure that everyone is not left out or denied of the basic schooling opportunity. UNESCO (2019) argues that denying a sustainable learning to the immigrants means the closing of the entire generation. Nicolai et al. (2017) argue that education plays a major role in integrating society, economic mobility, and learning outcomes, and as such immigrant learners should not be placed in segregated classes or schools as well as being taught in their native language.

When immigrant children arrive at their host destinations, the chance to realise or fulfill education as a human right might be compromised. In their destination country, immigrant learners may not find an opportunity of freely choosing, thereby being denied or forced to attend educational institutions of which they do not approve. Coomans (2018) alludes to the fact that immigrant learners may experience insecurity in choosing an institution to study. Human rights are at play when immigrant learners' educational fulfillment is at risk. The right to education, as a human right, in a way can open opportunities to these vulnerable learners, be this legal or illegal, by according them a chance to reflect upon their options for their future and possibilities for self-realisation, with a view of living in freedom and in a dignified way.

Immigrants regard obtaining educational qualification as the right path of being recognised as a full member of their new country of residence. Furthermore, education in a way enables one to be stable and helps one to have a positive self-esteem. Due to these important aspects, education as a human right brings to immigrants' lives, it then calls for the states or government to provide for

educational services to all. For these reasons, this study sought to explore immigrant learners' experiences in sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

The right to education for immigrant learners is steered by several legal instruments. One of the instruments is the 1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants and Members of Their Families. It is important to note that with conventions are in place, commitments to implement them practically lies in the hands of the responsible authorities of the host nations, and these vary considerably. In most cases these are only realised in primary education.

### **3.4.5 Immigrant learners in foreign land**

Immigration alters a lot of things in an immigrant learner's life. Firstly, immigrant learners' way of interaction, and how they relate to other people in the new host country must change. Secondly, there is the disconnection or loss of their direct or close relatives and friends resulting in a feeling of isolation, learning a new language, negotiating their ethnic identity, changing family roles, and lastly, adjusting to the schooling experiences and culture (Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Garza, Reyes & Trueba, 2004). Research done by Ricucci (2008) validates that immigrant learners tend to show comparatively poor levels of education and training when their academic performance is measured. Crul and Vermeulen (2003) in the same vein concur with Ricucci where they argue that immigrant learners generally lag behind in all school success, indicators with higher percentages of them either dropping out, repeating classes more frequently, or becoming more focused in the least challenging educational institutions. Studies of immigrant learners done across countries outside Africa which include Australia, Canada, England, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland and the USA pointed out to language, ethnicity, and family background as the main contributors behind immigrant failure.

However, not all the immigrant learners have challenges in their academic work. I have observed that there are some who perform exceptionally, and some become high-achievers in all areas of their schoolwork, despite their inadequate knowledge of the local language and difference in background. This was observed in a school in KwaZulu-Natal, where this researcher once worked. Where all the excellence awards in a certain grade were taken by immigrants. This is supported by Hemson's (2011) findings at a primary school in Durban regarding the experiences of African immigrant learners in South Africa. One of the research participants who happens to be the school

principal made it clear that the academic standards of the school has risen with the enrolment of the immigrant learners and he attributed this to the immigrant learners' willpower and hard work towards their school work. The study also revealed that most of the beneficiaries of some sports and academic scholarships offered in schools to excelling students are immigrant learners. Hemson's research findings indicated that immigrant learners generally perform well than their local counterparts at the higher school level and linked this to resilience, which is developed at this stage.

Most extant research acknowledged the increasing number of immigrant learners worldwide due to global immigration (Ricucci, 2008; Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Lamb & Markussen, 2011; Mahembe, 2012; Mohamed, 2015). According to Orfield (2014) non-white learners constitute half of the learners enrolled in the American metro suburbs schools. On the other hand, Perez (2014) revealed that there are 41, 3 million legal and illegal immigrants currently in the United States. Due to this global immigration, Drake (2014) predicated that there will be 40% of language minority (LM) learners in the United States by 2030. Ferguson (2008) shares the same sentiments with Mittler (2005), who observed that intra and inter-continental immigration has brought about diverse and multicultural societies, which in turn result in multilingual classrooms, consisting of learners of mixed abilities, diverse cultural, economic, and societal backgrounds. This is brought about by the movement of diverse populations from one country of residence to another.

This immigrant influx to some extent tends to affect educational spaces of the host countries when the classrooms become multicultural and or multilingual. This calls for every family, school, community as well as the individual immigrant learner concerned to now make sure that sustainable learning is fully realised whilst in a multilingual classroom. Pillay (2012, p. 4) is of the belief that when this vulnerable group of learners is shown love, support, care and empathy, they would self-actualise and experience sustainable learning that will help them to become independent individuals as well as responsible citizens throughout their lives. I also believe in Pillay's idea of supporting the learners and walk them through sustainable learning so that they would be able to maneuver the world on their own as they would be equipped with the basic skills for survival hence the scramble for the basic needs like employment opportunities would be the thing of the past, as they may become employers themselves. However, the absence of support,

acceptance, power, and the receiving of dehumanising comments impacts upon immigrant learners' sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

Due to the changes experienced globally, there is also need for education in schools to be consistent to the changes. This calls for sustainable learning to be realised in all spheres of learning. It is of great importance to note that for the full achievement of sustainable learning, there is need for some remarkable transformative pedagogy that includes the analytical and context-related skills to be developed in learners. To operationalise sustainable learning, approaches in teaching need to concentrate on fundamental issues that involve learning processes, instead of the gathering of knowledge. In so doing, schools will produce offspring who are able to improvise, adapt, innovate and create ideas when facing a challenging situation. The learners will also be critical thinkers, problem-solvers, team workers and or interdisciplinary thinkers.

### **3.5 Statutory imperative and obligations**

Children are protected by statutory laws nationally and across borders. The Department of the Social Development (2010, p. 12) has put in place an international legislation like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (2009). which was put in place to protect vulnerable children and dwells on their special care and family protection. Other important legislations in place include The African Charter on the Rights of the Child (ACRWC) (1999). The charter aims to improve children's lives because of its holistic implementation which takes cognisance of civil, political as well as socio-economic rights. Of great important is also The Bill of Rights of the constitution of South Africa (1996) which entitles the child the right to appropriate care, guard against any harm, provision of basic needs like food, shelter, healthcare, education, and love (Children's Act No 38 of 2005). Not left out is the SASA, Act 84 of 1996, Chapter 3, s 12.3, which noted, "All learners' educational needs must be served without unfair discrimination." The issue of discrimination is further raised in the inclusive schools' guideline (Guidelines for full-service and inclusive schools, 2010, p. 3).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 1996 (Act No 108 of 1996) asserts that children are the future leaders of the country and as such there is need for their rights to be observed as the first priority. Also, the Children's Act (Act No.38 of 2005 as amended) gave children the right to take a leading role in making decisions that directly affect them. Not to leave out is the Social Assistance Act (Act No. 13 of 2004) and the Guardianship Act (Act No. 192 of 1993),

which gives parents the authority to consent on behalf of the child in the event that the child needs to apply for a passport and study permit, which is seen as a challenge to immigrant learners.

Education White Paper 6 (2001) and the Guidelines for Inclusive Schools (2010) also encourages schools to register, care for and support learners with learning barriers. However, most schools are found to fall short of this, as the policies seem not to be meant for immigrant learners, taking into consideration their psychological and social challenges. This researcher believes that it is important that all children are treated the same as they are all regarded as future leaders of the country, regardless of their citizenship status. Based on the illustrations and the legislations in place, this present study sought to align itself to inclusive policy (2010, p. 45) which gives the roles and responsibilities of different players in supporting immigrant sustainable learning.

### **3.5.1 Immigrants and exclusion experiences in South Africa**

When one happens to reside in a foreign land, usually she/he may be excluded from most spaces and or areas of life experiences. Bangura (2001) and Harris (2002) note that African immigrants in South Africa experience a degree of exclusion when they are discriminated against, suffering at the hands of xenophobic attacks and stereotypes and prejudice. Similarly, in some countries, immigrant laws and policies leave immigrants at a disadvantage when they are denied some basic rights and life opportunities. CoRMSA (2008) have pointed out that immigrants' face discrimination and limitation in form of immigration documentation needed to get employment in their host country. In event of not having proper documentation, one is denied of a chance to be employed in South Africa.

In order to be enrolled in a public school, the authorities require a study permit from immigrant learners, which on its own cannot be obtained without having a South African identification book and, being registered from a recognised medical aid for a year. These discriminatory requirements may hamper or prevent fee exemptions and even matriculation, affecting the immigrants' socio-psychological freedom.

Harris (2002) has noted that negative attitudes extended towards immigrants and the prejudices they suffer, preventing them from freely participating in society. In South Africa, xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants are demonstrated by different modes that includes the national mass media, as well as verbal and physical attacks (Harris, 2001). In most cases, these vulnerable

individuals are given negative labels like criminals, poor, smelly, and are always connected to the unemployment of locals and illegality. Host citizens always treat immigrants as outcasts. Due to these hostile behaviours towards immigrants, they live in fear, some suffering depression (Crush, 2005).

African immigrants in South Africa are frequently the first suspected perpetrators of crime (Harris, 2001). Some immigrant families experience varying degrees of bias, rejection, and stereotypes from the locals. This kind of stereotyping contributes to the immigrant insecurity, which may undermine their goals. CoRMSA (2008) added that the kind of treatment they receive causes immigrant learners to also develop a negative personal identity.

### **3.5.2 Immigrant learners and inclusion in South African Education system**

Lazarus et al. (1999) purport that an inclusive school serves the development of an inclusive society, where every individual in the society functions properly and is given a chance to actualise their full potential, and where respect and value is shown for various ethnicities, and where social integration is encouraged, as well as valued. This therefore means that in such a school, issues of race, culture, and nationality ought not to be a topic for discussion that hinders accessibility of sustainable learning in South Africa. The National Commission on Special Education (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) supports the idea of inclusion and diversity in South African schools to be able to cater for diverse number of learners (Parker et al., 2001). Unfortunately, this is not the case for immigrant learners, who are faced with certain obstacles in accessing education in South Africa (CoRMSA, 2009).

Inclusive schools in South Africa serves to develop and maintain a society that is inclusive, one that will create an enabling social, psychological and cultural environment for all to function properly (Lazarus et al., 1999). Based on the above argument, immigrant learners are supposed to experience sustainable learning just the same way as the locals do. The most important aspect would be to link diversity principles to social integration, in an effort to promote unity among learners.

When immigrant learners are enrolled into the host school, they are likely to face significant challenges that include being discriminated, harassment, isolation, language barriers, cultural change, social changes, change in teaching and learning styles, school environment, as well as a

sense of belonging and identity (Meda, Sookrajh & Maharaj, 2012). Garcia and Marks (2012) also note the importance of examining experiences of racial and ethnic discrimination of immigrant learners both within and outside the school context as this also contributes to learners developing an awareness of how they are perceived by others, thereby affecting their social sensibilities, and participation in sustainable learning.

There has been a growing body of research that has been done on the lives of immigrant learners and their families in South Africa, which include that of Sookray, Gopal and Maharaj (2005), Osman (2009), Vandeyat (2012), Mahembe (2012), Meda (2013) Ngema (2014) and Mohamed (2015). Little study has however been conducted in the South African education context on sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in primary education. Most studies address the challenges they face in trying to fit into the society and their experiences in school. With that established, it is necessary to hear these immigrant learners' voices on their encounters in face of sustainable learning, and how they wish to be helped in maneuvering their way towards sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom.

### **3.6 Conceptualising sustainable learning**

According to Barron (2006), learning is an action that happens either within, between or across contexts. On the other hand, Muro and Jeffrey (2008) regard learning as the self-motivated communication between people and the environment that in turn results in meaning-making and self-formation. This learning is also an active and constructive process, where recipients learn new information, ideas, and/or skills. In this process, the learners are required to actively integrate new materials with what they already know in order to re-organise what they thought they knew. Vare and Scott (2007), in the same vein, have noted that learning is the educational outcome and that its product is change brought about by established facts which leads to individuals knowing their positions or establishing who they are. Usually in schools, learning takes place in a defined space, with a facilitator, here referred to as a teacher or educator.

Hlalele (2013, p. 565), on the other hand, outlined these elements as key in defining learning:

- learning is hardly direct or calculated, it is disordered or chaotic, organic, and frequently unprompted;

- learning happens in trustworthy, dependable interactions and unions which develop through diverse self-organising procedures;
- learning is exceptional to an individual and the situation, it cannot be simulated, because no two learning settings or affairs are the same;
- unlearning, self-learning, co-learning are all important and unified facets of learning; and
- learning grows from discussions between expressive enquiries and real-world or applied errors.

The speed of change has accelerated, where change has come to define social, physical and cultural spheres, due to globalisation. These changes do not only influence individual thinking, knowledge, trust, and the way individuals act, but also disturb the role of education. Taking the changes into account, it is now imperative for the education or learning to be on par with the changes, where there is a need for sustainability. It needs to be sustainable in order to meet and address the ever-changing circumstances of globalisation. In this regard, learning ought to focus on social learning, transformative learning, learning by doing, service learning, across boundary learning, and learning within and from nature. For this reason, sustainable learning is a learning process that is based on the standards and philosophies that inspire sustainability.

Taggart (2007, p. 11) have defined sustainable learning as the various life skills that learners need that empower them throughout their lives. These life skills are required in facing future life challenges and they are learnt through a formalised transfer of knowledge from the educator or the teacher to the learner (Tsoetsi, 2013, p. 43). However, it was noted that children do not only acquire this knowledge in a classroom situation in schools, but also acquire knowledge at home. In support of the above view, Mapasela, Hlalele and Alexander (2012, p. 90) observe sustainable learning to depend on collaboration between teachers, learners, parents, and stakeholders. Sustainable learning can be understood as making sure that individual development efforts gain lasting improvement in children's lives, and their care givers and the communities in which they live, without harming or compromising their well-being and that of others, either now or in the future (Salamo, 2011, p. 14).

Sustainable learning is achieved through human interaction, where adults or knowledgeable others assist learning at a greater level of understanding (Ministry of Education, 2014, p.19) and through cooperative inquiry, teachers involve other stakeholders in critical reflection, discussion of ideas,

theories, and methodologies of learning (Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 22). In order for sustainable learning to be continually realised, it calls for the empowering of communities with regard to positive livelihood, self-resilience skills, and the strengthening ability, in order to deliver services needed in learning. For this to happen, individuals ought to be able to accurately measure their life limitations. It is important that individuals themselves seek the need to change after finding their limitations so that they may not feel forced to transform which then may sound oppressive in a way.

Wals and Corcoran (2012, p.78) has this to say concerning sustainable learning:

We live in turbulent times; our world is changing at accelerating speed. Information is everywhere, but wisdom appears in short supply when trying to address key interrelated challenges of our time such as; runaway climate change, the depletion of natural resources, the ongoing homogenization [sic] of culture, and the rising inequity. Living in such times has implications for education and learning.

Sustainable learning is concerned with all stages and categories of learning, aiming to provide quality education, as well as nurturing sustainable human development. In other words, it encompasses “learning to know, learning to be, learning to live together, learning to do as well as learning to transform oneself and society” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 32). This type of learning involves value education and learning focused on poverty alleviation/reduction, sustainable livelihoods, climate change, gender equality, corporate social responsibility, and the protection of indigenous cultures. Lansonon (2006) advocates for sustainable learning as a new image of learning that has the aim of empowering learners of all ages in taking up responsibilities of generating and appreciating a sustainable future. In short, this researcher sees sustainable learning as a form of lifelong education where the learners acquire or are equipped with valuable survival lifelong skills useful in tackling any future challenges they may encounter. It refers to a circumstance whereby the immigrant learners would be equipped with the knowledge that would help them to define who they are, what they want to be, and how they will accept and tolerate living with those different from them, while at the same time transforming self and the others around by behaving and doing their day-to-day activities without compromising the needs of others.

Sustainable learning, according to Chilisa, Mafela and Preece (2003, p. 76) is associated with environmental sustainability and the sciences. On the other hand, Wals, Van der Hoeven and Blanken (2009, p. 7) determine sustainable learning to include progressions of modifications in society that encompass at least seeing connections, linking roles to one another, utilisation of diverse strategies, and generating collaboration that may offer sustenance in understanding a society that is more workable than the current one. In a way, sustainable learning ought to be based on networks, mutual dependency, flexibility, and resilience (Wals, Van der Hoeven & Blanken, 2009, p. 7).

Sustainable learning will help learners to think in advance, and be active participants in their own learning. This will help the learners to think ahead in solving anticipated future problems beforehand. Secondly, the learners would be equipped when they would be capacitated in seeing relationships and interdependencies. Sustainable learning also helps learners develop empathy and open-mindedness. This enables citizens to put themselves in the shoes of others, practicing *ubuntu*. When learners develop an open mind, they will in turn be able to apply a variety of innovative ideas in trying to cope with whatever situation they might face. Hlalele (2013, p. 566) has observed education to be the means by which humans learn about their cultural heritage and their values, and the means through which they transform all forms of knowledge from generation to generation.

Sustainable learning systems, according to Branden (2015), are geared towards the acquisition of crucial competences that suits the changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which they can deploy and further develop on a long-term sustainable basis. These competences include making individual lives work, as well as making life on the planet work. In this research study, by sustainable learning, immigrant learners need to develop some crucial competences, as well as sustain them. Sustainable learning equips learners to fully live their present and future lives, as well as securing the future of the planet. In short, sustainable learning involves trying to make sure that knowledge works instead of making learners mere accumulators of facts and figures in their heads. Learners are also expected to learn how to use knowledge in flexible ways in solving complex problems that may arise in different situations and contexts, rather than memorising facts and decontextualising knowledge.

Graham, Berman and Bellert (2015) describe sustainable learning as the learning that is meant for all learners, and which is supposed to last for a lifetime. To them, it is the way in which it is taught

that leaves a mark. They define sustainable learning as learning that caters for all, learning that is lifelong and teaching that matters (Graham, Berman & Bellert, 2015). Sustainable learning is a holistic learning that plays a major role in the development of immigrant learners in order for them to be able to participate or take a leading role in life both culturally, physically, psychologically as well as spiritually in the communities they reside (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, n.d.). In one way or the other, it is likely that individuals make use of the capabilities developed earlier as children or adolescents in living flourishing lives marked by positive emotions, positive relationships, engagement, meaning, and compliments (Seligman, 2011). Basing on the above statement, people alter, refine, or renew their capabilities throughout life to suit the contexts within which they live, work, relate and learn. So, sustainable learners are those who would be able to keep on learning and adapting to situations throughout their life. As a result, this kind of learning plays an important role for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom as they are faced with many life challenges that they need to overcome by virtue of being immigrants. Examples of the challenges include job opportunities, language barriers as well as financial difficulties.

### **3.6.1 Sustainable learning for all**

As has been mentioned earlier, sustainable learning is learning that encompasses all learners, in other words, meaning learning for all, here an attempt is made to explain what is meant by the statement. Recently, education or learning has been formalised, and teaching has come to be seen as a profession and the responsibility of the community in children's learning has shifted. This has seen the changes in the natural human interactions of teaching and learning embedded in individual families and their cultural and social worlds transforming into formal learning. These days, the teachers' role involves only those who have met the qualification and registration requirements in their teaching and the learning intervention is also done with considerable structure and confidence.

Schools are now composed of learners from diverse groups, who also show a large range of achievement in what used to be thought of as homogenous groups of learners of the same age or culture. Nowadays, with the inclusive education, learners with disabilities or who experience significant learning difficulties, language barriers, and different ethnic groups are seen to be

included in the same classroom. This variability in human development needs to be recognised and responded to by those who will be teaching. This difference rate in human development and learning states that it is not all the students in class who will be able to follow the expected patterns of learning at a stipulated rate, which in turn calls for inclusive education systems to be responsive to the needs of all learners. Having immigrant learners in this type of classroom, who are faced with many challenges like language barrier, family set up, way of living, change of friends and school, it is important to explore immigrant learners' experiences in face of sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, in order to make an intervention where possible.

Sustainable learning recognises learning not just as a fixed body of knowledge and skills, but as diverse interactive learning, where learners respond actively as well as authentically to teaching. Instead of responding in the same way in form of written examinations and/or listening and giving short answers or assignments following a given format, learners are now expected to give a range of responses that demonstrate their mastery. More emphasis in sustainable learning is granted to learners to be responsible or to manage their learning and behaviours in the classrooms. The duties of the teacher in sustainable learning and teaching, thus, according to Graham et al. (2015), has shifted from being a controller of responses, to being seekers of increased learners' responsibility for their own behaviours and learning. By closely examining the demands of sustainable learning, the interactive part of learning might pose as a challenge to the immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, due to the language barrier. This has caused this study to seek to determine whether there are any hindrances in immigrant sustainable learning, so as to try to find solutions as to how they may be overcome in an effort to create an enabling environment for sustainable learning for all in a multilingual classroom.

### **3.6.2 learning that lasts**

According to Graham et al. (2015), the skills and knowledge learners gain in schools seems to have changed somewhat from the fixed body of knowledge in the past centuries, due to the explosion of access to information. Also, learning focus is increasingly placed on processes that meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education viz. the capabilities of learning that can be used across the curriculum for a variety of learning tasks.

In sustainable learning, the main challenge is where the learners acquire or are equipped with valuable survival lifelong skills useful in tackling any future challenges they may encounter. the

provision of the foundation for learners to manage their lives in this present world, which is dynamic in nature. Graham et al. (2015) illustrated that students who are recently graduating and entering the working field are expected to be able to master and have knowledge of at least 30 jobs in their lifetime. This means that an individual needs to be able to adapt to as many new working circumstances and roles as possible in life. Therefore, sustainable learning will help in equipping the immigrant learners to receive or acquire learning that lasts, which is learning for life and learning for the future, in preparation for the unforeseeable future demands of society. As immigrant learners are not able to predict their future jobs and the country in which they may end up working, their careers and pastimes, it is also impossible for schools to provide opportunities to learn all future knowledge and skills, but to merely focus on the development of psychological processes that learners need in order to keep on learning and adapting to whatever the future holds for them (Graham et al., 2015).

Sustainable learning incorporates the use of the five of the ATRiUM capabilities, which according to Graham et al. (2015), are active learning, thinking, relating to others using language, symbol system and ICT and managing self. This all draws on the need to be able to adapt and be flexible individuals or learners in the ever-changing world.

### **3.6.3 Teaching that matters**

In sustainable learning, the teachers' job is to contribute to the development of the processes of human functioning for each learner for the learner to be successfully intelligent illustrated by his/her practical analytical abilities, creativity, and wisdom throughout his or her life (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2007). Teachers and learners also need to sustain each other's learning in the teaching and learning for sustainable learning processes. Twenty-first century learning needs to be lifelong, as well as life-wide, giving special focus to the individual learners' capabilities of engagement and interaction with the wider world at large, as well as responding to the new career demands, new technologies, cultural shifts, and rapid and unpredictable change. Thus, for immigrant learners, effort should be made to see to it that they adapt well in the different cultural settings and change of school environment, where the curriculum and the language of teaching and learning is totally different from what they know.

Their being included in the multilingual classroom will demand that each learners' needs be attended to, as well as that learning be carried out through effective teaching. Although most learners will achieve academically in an inclusive classroom irrespective of the teaching provided, the teacher's focus should always aim to activate learning that makes a difference for many learners, where skillful teaching plays a pivotal role to learners who experience any sort of difficulty. Here, a key issue to sustainable learning would be the interaction received. Learning, in other words, will not happen unless the teaching responds to the learners' specific learning needs.

Mavuso (2014) explores the teachers' role in making sure that all learners are included and taken care of in the teaching and learning process. The researcher revealed the need for teachers to be competent so as to be able to accommodate learners from diverse backgrounds with diverse learning needs as they are obliged to implement learning support processes that ensures the active participation of all learners. He further argues that, although many countries are in support of inclusive learning, teachers are not well equipped for it, as shown by their struggle in trying to provide the support for learners experiencing a learning difficulty. The study also revealed the need for teachers to identify specific difficulties learners come across and then develop intervention programmes to support them. Thus, in this present study, experiences of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom were explored, with learners highlighting their barriers to sustainable learning so that intervention may be sought.

### **3.7 Multilingual classroom and immigrant learner**

According to Cenoz and Gorter (2015) the multilingual classroom refers to the use and acknowledgement of more than one language in the teaching and learning process. They further argue that this multilingual phenomenon has become common, due to globalisation and international immigration. When a classroom is described as a multilingual one, this means it houses learners of different cultures, but in the end only one culture dominates, and all of the other learners are to adapt. Immigrant learners are to adapt to the culture of the school in order for them to experience sustainable learning in a positive way. Perez (2011) believes that this issue of multilingual in a way adds extra emotional instability, which in turn has a negative impact on immigrant learners' social wellbeing. Many challenges that immigrant learners experience and/or come across in their lives in the host country may differ, and in the event of them being culturally

distant from one another, the cultural norms proved difficult to be reconciled (Perez, 2011). On the other hand, when immigrant learners are embedded in the host country with different cultures, they build culture awareness that influences their self-perception in relation to the world (Tomlinson Clarke, 2015).

Meier (2014) believes that acknowledging a variety of languages in schools in a way may help in meeting linguistic needs, as well as recognising various languages that may lead to an understanding of cooperation. However, as immigrant learners come across challenges in studying in schools where they employ English as the language of learning and teaching, the language barrier and acculturation process worsen their academic, emotional, as well as social development, and also challenges and limits their access to indifferent school programmes (Gum and Patian, 2013).

A study by Makarov and Birman (2014) on immigrant learners' cultural transition and academic achievement proved that the under-performance of immigrant learners is rooted in the process of their acculturation, which is seen as stressful, and impacts negatively on their adjustment to the new environment. It is seen as a challenging process of being forced by circumstances to change all one's socialised beliefs to adapt to new environments. Immigrant learners in this study are more likely to face or have faced this stressful task and these changes in culture become central to their sustainable learning experiences. A study by Makarova and Birman (2014) revealed that insufficient support has been given to immigrant learners' cultural maintenance and propose that schools should not be found as a place for stereotypes and prejudice so as to socially integrate immigrant learners in conducive multilingual inclusive environments. If relevant support is given to each and every learner according to their different needs, multilingual classrooms would be safe and enjoyable places for immigrant learners to experience sustainable learning, whilst feeling at ease and enjoying a sense of belonging.

### **3.8 What is the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?**

Thomas (2018) has noted that globally, with the aid of consultations, publications and some reports, there are increasing moves towards the inclusion of environmental and sustainability

issues in tertiary curricula globally. In trying to implement and achieve sustainable learning, some scholars, who include Bowen and Fincher (2018), Hays (2018), UNESCO (2017). Thomas (2004); Sterling and Thomas (2006); De la Harpe and Thomas (2009) note that the road to sustainable learning is one where challenges can be expected. The intent of sustainable learning is to create and proliferate sustainable and dispositions to thrive in complicated, challenging and ever-changing circumstances, while contributing positively to making the world a better place (Hays, 2018). Some of these include that of significant curriculum change to accommodate sustainable learning. Immigrant sustainable learning includes the achievement of an integration of different values and beliefs, which, rather than bringing about agreement, would instead pave a way for dialogue, which to some extent is healthy for problem solving and or illustrating one's ideals.

In exploring the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, language difficulties are the main cause that inhibits immigrant learners from fully participating in the classroom thereby causing academic limit (McConville, 2019; UNESCO, 2017; Naambo, 2016; Lamb & Markussen, 2011). Even if they want to participate fully, there is no way they can do so that without understanding what is being said to them. Due to this language barrier, most of their efforts are blocked out. Karsten (2006) and Nusche (2009) all assert this as caused by learners whose first language is not the language of instruction in their school. When immigrant learners cannot speak or communicate well in the target language in the classroom, they are teased or laughed at by others, and this in turn causes them to withdraw from the situation, where their participation is cut short, resulting in them being mere spectators.

Others cannot communicate well or even understand instructions in the host language when teachers give them work to do. Breen (2001) is of the view that when these immigrants speak out, their main aim will not be of only exchanging information with the target language speakers, but instead, redefining themselves and how they relate to the social world. When the immigrant learners are accepted in their use of language, they find themselves participating fully in class rather than adopting an aloof, disengaged way of participating. Currently, according to Mohamed, (2015) immigrant learners exclude themselves from social groups at school due to the language

barrier. These learners who isolate themselves or who are isolated in class show poor academic performance when compared to those who felt a sense of belonging.

Ngema's (2014) findings indicate that immigrant voices need to be accessed in order to determine their needs for sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom. His research study revealed that as long as immigrants are given the opportunity for equal education, at present little is done to help them in overcoming language barriers, as they attempt to keep up with their peers whose home language is the same as the language of instruction.

### **3.8.1 Why is there a need for immigrant sustainable learning?**

The vision of Agenda 21 saw the pursuing of the work of the UNESCO Educating for a Sustainable Future Programme in the 1990s, and the declaration of the United Nations (UN) Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The existing universal movements indicate that people's behaviours impede their capacity "to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Bruntland, 1987, p. 8). Accordingly, calls have been made for institutes of learning to offer Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in order to lessen the interruption of people and the natural environment.

Due to the changes experienced globally, there is also a need for schools to accept and implement sustainable learning in all spheres of learning. It is of great importance to note that in trying to achieve sustainable learning, there is need for certain transformative changes that include the analytical and context-related skills to be developed in learners. To operationalise sustainable learning, approaches in teaching need to concentrate on fundamental issues that involve learning processes, instead of the gathering of knowledge. In so doing, schools will produce offspring who are able to improvise, adapt, innovate, and create ideas. The learners would be also be critical thinkers, problem-solvers, team workers and/or interdisciplinary thinkers.

The prevailing worldview indicate that people's behaviours impend people's capacity "to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Bruntland, 1987, p. 8). For this reason, calls have been made for institutions of learning to offer Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) so as to meet the future challenges.

Outlined are examples from the International and Australian contexts for calls on sustainable learning:

The United Nations Conference of 1992 held in Rio de Janeiro on Environment and Development issues adopted the Agenda 21 Chapter 36 of, “Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training”, includes institutions in education for sustainability (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2005)

The attention of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development wishes for all educators to embrace sustainable development issues and goals in their curricula (UNESCO, 2004).

Several declarations by the international education community, including the Talloires Declaration, bind themselves in building sustainability schedules into actions and curricula (currently 17 out of the available 420 signatories are from Australian institutions) (ULSF, 2010).

Some definite enterprises of government-bodies directs educational institutions to implement curricula and working methods to fund sustainable development (e.g. Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2009).

In Australia, the national government has strategies for sustainable development, such as the “Environmental Education for a Sustainable Future: National Action Plan”, which categorizes educational institutions’ part in sustainable learning (Environment Australia, 2000)

Again, in Australia, there are detailed enterprises by national organizations that includes the Australian Vice-Chancellor’s Committee, which inspires its associates to:

“build capacity in the community by educating the next generation of professionals and leaders to become fully aware of sustainability:

- for learners, reflect surrounding basics of sustainability at fitting levels in academic programs;
- for staff, consider implementing Professional Development programs on sustainability themes” (AVCC, 2006).

Figure 1. Examples of declarations of the need for education for sustainable development in educational institutions.

Despite the burden of alienation reasonably faced when migrating, immigrants maintain their high hopes for their children to receive sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. Dustmann and Glitz (2011) see education as human assets. Migrants see sustainable learning as a “route to many good career opportunities and that which equips them with life-long survival skills that lead to a comfortable life for their children” (Osman, 2009, p. 15). In view of this, most

immigrant parents have it clear that they are prepared to sacrifice for their children's sustainable education, such that that they may not live the life they themselves are leading. They believe that sustainable learning opens great opportunities for both businesses and employment for their children, both in and outside their countries. So, to them, sustainable learning is a vital tool in every child's life when tackling future life challenges that may require critical thinking and/or a hands-on approach. Due to the benefits of sustainable learning, there is a great need for it to be also accessed by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

### **3.8.2 What are the favourable conditions of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?**

Immigrant learners face many challenges in trying to adapt to the culture of the host country, let alone the school culture. The many changes that happens in the immigrant learner's life in a way affect his or her ability to experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom positively. In order for immigrant learners to positively realise sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, efforts should be made to create a conducive learning environment in face of the many changes in the immigrant learner's life.

One of the favourable conditions is the ability for effective communication in the classroom. Lamb and Markussen (2011) believe that a lack of meaningful communication facilitated by a common language inhibits immigrant learners from classroom participation, and hence, from academic success. In this case, Karsten (2006) proposes that all teachers, regardless of specialty, ought to maintain their standards by playing a role in language mastery of those affected learners.

Also, classrooms must create an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance as well as respect to one another and learners keeping in mind that learners come from diverse backgrounds. When learners accept and tolerate one another, they will not tease or laugh at immigrant learners in such event that they fail to express themselves in a target language in class that will result in the immigrant learners withdrawing or not participating in class. Giltrow and Edward (1992, p. 63) observed that Guatemalan immigrant learners responded by physically not involving themselves or absenting themselves from class activities when they feel they are not being accepted or tolerated in their failure to communicate in the target language.

Gibson (1997) and Zhou (1997) believe in the effectiveness of the ethnic support systems. Gibson (1997) described the usefulness of ethnic support systems as helping immigrant learners to participate well in school, and defining such social support networks as the benefits that develop to individual members of a group by merely ascribing to the group. Immigrant learners' previous research shows a correlation between immigrant academic achievements to their strength of their ethnic self-identification (Gibson, 1997). Gibson further noted that immigrant learners who are embedded in their ethnic cultures proved to perform better in school than their peers, who abandon their ethnic culture as well as their language pressurised by teachers and or citizen peers in school. In a study carried out amongst Mexican immigrant learners, it was noted that the negative attitude teachers' display on the use of Spanish at the English-medium school impacted how Mexican learners felt towards learning. Matute-Bianchi (1986) in her research with Mexican American and Japanese American learners found that success in school was linked to a strong Mexican identity on the part of the Mexican immigrant learners in America. Also, Bankston and Zhou (1995,) in their study involving Vietnamese immigrant learners, confirmed that ability in one's mother language or home language is strongly linked with educational success.

Another condition not to be omitted in enhancing sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom is the parental support. Hao and Bonstead-Bruns (1998) observe that the parents' high educational expectations for their children translate into children's greater educational achievement. They further argue that parents can foster positive relationships with their immigrant learners that in turn reinforce school learning whilst at home and provide opportunities, encouragement, and emotional support for children's education. In the event of having this kind of relationship, parents and learners' expectations in school increase as they collaboratively work together thereby supporting sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

### **3.8.3 Hindrances of sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom**

A study by Mohamed (2015) on the scholastic experiences of immigrant learners at one secondary school in South Africa concluded that a hindrance for sustainable learning is the lack of schools in addressing immigrant linguistic and cultural background, which leads to immigrant learners to feel alienated, instead of feeling a sense of belonging. In concluding the study, Mohamed (2015, p.84) noted, "Black immigrant learners have distinctive stories to tell regarding the way in which their

host country affects their life experiences. Yet so far these stories have not been heard and have not had any significant impact on policies, curricular and instructional strategies.” Therefore, unless these said stories are taken seriously, immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom will continue to face hindrances in sustainable learning.

Language also pose as a barrier to immigrant sustainable learning. When immigrant learners arrive in their destination countries, they are exposed to the use of nearly eleven official South African languages (Sookrajh et al. 2005, p. 6). Additionally, in the classroom environment, the language barrier poses as a hindrance, as most immigrant learners arrive not well versed in the language of instruction, which is English in most schools, or isiZulu, and this as a result affects their performance. Similarly, the findings of Karsten (2006) and Nusche (2009) make it clear that immigrant learners’ bilingual abilities proves a hindrance in the classroom, despite their teachers’ effort in helping them where possible, irrespective of the different levels of English mastery they show.

Yeh, Okubo, Ma, Shea, Ou and Pituc (2008) see communication as an important tool used by immigrants in adjusting to a new environment and society. This communication is seen to be enhanced through common language, as language is regarded as an important weapon in interacting in the school space, both inside and out of the classroom (Gupta, 2009). In immigrant sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom, if one has a language limitation, this may hinder the smooth acquisition of sustainable learning.

Again, in order to achieve effective sustainable learning for immigrant learners, there is need for the learners to feel a sense of belonging to the school. Lack of the sense of belonging proves to hinder this vision in a way. Learners develop relationships with one another in a significant way that tend to have a large impact on sustainable learning, motivates behaviour, and influences performance in a school setting (Bygren & Szulkin, 2010). Osterman (2000) alludes to the fact that when one isolates oneself from others and does not have a sense of belonging to the group, it leads to a negative academic achievement. It is most likely that some of the immigrant learners’ participants may have these attributes that may pose as a hindrance to immigrant sustainable learning and may lead them to lose focus and commitment in whatever is carried out in school.

The immigrant learners who manage to have a sense of belonging in the host multilingual classroom see themselves being accepted more by the local learners and as a result are less

discriminated against at school (Asanova, 2005). By lacking a sense of belonging, immigrants are seen to be exposed to prejudice, xenophobia, isolation or exclusion in most schooling activities. Mohamed's (2015) study revealed that immigrant learners' development of a sense of belonging is a strength that enables the integration of the learners into society, as a result allowing them to focus on or exhibiting greater levels of schooling achievement. In the end, when immigrant learners are not discriminated against, they show limitless positive sustainable learning achievements.

A lack of a sense of belonging hinders immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom from positively experiencing sustainable learning. Billman, Geddes and Hedges (2005) argue that if one has a sense of belonging, s/he would be encouraged to survive in a new environment and stay focused to show full commitment and achievement of their school potential. This sense of belonging also shows the degree of attachment one has to the school and the learning process, in this case, sustainable learning. This may be the case as learning entails children's exposed experiences in the academic as well as non-academic fields (Wenger, 1998). There are many ways an immigrant learner may experience attachment and belonging to a school. When immigrant learners are accepted by social groups, as well as making friends and having knowledge of the dominant culture, such as the language commonly used by group members, they regard themselves as part and parcel of all the activities in the given space, as they feel a sense of belonging. Vidali and Adams (2007, p. 124) note with regards to common language that "young adults cannot confront difficulties in acclimatizing [sic] to school if they do not own the knowledge of language, others' cultures and communication codes" that may be needed to survive within the school environment. Consequently, in this study, immigrant learners' inability in the common language which is either English or isiZulu, pose as a hindrance to sustainable learning.

In most cases, immigrant learners come into the school sharing a different ethnic culture from that of the host country schools. Most immigrant learners see the behaviours of South African learners towards their teachers and schoolwork as unacceptable, differing from what they used to do in their former countries. For effective immigrant sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual school, immigrant learners need to effectively adjust to the cultural norms of the host school by understanding or integrating to the host society culture (Berry et al., 2006). Failure to adjust to the ethnic culture will pose as a hindrance to immigrant sustainable learning. In support of this, Gibson

and Carrasco (2009, p. 254) note that “Although official school discourses appear to embrace cultural and linguistic diversity, foreign-born and native-born children of immigrants often end up feeling silenced and alienated.”

In the same regard, Mohamed’s (2015) study approved of the above statement when it revealed that immigrant learners who felt isolated gave the reason for this as the school and the educators’ ability to welcome and accept cultural diversity. It also shown that South African learners’ prejudice towards immigrant learners is learnt from their parents and their community, leading them to bullying, harassment, and discrimination against immigrant learners, which comes as a hindrance to sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

As has been noted earlier, children have the right to participate in issues that concern them by providing solutions to their problems, and this research seeks to understand and present how immigrant learners report to cope with the barriers they face in the multilingual South African classroom.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

It is clear that the ongoing globalisation and changes in population growth also requires the change in educational processes to move in line with the global changes. This has brought about the call for sustainable learning that equips learners with the requisite skills needed in tackling future challenges, without compromising their well-being or their fellow others. In as much as all learners need to be exposed to sustainable learning, effort should be made to ensure that immigrant learners are not left out hence the need to explore the sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom. Thus, it is the duty of schools to ensure that they provide an enabling environment and that the community and parents to provide a support base so that the immigrants realise their sustainable learning.

Immigrant learners themselves need to stand up in order to overcome all negativity brought about by being an immigrant. This calls for introspection, transformation, as well as empowering of oneself in order to maintain a positive attitude towards sustainable learning. On the road towards sustainable learning, teachers and responsible authorities in education ought to accept and tolerate

cultural diversity in schools, and not to accord a certain group of learners' powers over the other, thereby tolerating discriminatory tendencies among learners.

The purpose of the present study was to explore immigrant learners' experiences in sustainable learning at primary school level whilst in a multilingual classroom, with the goal to empower immigrant learners so that they find ways to maneuver beyond their challenges in a foreign land. The study seeks to determine how families, school, their fellow learners as well as communities operate according to their experiences in immigrant sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. There is limited local literature on the topic of immigrant sustainable learning particularly in primary school level. It is the aim of this present study to contribute towards the existing body of literature and also to encourage further studies related to the phenomenon under study.

The next chapter provides outline of the research design and data generation methods that guided the analysis of data. It will further discuss the choice of qualitative methods in research and the need for a participatory action research. The chapter will conclude by reviewing limitations and ethical issues that were put into consideration before data generation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY FOR DATA GENERATION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The chapter seeks to present details of research methods used and steps undertaken in generating the data needed for this study. The study was embedded in the transformative research methodology as it adopted the CER lenses, as well as Participatory Action Research (PAR) strategy. The study was embedded in the transformative research methodology as it took the CER lenses as well as Participatory Action Research (PAR) strategy. By closely analysing CER and the transformative research methodologies, I discovered that there is a common aspect of understanding unequal power relations brought about by different nationalities and backgrounds, who are denied some kind of power and face dehumanisation comments as experienced by immigrant learners in the multilingual classroom. Researchers aligned to CER lenses validate, recognise and attempt to understand these power relations then work towards neutralising them. This chapter seeks to present details of research methods used and steps undertaken in generating the data needed for this study. Discussed in the chapter is also the research site. The chapter also describes the choice of participants included in the study and why they were involved in the study. Attention was also given to the methods of data analysis and ethical issues preserved. The chapter is ended by emphasising the need for individuals to stand up for themselves and participate in issues that affect them in responding to research questions that sought to determine how sustainable learning is experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom and how they intend to be helped in getting past these hindrances. Firstly, the research questions are to be highlighted so as to give a picture of the purpose of the research and link them to the chosen suitable research methods.

### **4.1.1 Research Question**

The focus of the present study was to explore sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom and to establish the meanings that are hindering in such encounters. The critical question is posed as follows: how do immigrant learners experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom? The question sought to determine how the immigrant learners who are enrolled in former Model C South African schools, which are both black and white dominated spaces, experience sustainable learning. Sustainable learning encompasses a wide range of aspects including economic, physical, environmental, social, and cultural experiences in education. Apart from the critical question, the research also explored the following sub-questions:

- Why is there a need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom?
- What are the favorable conditions for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?
- What are the hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?
- How can immigrant learners overcome hindrances for sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom?

This chapter discusses the research methodology of the study. The approach of research, paradigm, sample selection and sampling procedures as well as research instruments are described fully. Additionally, data generation and analysis methods receive discussion. Lastly, the chapter addresses the limitations in the methodology and ethical issues.

### **4.2 Research approach**

In this research study, the issue under study are immigrant sustainable learning. This research study was aimed at achieving a comprehensive understanding of the immigrant learners' sustainable learning experiences and identifying any hindrances in achieving it to create a conducive sustainable learning environment for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom. Due to the phenomenon's confusing and complex nature, the researcher found it suitable to understand

it comprehensively, employing a qualitative Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The approach has been preferred because this researcher wanted to generate an in-depth understanding of the immigrant learners' problems or challenges, which they outlined as sustainable learning experiences in a multilingual classroom, where Mertens (2010) describes it as something designed to give an in-depth analysis of a specific described group challenge or problem of study or setting. Additionally, in this research study, I was interested in discovering in detail the meanings that immigrant learners and other participants attach to their behaviours in line with immigrant sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom, how they interpret situations, and what their perspectives are on sustainable learning issues. Tavallaei and Talib (2010) support the idea when they argue that it is through qualitative PAR research that exploring complex issues in detail with the aim of empowering oneself is enabled.

Qualitative methods were appropriate in this research, which focuses on vulnerable learners, as it allowed the participants to reveal their feelings and experiences in their own words. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2005, p. 74) hold that "the researcher attempts to gain a first hand, holistic understanding of phenomena of interest by means of flexible strategies." In this research study, I wanted to gain undiluted experiences of sustainable learning from those directly involved who are the immigrant learners as well as the teachers. MacDonald (2012) argues that when a researcher employs qualitative research, the main aim is to find deeper truth while studying things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning that people bring to them, which is relevant to determining how sustainable learning was being experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom in a school environment which is an unmanipulated setting. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 270) concur with MacDonald where they maintain that qualitative researchers always attempt to study human action from the insider perspectives. In so doing, qualitative features of one's feelings, views and patterns are revealed without manipulation or control from the researcher (MacDonald, 2012).

In this research study, learners were enabled to provide detailed encounters of their sustainable learning experiences and engage in meaningful discussions when using qualitative approach. This was of great importance because it allowed the researcher to generate data by interacting closely with research participants. The rationale for choosing qualitative methods was its ability to give the researcher free interaction space with participants to gain an insight about the nature of

immigrant sustainable learning. This study serves not only to make an original and meaningful contribution to the scientific research work but also to probe issues of immigrant stigmatisation and segregation, teacher preparedness in sustainable learning, and learner performance and experiences more deeply and in the end find suitable ways of creating a conducive sustainable learning environment for immigrants learners who are in a multilingual classroom.

Being concerned with how immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom construct meaning of sustainable learning and establish and overcome the hindering aspects towards sustainable learning, the study adopted a transformative paradigm, which proved most suitable due to its emphasis on empowering human beings to surpass the limitations placed on them by race and or class (Creswell & Poth, 2018), making their voices heard, and having a say in what they want in their sustainable learning. This is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.3 Research paradigm**

The researchers, working within transformative paradigm seeks to understand, explain and unveil the phenomenon under study through empowering participants and level the power issues for the marginalised groups from the insider perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007). Babbie (2007, p. 32) defines a research paradigm as “a model or framework for observation and understanding, which outlines what we see and how we understand it.” Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 22) in support of Babbie’s definition see a paradigm as an illustrative (to those that share the same view) of a certain worldview that clarifies what is bearable to research, and how this ought to be done. Schwandt (2001) in the same view sees the paradigm as a cooperative worldview that characterises the views and standards of a discipline and it leads to the way problems are resolved. Asghar (2013) clarifies a worldview as the standpoint or school of thought or collective views that enlighten the meaning or explanation of a research data. When a researcher chose to operate in a certain paradigm, then, the selection of research questions, line of observations and or explorations, data generation methods as well as the interpretation of the findings ought to be aligned to that paradigm of choice. In other words, the researcher researches the world according to the way s/he sees it.

This research study employed the transformative or emancipatory paradigm. A transformative paradigm involves a household of research designs that are influenced by several philosophies and theories which have a shared theme of emancipatory and aiming to transform societies through group action (Mertens, 2009). In this research study, the paradigm assists in clarifying the marginalisation of knowledge formed in other cultures in this case immigrant learners.

**4.3.1 Epistemology** As a transformative researcher, I maintain that knowledge is true only if it can be turned into practice that empowers and transforms the lives of the people. Researchers who subscribe to this paradigm believe that theory acts as a basic device to assist the researcher discover new truths. These truths are constructed into theory that is constantly enhanced by linking it to practice (Neumann, 1998). For this reason, transformative paradigm researchers proclaim that true knowledge lies in the shared meaning making by the people, which can improve group action that leads to progress in the lives of those to whom they may be devoting their aid. In this context, the participants' frame of reference is used to construct knowledge. The researcher and the researched relationship involve a transformation and emancipation of both participant and researcher and not on power hierarchy, as is in the interpretative paradigm.

#### **4.3.2 Axiology**

Transformative paradigm researchers regard research as a moral and political activity that involves them selecting and binding themselves to a worthwhile situation (Chilisa,2011). Researchers accomplish neutrality by reflecting and investigating their values so as to guarantee that they are suitable for carrying out the research study. In this paradigm, not all views are considered automatically valid.

#### **4.3.3 Methodology**

The purpose of research in the transformative paradigm is to eradicate myth and illusion and false knowledge, and to empower people to act in transforming society. In this paradigm both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used in the research process. Data generation

techniques and sampling procedures suitable in both quantitative and qualitative studies are employed. In this paradigm, those involved in the identification of the problem, defining the problem, collecting and analysing the data, disseminating the findings as well as using the findings to inform practice include the participants. By contextualising the research study through a comprehensive illustration of the research position and participants, it was foreseen that a complete depiction of the study would be obtainable.

#### **4.4 Research Design**

Yin (2011, p. 75) sees research designs as sound blueprints used by researchers to reinforce the validity of their studies and to ensure that the data they collect is in line with their topic of study. In support of Yin, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) regard research design as a proposed plan of inquiry used to acquire evidence in answering the set research questions. In the same view, Johnson and Christensen (2017) note that a research design presents a plan or strategy used by the researcher in investigating the research study questions. Yin (2003, p. 19) notes in this regard that “Every empirical study has a research design and a research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study.” Taking into consideration the above views, this research study adopted a qualitative participatory action research design (PAR).

#### **4.4.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)**

As noted, the researcher employed participatory action research (PAR). According to Watters, Comeau and Restall (2010, p. 5) PAR is a type of research that combines two different approaches which are participatory research and action research. Babbie and Mouton (2004, p. 314) concur with them when they argue that it is one of the mostly widely used research approaches that are characterised by a participatory element. In the same view, Babbie (2007, p. 301) goes on to regard this as an approach to social research in which the people being studied are given control over the purpose and procedures of the research. This is done in order to counter the implicit view of regarding researchers as superior to those they study. This type of research calls for equal involvement from researchers and participants in the research process. PAR is unique because participants are regarded as experts due to their lived experiences related to the research topic, ensuring that relevant issues are being studied (Comeau & Restall, 2010). In this research study, therefore, immigrant learners, teachers and parents took a leading role in all the discussions and contributions as they are the experts due to their experiences with immigrant sustainable learning.

Another point to note in PAR is regarding its incorporation of local knowledge into the research. This kind of research values and respects participants' contributions. This is supported by Babbie and Mouton (2004) who highlighted that the participants' contributions are even honoured, celebrated and praised. In so doing, the team spirit of celebrating together would be enhanced and the aspect of togetherness in *ubuntu* brought in to practice. When one's ideas are valued and celebrated in a group, the individual member will develop a sense of belonging, a feeling of togetherness, the need to work together will be encouraged, and co-researchers become motivated to continue to contribute positively, thus empowering.

In PAR, people first identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts are, and if not satisfied, try again (O'Brien 1998 in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). According to Neuman (2000), the design addresses real live problems which occur at the workplace on a day-to-day basis. The aim of the design is to capture and understand the factors within the workplace

with the view of improving upon present practice or performance hence the term action research is very common in the educational field.

In employing PAR in this research study, the team was established, and invitation or consent letters sent to them, which outlined the requirements of the study and what was expected. The participants were then invited to the first meeting meant for issue clarifications. In this meeting, all the participants participated, and the team agreed to meet twice a month to reveal the progress of the research.

In using PAR in this research study, the first stage involved the identification of the issue of concern by the research team. This involved selecting the challenges or problems immigrant learners have in sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. After identifying the problem, the group highlighted why they regarded it as a problem or challenge and how they felt about that challenge. The group further made some notes on how and why the problem existed. The immigrants also revealed the possible consequences of the problem if not addressed and as a result discussed what they felt should be taken in order to understand the problem better so as to address the problem or challenge. The group also identified the resources at hand they may use in understanding the challenges better and other sources they might get information concerning the issue. The issue was chosen by the immigrant learners and their parents, who were the main subjects of the study in relation to immigrant sustainable learning. These individuals have expertise and have lived experience with the phenomenon under study. After choosing the issue to explore, the critical question was formulated as follows: how do immigrant learners experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom?

In the second stage, also known as Phase Two or the investigation phase, the participants explored deeper into the problem or challenge at hand. In this phase, data was collected on immigrant sustainable learning paying special attention to formulating relevant research questions that addressed the phenomenon or problem at hand that helped in establishing what needed to be known, why it was like that, and how the relevant data would be available paying special attention to the methods in order to find more on the phenomenon.

The discussion on how the required data was going to be generated was discussed and finalised. The research employed semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. FGDs and interviews were used to inspire discussion since the study was guided by equal

participation in PAR. For this reason, every participant was accorded equal opportunity to pose a question for discussion and all discussions were recorded. The team concluded that interviews would be carried out with learners, teachers in the beginning and then focus group discussions would follow to validate the findings obtained in interviews.

The skills needed were also outlined in this stage, thus, the inclusion of the research team that comprised the school principal, teachers, local learners, immigrant learners, immigrant parents, the school counselor and the researcher. My main role was to share my expertise in research methods, develop data systems, and conduct data collection analysis. The way forward on new steps or dimension to take was also discussed in this phase, based on the data gathered in this stage. In this stage again, the team laid down conflict resolution strategies in the event of conflicts as the group was made up of varied individuals who shared different opinions and ideas; so planning and being prepared to deal with issues that might have arisen was essential to allowing the research to move smoothly forward (Morris, 2002). The presentation of results was the next stage as fully explained in the next chapter. In this stage, findings analysed and interpreted were summarised and presented in a report format, which was distributed to concerned target groups.

Acting on the findings is considered the key element of PAR, where the researcher's conclusions are taken and used to take steps towards changing the existing situation. At this stage, a decision as to how and what action to take proves crucial. For example, the decision regarding the methods to take as an avenue to communicate research needs to be decided. In this research study, research results were communicated to the participants through written reports and through parents' meetings and or awards giving days where our target audience would be present.

The final stage of embarking on evaluating the research project is best called the reflection stage, where participants reflected on the whole process of the research. This was done to determine whether the research was a success or not at the same time identifying areas that were not successful. PAR is a cyclical and dynamic process, where each stage impacts the subsequent stages and each stage can be revisited so the need to constantly evaluating the process to ensure achievement of the set goals (Keilhofner, 2006).

As PAR is suitable for working with underprivileged groups (Babbie & Mouton, 2004), I found it necessary because in the sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, the immigrant learners are seen as lacking power in society, as their existence in South

Africa is seen as illegitimate by most local power structures (Meda 2013, p. 8). Another reason for using PAR in this study was due to the immigrant learners' cultural vulnerability. Babbie and Mouton (2004, p. 314) allude that a group of a community in society can be considered highly appropriate for a PAR project due to their "cultural vulnerability", which in other words means that the immigrants are vulnerable because they do not form part of the dominant culture in the region of KwaZulu-Natal. Lastly, the design was suitable for the study because we would be trying to find ways of supporting them in moving past their hindrances in sustainable learning to acquire valuable life skills that will see them change their fate.

The advantages of PAR are that firstly, qualitative features of an individual's feelings, views and patterns are revealed without control or manipulation to improve on ways immigrant learners are being taught in schools by recommending ways of overcoming hinderances for sustainable learning whilst they are in a multilingual classroom. This improves their learning from the present practice; thus putting into practice PAR's main goal of improving and bringing social change to communities; hence, people learn best and participate more when they are fully involved in working as a team. The participant is active in making informed decisions throughout all aspects of the research process for the primary purpose of imparting social change, a specific action which is the main goal.

PAR proved suitable for the research study, because it enabled the researcher to steer its objectives. Due to the researcher's concern with immigrant sustainable learning in an effort to empower and transform lives, social interaction, communication and determining ways of combating immigrants sustainable learning hindrances were suitably conducted through PAR. PAR helped every research participant to take part and to learn the real situation of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. PAR is suitable here because of its focus on turning the people involved into researchers. PAR was also suitable as it believes in the principle of participation, reflection, empowerment and emancipation of people who are interested in improving their social situations (Comeau & Restall, 2010) in line with the principles of the CER theoretical framework employed. The participants in this research study took on the role of co-researchers and shared equal powers with the researcher about the data generation process.

#### **4.5 Profiling the School**

One school in KwaZulu-Natal in Pinetown District was the case study the researcher chose to explore. The school is in the Inchanga Circuit. The school caters for areas like Hammersdale, Inchanga, Cato Ridge, Camperdown and No. 9. Its classes range from Grade One up to Grade Seven, with an enrolment of 1 119 learners. The school is a former Model C school and hence enrolls a mixture of races. Among the learners are Blacks, Whites, Indians and some foreigners from Africa and beyond. It is of importance to note the composition of teachers at the school. The teachers comprise twenty-two black African local teachers among them are isiZulu, Setswana and isiXhosa-speaking teachers. There are also six white teachers who speak English, and three of them speak Afrikaans. There are also six Indians, with only one coloured and one immigrant teacher From Zimbabwe. This composition of learners and teachers from a diverse cultural and language background makes the school a multilingual one.

The school has immigrant learners enrolled. It accepts immigrant learners with legal documents, but does not exclude others. Also, its fees are manageable for the immigrants, as some of the Former Model C schools fees are too high. Immigrants prefer the school, because of its use of English as the language of instruction (LoI). Immigrant learners at this school come from different continents, but this research study was mainly concerned with African immigrant learners. African immigrant learners at this school are from Zimbabwe, Congo, Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Somalia.

#### **4.6 Recruitment strategy**

The study explores immigrant learners' experiences of sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom and to do this, the researcher had to interact with and generate data from those directly linked to the phenomenon and the subjects, viz. immigrant learners, immigrant parents, local learners, and the school principal. The school counsellor was involved as the research study was dealing with vulnerable children to offer counselling services if needed.

#### **4.6.1 Purposive sampling**

Purposive sampling involves choosing people who will participate in the study based on the researcher's discretion on a particular purpose (Leedy & Ormond, 2010, p. 212). In purposive sampling, researchers use their judgement to select a sample that they believe will provide the necessary data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007). In this research study, the researcher used homogenous purposive sampling to identify the seven immigrant learners between the ages of seven to thirteen years of age, who had at least the first grade, or had some prior learning in their home countries. Additionally, eligibility for learner participants was determined by age, country of origin, language and length of stay in South Africa. The immigrant learners were from African countries, which are Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, DRC and Ghana.

The immigrant parents were recruited based on the responses given by their children in the individual interviews. So, in the event of the researcher wanting some further clarification on areas the child was not able to answer, the parents were involved. In this research study, three immigrant parents took part in the individual interviews.

In the recruitment strategy, the researcher took into consideration the research criteria of Babbie and Mouton (2006), which entails thorough enculturation, current involvement, and adequate timing for the individual interviews and FGDs. In this regard, thorough enculturation allowed for existing and very newly enrolled or very recently joined immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom to be interviewed on their experiences, exposure and/or engagement in sustainable learning processes. In current involvement, immigrant and local learners who are currently enrolled or who were very recent learners at the selected school in question were recruited. Lastly, adequate time was given to participants.

#### **4.6.2 The sample size**

The sample size comprised of seven immigrant learners of mixed gender, four local learners also of mixed gender, one female immigrant teacher, two language teachers of English which is the language of instruction at that school and isiZulu, which is the first additional language at the school, one science teacher, one school counsellor, and one school principal, who provided rich

information to have a feel of the immigrant learner's experiences on sustainable learning thereby understanding the phenomenon from the insider perspective.

In this research study, I chose the sample that possessed the attributes I wanted to explore, like the immigrant learners who were in a multilingual classroom, immigrant teacher who has prior experience of teaching from different nationalities, language and science teachers who execute the teaching of sustainability education, and makes sure the environment is conducive for immigrant sustainable learning. The school principal was involved as he is the one who manages the school activities and the enrolling of immigrant learners. The school counsellor was involved to manage those learners who might be traumatised due to the proceedings of the research as the research involved a vulnerable group of learners. The immigrant parents helped as they deal with the immigrants' stresses and changes at home. Three parents participated in the study. The parents were recruited by sending request letters to them for guidance of immigrant learners already in the study to further explain some issues, basing this on their children's responses in individual interviews. All the information was first clarified, and they consented to participating by signing in a consent letter that explained the details of the research and what is expected of them.

Immigrant learners were chosen because they were the subjects that were required for their experiences in sustainable learning. So, there was a need to understand them as immigrants and their sustainable learning experiences. Only ten immigrant learners were chosen to have an intense case study of their sustainable learning experiences. The use of the small number in a case study enabled the researcher to do that effectively as it was easy to interact with them in interviews and focus group discussions effectively.

#### **4.7 Data generation methods**

Johnson and Christensen (2017, p. 224) defined method of data generation as "technique for physically obtaining data to be analysed in a research study." In unveiling the experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom of sustainable learning, the data was generated through individual controlled interviews, document analysis and focus group discussions through PAR.

### **4.7.1 Interviews**

Interviews are described by Demarrias as a data-gathering process that involves a researcher and participant engaging in a conversation directed on answering questions related to the research study. Johnson and Christensen (2017, p. 231) added that the interview is a data collection method that involves an interviewer asking an interviewee some questions in line with the research questions. In this research study, the researcher used the semi-structured individual interview which is seen as a face-to-face interview. This method was chosen because the researcher wanted to obtain verbatim evidence on the immigrant learners' experiences of sustainable learning whilst in a South African multilingual classroom.

The purpose of interviewing was to try to determine from the interviewees those attributes that a researcher could not observe (Patton, 2002). These attributes included thoughts, intentions, and/or feelings that were difficult to observe, so the researcher had to ask people who were seen to have those attributes. By involving interviews in this research study, my main purpose was to get into the participants' perspective of immigrant sustainable learning. The researcher utilised an interview guide in the process. The interview guide included a mixture of less and more structured questions which were flexible for obtaining specific data from the interviewed participants. The duration was between one and one-and-a-half hours, depending on the deliberations for adult participants, and 30 minutes to one hour on learners considering their short listening span. I carried out the process after hours, when both learners and teachers were free, so as not to interfere with the school programmes.

### **4.7.2 Document analysis**

The researcher also employed document analysis method as a secondary method to validate the findings in the interviews. This enabled me to have both verbal and non-verbal data on the experiences of immigrant sustainable learning.

Document analysis refers to secondary data review that compliments other data generation methods with a focus on all types of written information that may describe or explain a phenomenon of study (Maree, 2007). By using document analysis in data generation, this researcher made use of written recordings of events (Naidoo, 2012). Haricock, Ockleford and Windridge (2009) assert that document analysis refers to reviewing written materials to produce qualitative data. In this study, results analysis of immigrant learners, their reports, notices, diaries, school language policy documents codes of conduct and photographs were analysed; the syllabus was also analysed so as to determine the nature of sustainable learning.

#### **4.7.3 Focus group discussions**

Focus group discussions, as seen by MacDonald (2012), are a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between the research participants in generating data. Mertens (2010) concurs with him when he argues that FGDs are group interviews that rely not only on a question-and-answer format interview, but on interaction within the group. FGDs are conducted in a way that a researcher asks questions and elicit responses through discussions (Creswell, 2008). The interaction between participants is designed to give more of the participants' point of view as opposed to more researcher-dominated interviewing.

This study used the FGDs in data generation enabled dialogue within participants, which Babbie and Mouton (2004) claim is key to data generation. Through engaging in dialogue, immigrant learners were helped in the development of knowledge when they learn from their own reality and by learning to critically analyse their own situations and problems. In this research study, FGDs proved suitable because they allowed participants to engage in a wide debate of a subject, in this case sustainable learning for immigrant learners learning in a multilingual classroom, thereby helping the researcher to obtain collective and rich information on immigrant learners' experiences and level of meaning. In this study, all the discussions were recorded, and a conducive discussion environment was used for the learners to feel relaxed and as a result speak their minds out freely. To maximise confidentiality, learner interviews were conducted with learners only, in the absence of teachers or any other member of the school community.

Another reason for employing FGDs in this study was my intention of clarifying and re-evaluating the responses obtained from individual interviews and analysis of documents, which needed elaboration. In the discussions, I used the same immigrant learners who had previously been interviewed individually in order to further explore their sustainable learning experiences.

Johnson and Christensen (2017, p. 238) argue that using a homogeneous group in FGDs promotes discussion. The two FGDs were made of eight participants immigrant learners, and another group composed of five local learners. The immigrant learner group had eight participants because two participants chose to withdraw from the study. These groups were separated to avoid mutual scrutiny, and when a group is composed of people with the same characteristics, participants participate freely without fear of prejudice. The FGDs enabled the researcher to generate rich data because of its involvement of participants in real life, natural setting. Creswell and Poth (2018) made it clear that FGDs are well known for their in-depth and well thought out discussions to generate views, experiences, and feelings of participants on the discussed topic without any judgements.

#### **4.8 Procedures**

The preliminary technical steps included the application for permission from KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (DoE) as I chose to conduct research at the chosen primary school in their area. In doing so, the researcher applied for an intend to conduct research and was submitted to KZN DoE. Attached together with the application was the research proposal, research instruments, introductory letter, and drafts of consent letters of participants. This gatekeeper's letter was granted (Ref: 2/4/8/1471), as contained in Appendix A. After receiving gatekeeper permission, the field work resumed, and firstly, the researcher consulted with the principal who allowed her to gain access to the school, which was also granted. Appointments were made to meet with the parents of chosen learner participants for obtaining informed consent. To gain this, letters of consent were given to parents with all the information on the requirements of the study and what they were expected of as evidenced in Appendix B. Immigrant learners' parents who consented in taking part in the study also signed the consent forms (see Appendix C). Before embarking on the generation of data, ethical clearance was sought from the Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Protocol Reference number HSS/0408/018D). As soon as full approval was

granted, the researcher made arrangements for conducting the interviews and FGDs with the participants. The required records were also made available by the school principal.

The autobiographies of the learners were generated through a controlled and guided writing exercise. This was done in class with the help of the class teacher. The class teacher stands in for the researcher so that the learners feel at ease in writing their autobiographies with the person they are used to. All the learners submitted their autobiographies and that's when this researcher chose the ones to include as the research participants. That is those who were once enrolled in their home schools for at least a year or above and transferred to SA multilingual classrooms later. These were written prior to the data generation process.

The focus group discussions were carried out with the immigrant learners and local learners. These were done separately to avoid teasing and marginalisation of the immigrants. Tuesdays and Thursdays were the days used for FGDs with immigrant and local learners, respectively. The sessions last between 40 minutes to one hour each. The immigrant learner FGDs group comprised of seven learners, as three of the consenting ten did not arrive. The four local learners out of the six arrived and participated in the FGDs. All the proceedings were tape-recorded.

The FGDs enabled the researcher to generate a lot of information on the phenomenon under study from quite a large group of participants in a short space of time. To gain a more detailed and individual sustainable learning experience, those participants who engaged in FGDs were also asked to participate in individual interviews. In the interviews, I also included the immigrant teacher, two language teachers, the school principal, school counsellor, and two immigrant parents. All of them consented to participating. The interview process took 10 days to complete, as I was able to conduct an average of two interviews per day of between approximately 30-50 minutes. The interviews were recorded after seeking permission from the participants.

The interviews with immigrant learners were carried out at the learners' homes to avoid teasing or stigmatisation. The interviews were recorded. To those participants who were not comfortable with the recordings, notes were taken during the interviews. Only one participant felt uncomfortable with recordings, and therefore notes were taken instead.

The last phase of the data generation involved the analysis of documents as a secondary method to validate the findings in the FGDs and interviews. This enabled me to generate both verbal and non-verbal data on the experiences of immigrant sustainable learning. School records and profiles were used to give statistics of immigrant learners' information about the curriculum, learners' performance over a specific period and some contextual information about the school. These were made available by the school administrator.

#### **4.9 Data analysis**

Merriam (2009) views data analysis as a process of trying to make sense of the obtained data. Data analysis is regarded as a continuous process as such findings are assembled and systematically built as pieces of work in the dialogue throughout the research process. According to Mertens (2010, p. 427), data needs to be processed gradually, through the relationship between the principal researcher, and core researchers as team participants. In this study, the researcher settled for critical discourse analysis (CDA) in the analysis of data.

CDA, according to Stubbs in Babbie and Mouton (2004), is concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence or utterance, thus it recognises Sigmund Freud's idea that every word or utterance has a hidden meaning even the slip of the tongue. This method is concerned with the interrelationships between language and society and with the interactive dialogue properties of everyday communication. Thus, discourse analysis according to Blanche and Durrhelm (1999) cited in Babbie and Mouton, (2004) is the act of showing how certain discourses are deployed to achieve effects in specific contexts. Critical thinking means not taking things for granted, opening complexity, challenging reductionism dogmatism and dichotomies, and being self-reflective in research (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). All these processes make it possible for opaque structures of power relations ideologies to manifest. Thus, critical examines hidden meaning and proposes some alternatives to conventional thought.

I found it necessary because it includes issues of power and its implications in wider society, the power over teachers and of teachers over the learners, and other learners over migrant learners in a multilingual classroom. Due to these power relations, the implications thereof could be better understood (Mertens, 2010, p. 427). According to Fairclough (2013, p. 3), the importance of a discourse is to use language for meaning-making focusing on the way of life of a specific society.

Furthermore, discourse analysis critically describes the elements of power relations and social identities by explaining and evaluating existing realities of human wellbeing of society. CDA was seen as relevant to critically evaluating sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, and the best way to maneuver through these.

I found CDA to be suitable for my study since the real life experiences of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom and their well-being were analysed so as to find a deeper meaning as it is concerned with studying and analysing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts (Foucault, 2000). Discourse analysis is used to view the opportunities created through language use not as a tool for communication alone, but also as a tool for building reality (Desai, Qorro & Brock-Utne, 2010).

The analysis was carried out in three forms. Firstly, the spoken word was used to confirm the findings. This was followed by discursive practices level, and thereafter, making use of social structure to get to the bottom of the meaning to understand the text. According to Creswell (2009, p. 183) the process of data analysis involves making sense out of a text and image data. In using CDA, I listened to the recorded discussions and transcribed findings. I then read through the documents two or three times to make sure I understood them clearly. Finally, I arrived at conclusions about all documents. In Fairclough (2004) there are three levels of analysis. The first level uses the spoken word or text in trying to conform a fact or finding. Second is the discursive practices level, which unearths those not so obvious moments and inform and ground utterances and behaviours. Lastly, the social structure aims at getting to the bottom of the meaning-making repertoire to understand the text on an even deeper level. I found this suitable for the study to analyse the real-life experience of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom and their well-being.

#### **4.10 Validity, reliability and trustworthiness**

According to Howell et al. (2005) validity is concerned with the study's success at measuring what the researcher set out to measure, whereas reliability is concerned with the accuracy of the actual measuring instrument or procedure. In qualitative study, these terms measure the trustworthiness, credibility and accuracy of the generated data and or findings. In other words, when it comes to

validity, the researcher must ask herself or himself whether s/he was successful in measuring what the researcher intended or set out to measure. The reliability aspect looks at the accuracy of the instruments or procedures employed. This implies that if an independent researcher was to employ the same research methods and procedures, he/she should be able to get the same or almost the same results.

Validity does not carry the same connotations in qualitative and quantitative research. Validity is also not a companion of reliability and generalisability (Creswell, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (2011) assert that in qualitative approaches, the terms that are used to address validity are credibility, transferability, and dependability. In this design, validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and projects.

In ensuring that credibility is realised, the researcher selected the research participants that work closely with the immigrant learners in-school and out-of-school. This was done to increase the possibility of shedding light on the research questions. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) reveal that credibility of the findings also concerns how well categories and themes cover data, in other words, no relevant data have been excluded or irrelevant data included. This research study texted verbatim all extracts of group discussions and individual interviews and the research team validated findings. My analysis of multiple sources of data (FGDs, document analysis and individual interviews) ensured the credibility through corroboration of evidence.

Reliability and validity of the findings in this research study were realised by a careful and systematic placement of all arranged procedures and phases needed for the approval of a research study. The researcher followed the normal research ethics protocols required for the gaining of access to the research setting and recruiting participants. Various sources of data (learners, teachers, parents and school principal) and research instruments (focus group discussions, protocols, document analysis, notes and interview transcripts) known as triangulation were employed.

#### **4.11 Ethical issues**

Ethics in research frequently sets principles drawn up to guide the researchers' actions in the field as well as to protect the rights of participants in research (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 56). Turner and Fozdar (2010) see ethical responsibility as fundamental to all research, especially when dealing with vulnerable groups like in this research study immigrant learners and children. In a case like this, strict ethical issues are to be observed in order not to harm the participants.

Cohen et al. (2007) pointed out three main areas of ethical issues to be maintained. These are informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and publication access. In order to gain ethical clearance to and trust and support of the participants, this researcher complied with all the concerned areas of ethical issues. Participants were voluntarily recruited and were also well informed regarding the purpose of the research, its possible consequences, and what was required of them.

In this research study, children's consent forms were signed by their parents as they are regarded as minors who were not able to make informed decisions on their own. Instead, the children consented in taking part in the study after understanding and agreeing to participate in the research. The researcher asked permission from the parents for the children to participate in the study. The children were later notified about the study and given consent forms to sign before taking part in the interviews and group discussions. The children were also told that they were free to withdraw from the study if they saw fit to do so, without any consequences.

This research study's proposal passed through UKZN's Ethics Committee, which judged it on its sensitivity to human subjects as well as the appropriateness of the methodology in answering research questions. The committee granted the full approval of the ethics clearance to show that all its steps were put in place in trying to be ethically sensitive.

#### **4.11.1 Rapport building as an ethical strategy**

When a researcher is carrying out a study involving vulnerable participants, these participants usually don't feel comfortable in revealing their experiences. In order to work with participants like these, there is need to build good rapport. According to Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong (2009), establishing rapport is crucial to qualitative research, which deals with sensitive participants and or issues. When there is good rapport, participants feel relaxed and free

to participate in the study and they share their experiences freely. King and Horrocks (2010), in support of this, sees rapport as an essentially trust-enabling thing that makes participants comfortable in opening up to the researcher. Ready and Burton (2012) outline different models of rapport building singling out the relation building approach as the prominent one. The relation building approach involves framing a working relationship with participants in order to gain their confidence as well as trust (Ready & Burton, 2012). In this research study, this researcher established a good rapport by building a good relationship with the learners, teachers, and parents. This researcher shared her immigrant experiences with the immigrant learners and parents. Additionally, the researcher volunteered to carry out some sporting training activities at the school in order to become familiarised with the teachers and all learners.

#### **4.12 Delimitations of the study**

There are many immigrant learners in South Africa who come from different continents. This study was limited to African immigrants. This is due to the increasing number of African immigrants arriving in economic exile. The study also concentrated on primary school immigrant learners who need to have a sound base in education. Due to the focus on learners in multilingual classrooms, the study used purposive sampling to select suitable participants.

#### **4.13 Conclusion**

The chapter concentrated on research design and methodology employed in this research study. In order to answer the critical questions of the study, a qualitative PAR approach proved suitable for the study, which had an interest in immigrant experiences in sustainable learning. The study was done in a former Model C school, which is a multilingual one. The school enrolls immigrant learners from different continents, but this research study concentrated on the immigrant learners from African countries.

The research study employed purposive sampling, where the researcher chose participants who she thought would help her in answering the research questions. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the immigrant learners, local learners, teachers, and the school principal. Additionally, the school counsellor and immigrant parents were chosen in that way.

The study made use of 20 participants, namely seven immigrant learners, four local learners, three local teachers, one immigrant teacher, one school principal, three parents and one school

counsellor. In generating data, the research made use of PAR with the use of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The interviews were done with all participants. Learners were also involved in FGDs, which were divided into two groups of local learners and immigrant learners. Lastly, document analysis, which analysed the school records and profiles, was employed. Strong ethical issues were followed as the study was sensitive with a possibility of exposing immigrant learners to possible teasing and traumatic experiences. Participants made a voluntary choice to participate in the study.

The next chapter examines the data presentation and analysis of the generated data on sustainable learning for immigrant learners who find themselves in a multilingual classroom.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore the immigrant learner's experiences on sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. The study seeks to answer the critical question: *how is sustainable learning experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom?* Five objectives were set to guide the study. The first objective aimed at investigating the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom; to examine the need for immigrant sustainable learning; to examine the favourable conditions for immigrant sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom; to identify and discuss hindrances encountered by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom towards establishing the phenomenon of sustainable learning; and lastly, to use findings to develop or propose ways of supporting immigrant learners achieve sustainable learning in a friendly environment by overcoming hindrances to achieving sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. Chapter 4 presented the research design and methodology employed in the study. In this chapter, the generated data on immigrant sustainable learning in multilingual classroom are presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed, and the findings used as a basis in finding ways of creating an enabling environment of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

In this study, I will use critical discourse analysis (CDA) in analysing the data gathered. CDA proves appropriate in studying data that was generated through PAR approaches. This research study took the critical emancipatory research (CER) lenses underpinned by emancipatory and

power issues, where an effort was made to counterbalance power associations during the analysis. The study also employed *ubuntu* theory as a complimentary theory which looked at embracing, respecting, accepting, trusting, disciplining, authority, commitment, valuing as well as sharing (Mbingi 1997:1) resources with immigrant learners. In order to counterbalance power issues, all the members of the research team were granted the chance of hearing what they said or contributed before agreeing on the interpretations. This chapter starts by laying out biological profiles of the participants. Thereafter, immigrant sustainable learning experiences whilst in multilingual classroom are discussed. The presentation of the generated data is aligned to the research questions presented in Chapter 1.4, the critical question being: *how is sustainable learning experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?*

Some research questions which are also guiding this presentation are stated below:

1. What is the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?
2. Why is there a need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?
3. What are the hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom?
4. How can immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom be supported for sustainable learning?

In this research study, the first two questions are partly answered by data generated from the semi-structured interviews with the school principal and the teachers. Again, the questions are addressed partially by empirical data conducted amongst immigrant learners and their parents. This research chapter reports on the findings from the generated data from the research participants. Thus, the rest of the chapter indicates data that have a direct result or that which answered to the given critical question. In addressing the leading critical question, participants' answers were analysed regularly especially those of the school principal, teachers and the immigrant learner participants. To authenticate the data presented, citations of the verbatim responses of the participants are given with the aim of providing the genuine picture of the experiences of immigrants sustainable

learning. In achieving this, I regularly made reference to the real data generated from the interviews and at times being corroborated by data from document analysis.

## 5.2 Biographical profiles of the participants.

This study made use of seven immigrant learners, four local learners, one school principal, three local teachers, one immigrant teacher and two immigrant parents. Initially, there were 10 immigrant learners, after which three dropped out in the middle of the data generation process. The reason for the withdrawal is that their families had transferred out-of-province. The school counsellor was always available as we were dealing with the vulnerable group to attend to anyone who might need the help. The rationale behind having the participants' biographical profiles was to reveal diversity or to make sure the phenomenon under study was viewed from diverse participants.

**Table 5.1 shows the profiles of the adult participants**

PARTICIPANT	COUNTRY	AGE GROUP	GENDER	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	LANGUAGE SPOKEN
Principal (P)	SA	58	M	Tertiary	English/ isiZulu
Counselor (C)	SA	42	M	Tertiary	English/ isiZulu
Teacher 1 (T1)	SA	59	F	Tertiary	English/ Afrikaans
Teacher 2 (T2)	SA	45	F	Tertiary	English/ French
Teacher 3 (T3)	SA	28	M	Tertiary	IsiZulu/ English
Immigrant Teacher (IT)	Zimbabwe	44	F	Tertiary	Shona/English/isiZulu
Parent 1 (P1)	Zambia	42	F	Tertiary	Bemba/ English

Parent 2 (P2)	Zimbabwe	35	M	Tertiary	Ndebele/ isiZulu
Parent 3 (P3)	Zimbabwe	36	F	Tertiary	Shona/ English

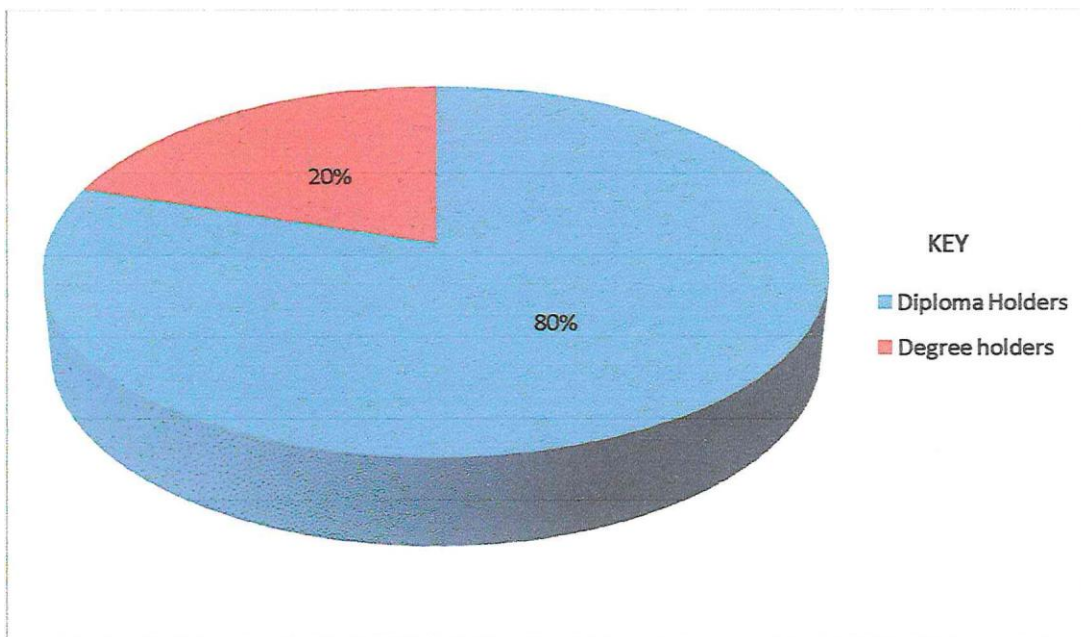
Table 5.1 indicates that the nine adult participants comprised of the school principal who was referred to as (P), throughout the data analysis, the school counsellor, also referred to as (C), three local teachers referred to as (T1, T2, T3), the immigrant teacher who was also referred to as (IT). The adult participants also included three immigrant parents here identified as (P1, P2, P3). In total there were nine adult participants, but the Counselor was only there to attend to the immigrant learners who needed her services as we were discussing some issues that had a potential of affecting the learners emotionally due to their vulnerability. These participants had different biographical profiles. In Table 5.1 all their profiles are given. The first column on the Table represents the code for each participant. The codes were used instead of the actual names in order to make sure that anonymity is exercised. The second column shows the country of origin of each participant. In this regard, there were five South Africans, three Zimbabweans and one Zambian. The third column indicates the age range. In this regard, the table shows that participants were 25 years old and above with most of them in the 40s and above age range. There was only one between 25 and 30 years old. This in a way shows that the adult participants who were dealing with immigrant learners were mature people. This was important to the research, since adults have a listening ear and could be kindhearted to the immigrants. The gender of the adult participants are shown in the fourth column. This research study included both male and female teacher participants who were purposively selected. Looking at the gender, it was imperative to balance, as there were five females and four male participants. Following is the fifth column, with the participants' highest level of education. In South Africa, one is employed as a teacher after attaining either a Diploma, Degree or any other post graduate qualification in Education. These tertiary qualifications together with registering with the SACE board qualifies one to become a practicing teacher.

Of importance to this study is the language of communication in which participants are versed, as shown in column six. In this regard, it was found that the participants have different mother tongues, which are: English, isiZulu, Afrikaans, Shona, Ndebele, and Bemba.

### 5.2.1 Academic Qualifications of the Principal and Teacher Participants

In South Africa, one is employed as a teacher after attaining either a Diploma, Degree or any other post graduate qualification in Education. These tertiary qualifications together with registering with the SACE board qualifies one to become a practicing teacher. Shown below is the illustration of the professional qualifications of this study's teacher participants.

**Pie Chart showing professional qualifications of teachers and principal (N=5)**



**Fig 2. Pie Chart Showing Teacher Participants' professional qualifications**

There were five teachers together with the school principal who participated in the study. Of the five teachers who took part in the study, 20% of them were degree holders, and 80% had diplomas. Their qualifications could have enabled them to be able to use and understand English well as it was the language used in this present study in the generation of data. Also, in a multilingual classroom, they could have been able to teach well using English as the LoI for immigrant learners to understand.

### 5.2.2 Learner participants

The focus of the study was to explore immigrant learners' experiences of sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom with the aim of creating an enabling environment. As such, data were generated from those directly affected bearing in mind that the study was based on the CER lenses that advocate for individuals to take an active role in issues that directly affect them in an effort to find solutions that empower them. In line with this, originally 10 immigrant learners were purposively sampled for the study. However, three dropped out along the way due to that they were no longer attending the same school. Two transferred out of the province and the other one went to a different town as cited by their class teachers. Ultimately seven immigrant learners of mixed gender and age took part in the semi structured interviews as well as FGDs. These learners were from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The immigrant learners' age and ability to speak and understand English and also their stay in South African schools contributed to their selection. This study wanted immigrant learners who were once enrolled in their home schools for a year or so and then transferred to a South African multilingual class. So, in a way, immigrant learners who were in Grade Five and above and were able to communicate in English were purposively selected as this was so to enable meaningful communication among the research team to take place. The immigrant learners' ages were between 11 and 14 years, who had at least done some grades or one in their home countries. Pseudonyms were used instead of their real names. Their profiles are as follows.

- **Rudo**

This participant is a ten-year-old immigrant learner originally from Zimbabwe. Rudo came to South Africa when she was doing Grade 3 in 2018. Her first and second grades were done in Zimbabwe. Her father is now working here in South Africa as a boiler maker at a reputable company. Her mother is not formally employed but does buying and selling business to help in the family finances. Rudo has been enrolled for two years now at this multilingual primary school and is now in Grade Four. The young immigrant learner's mother tongue is Shona which is one of Zimbabwe's widely used indigenous language. The language of instruction (LoI) in school became English, and at times with friends used isiZulu, which she did not fully speak and understand. The stated reason for their moving to South Africa was the country's economic meltdown and high

unemployment rate, which caused her father to be jobless for some time before moving here to South Africa.

- **Patrick**

Patrick was also from Zimbabwe and aged thirteen. He was in Grade Seven. The boy had stayed in SA for two years and when the study was carried out, it was his third year. He started Grade Five at the school two years back. Both his father and mother were working as secondary school teachers. His mother tongue was Ndebele. Patrick could understand and speak isiZulu well, because of his Ndebele background. He said their reason for immigration was for search of a better life. Patrick revealed that teachers' salaries here were better than those in his hometown.

- **Susan**

Susan was a fourteen-year-old Zimbabwean immigrant learner here in SA's multilingual classroom doing Grade Seven. Susan migrated to South Africa with both her parents three years ago, and by the time the research was carried out, her father had moved to Australia, where he had secured employment. At home, they speak Shona. Her mother works as an accountant for a local company. They migrated here in search of employment and better living conditions as all their companies they were working for had closed due to economic challenges in their home country and the inflation rate in Zimbabwe.

- **Chloe**

Chloe was an eleven-year-old Zambian learner, who spoke Bemba as her mother tongue, and conversational English in a Zambian accent. Chloe was in Grade Five and had arrived in South Africa when she was in Grade Four. The father was employed as a farm manager and mother as a domestic worker at a farm. Due to their situation, they stayed at the farm houses. The reasons that caused them to migrate was the highest level of poverty in their country due to political and economic challenges. The shrinking economy was a driving force for their migration.

- **Peter**

Peter was a twelve-year-old boy from DRC doing Grade Six at this multilingual school. He spoke Mumbala as his mother tongue. Peter could also speak French and conversational English. He came to SA with his parents two years ago. His father was formerly employed, but his mother owned a hairdressing saloon. The reason for coming to SA was due to political instability in their home country.

- **Brendon**

This was a 14-year-old Zambian boy, who spoke Chewa and English. Brendon was in Grade Seven in a multilingual classroom. Both his parents are working in food restaurants. The reason for immigration was that they were in search of better living conditions. He started his Grade Six here in South Africa, after completing his Grades One to Five in Malawi.

- **Martha**

This one was a 13-year-old Grade Seven girl originally from DRC. Her father is a tailor and the mother worked in a hair salon. The reason for migrating was that there was war in her country between tribes. So, to be safe, her parents saw it fit to migrate here to SA.

**Table 5.2 Table summarising immigrant learners' profiles**

<b>Immigrant learner name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Age of migration</b>	<b>Home language</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Last grade in home country</b>	<b>Grade started in SA</b>	<b>Duration of stay</b>	<b>Present grade</b>
<b>Rudo</b>	Girl	14	9	Shona	Zimbabwe	2	3	4yrs	7
<b>Patrick</b>	Boy	13	10	Ndebele	Zimbabwe	4	5	2yrs	7
<b>Susan</b>	Girl	14	10	Shona	Zimbabwe	3	4	3yrs	7
<b>Chloe</b>	Girl	11	10	Bemba	Zambia	3	4	1yr	5

<b>Peter</b>	Boy	12	10	Mumbala	DRC	3	4	2yrs	6
<b>Brendon</b>	Boy	14	13	Chewa	Zambia	5	6	1yr	7
<b>Martha</b>	Girl	13	10	Swahili	DRC	5	6	1yr	7

There were four local learners, both male and female. The purpose of selecting and including these specific study units was to benefit from those participants that might offer contrary evidence or views especially given the need for testing rival explanations. This also aided in avoiding bias, by selecting only those cases that approve my own presumptions. The purpose of including both the immigrant learners and the local learners in this study was to benefit from those participants that would yield the most relevant and plentiful data about the topic of study, namely: sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. Below are the profiles of those local learner participants who willingly took part in the study.

**Table 5:3 shows Profiles of the Local Learner participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Home language</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Thandolwethu</b>	Boy	13	isiZulu	7
<b>Ayanda</b>	Girl	14	isiXhosa	7
<b>Philasande</b>	Boy	12	isiZulu	6
<b>Mbali</b>	Girl	13	isiZulu	7

The above table shows that there were four local learners who took part in the semi-structured interviews as well as FGDs. These were two boys and two girls. The names used are not their real names, they are pseudonyms. This was done to make sure anonymity was maintained. The local learners' ages ranged from 12 to 14 years. Most of them were in Grade Seven, and in different classes. Only one of them was in Grade Six. Three of the learners spoke isiZulu as their home language. Only one was Xhosa. Their difference in home language contributed also to a multilingual classroom.

There were eleven learner participants in total. Their biological profiles above show a picture of diversity among the participants. The immigrant learners came from different African countries and were in different grades and share different home languages. On the other hand, local learners were not of the same gender, age and mother language. Such diversity was anticipated to bring a positive influence on the sustainable learning experiences given that the participants would bring on board diverse viewpoints and experiences.

**Table 5.4 Distribution of learner participants by Country of origin**

This set of data was obtained from the school records as well as from the learners themselves during the individual interviews. Below is a table showing the origins of the immigrant learner participants.

COUNTRY	FREQUENCY	%
DRC	2	18
SOUTH AFRICA	4	36
ZAMBIA	2	18
ZIMBABWE	3	28

### **5.3 Presentation and analysis of data**

In answering this research question, the research data revealed that there is a clear need for immigrant sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms. All the participants who included the school principal (P), immigrant parents (IP), the teachers (T) and the immigrant learners, agreed to the need for immigrant sustainable learning. The reasons they shared were as follows:

- Gaining knowledge of more than one language
- Understanding of different cultures
- Improved intellectual and creative skills
- Compatible skills in today's job market
- Human capital building
- Building national unity

#### **5.3.1. The benefit of having knowledge of more than two languages**

The data in the study was generated from participants in a multilingual environment, which was the school. All participants are cited verbatim. The school context used more than one language, the LoI and the FAL. The LoI used was English and the FAL was isiZulu. By virtue of these languages being used in the classroom, learners were expected to speak and understand them. With regards to the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, the school principal had the following to say:

*Knowledge of more than two languages allowed immigrant learners to communicate with many people, in both personal and professional contexts. Immigrant learners are really benefitting at this school. You know, some of them arrived here without any knowledge of our local language, but by the time they leave here, they will be fluent speakers of isiZulu as well as English.*

This was also supported by an immigrant teacher (IT), who was a participant in this study. She indicated that the indigenous or local languages that in most contexts are generally regarded as

unofficial tend to be a viable medium for effective and clear presentation of knowledge that we possess:

*Despite learning English which is the language of instruction used here, immigrant learners also gain the knowledge and understanding of the local language which is taught as the additional language. This gaining of the knowledge of the languages goes a long way in the immigrant learners' life.*

Another response from (T3) reads as follows:

*Yes, ya, there is need for immigrant sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom in order to have learners who do not have a limitation in communication due to language barriers. These learners gain a lot especially in language learning. If you look, they now know how to speak English, isiZulu and also their own mother tongue languages. Speaking three languages is great.*

The implication of the excerpts above is that knowledge of various languages by the immigrant students is likely to result in higher classroom performance from these learners. The performance might be even higher than that of indigenous students in the multilingual classroom. When one knows the official language and speaks indigenous languages perfectly, then the person will be able to synthesise knowledge and express it accordingly.

Other immigrant learners, who include Patrick, also stated that there is need for immigrant sustainable learning, as they really benefit from it by becoming bilingual. Patrick was happy, saying that he is now able to communicate in more than two languages. He said by then he could understand English, isiZulu, and his home language Shona. Apart from English and isiZulu that they do at school, Patrick revealed that he also can understand Bemba, which his Zambian friend speaks.

The parent (P3) involved in the study also supported the fact that sustainable learning is required as knowledge of more than one language is beneficial to students. This is revealed in the following statement from the parent:

*...children need to be well versed to [sic] a variety of languages as you can see these days you cannot guarantee where you may end up living. Having a knowledge of more than two languages enable our children to be flexible intellectually and or physically. The children won't be limited to stay where their language is spoken only but explore other places.*

The immigrant learners who were part of the team in the study also mentioned that immigrant sustainable learning is needed to equip learners with the knowledge of more than two languages. All Patrick, Rudo, Susan, Chloe, Peter, Brendon, and Martha noted enthusiastically that despite some challenges, they are now in a better position to communicate well in more than two languages. Peter had this to say:

*This sustainable learning in a multilingual school is helping me a lot especially in the languages. I can now speak English fluently and also have improved in my IsiZulu. I do not have problems now in communicating in these languages.*

In the world of today, where migration is not a thing of the past, people need to have knowledge of more than one language for easy communication with diverse populations. This was raised in the literature review, namely that language difficulties are the main inhibitor for immigrant learners, preventing them from fully participating in the classroom, and thereby causing academic limit (Lamb & Markussen, 2011). In the case of immigrant learners, this knowledge will help them not to be a misfit in their communities inasfar as communication is concerned. In this research study, it was revealed that those immigrant learners who managed to acquire the host language quickly did not have problems with mixing with others at school, and it also empowered them in a way. Multilingualism facilitates communication, by definition.

According to Cenoz and Gorter (2015), most immigrant learners have the strong desire to use and acknowledge more than one language in the teaching and learning process. Increased knowledge of more than two languages is also essential as it addresses the challenge of language barriers thereby resulting in achievement of sustainable learning for the immigrant learners. Meier (2014) also believes that acknowledging a variety of languages in schools and learning different languages may help in meeting linguistic needs, and may lead to diversity in knowledge sharing, hence, most immigrant learners may seek to understand more than two languages.

### 5.3.2 Facilitation in understanding different cultures

Another aspect raised in this research study on the need for immigrant sustainable learning was that it enables learners to have an understanding of different cultures. Most immigrant learners who came to South Africa all confessed that at first they were not aware of the isiZulu culture and their type of food. The learners reported that on Heritage Day, when local learners came to school in their traditional attire, they were surprised by what they perceived as a degree of ‘undress’, due to their lack of cultural exposure. When individuals have no knowledge of the ethnic cultures of other people, this poses as a problem in all communal interaction.

The principal had the following to say in this regard:

*Multilingualism provides an insight into the understanding of different cultures and experiences hence a multilingual becomes multicultural in nature.*

Another participant, the immigrant teacher (IT), also supported this by indicating that languages don’t operate in a vacuum:

*Culture and society play a key role in its existence as language relies on society, culture and mind [sic]. Immigrant learners who are at this school now know the Zulu culture as well as the English culture. This includes the type of food, dressing and their way of life. Knowledge and understanding of these cultures help them to co-exist peacefully.*

In this regard, multilingualism enhances an automatic understanding and appreciation of cultural values of the societies that use the concerned languages. The experiences gained from learning in multilingual classroom automatically tend to change the attitudes, skills, beliefs of the immigrant learners, society and create an expansion of world view.

Another participant, an immigrant parent, provided the following example:

*...for example, when we learn in English language in the South African context, we are forced to study its origin, the people and also their cultural and traditional values thus having the knowledge of English culture also.*

Thus, perceptions of the learners are widened as they learn various cultures in sustainable learning environments.

In this regard, Rudo noted the following:

*I really learnt a lot about English culture. You know, in our Shona culture, it is rude to speak to an elder whilst looking at him or her straight in the face. But here, our English teachers require us to look at them straight in the face to show that you are telling the truth and confident. So this culture is new to me and is important in building my confidence.*

The literature reviewed supports the above findings. Immigrant learners need to effectively adjust to the cultural norms of the host school by understanding or integrating to the host society's culture (Berry et al., 2006).

Understanding different cultures is very important, especially when you spend most of your time in a foreign land. Cenoz and Gorter (2015) add that multilingual classrooms host learners of different cultures, where immigrant learners are required to adapt to the culture of the school in order for them to experience sustainable learning in a positive way. For this reason, there is a need on the part of immigrant learners to understand host South African cultures. The findings indicate that immigrant learners may have the strong desire to understand the culture in the host country so that they may create friendships and feel a sense of belonging to the community as postulated by *ubuntu* (Metz, 2011).

### **5.3.3 Improved intellectual and creative skills**

It was also noted by some of the parents that sustainable learning is necessary to improve intellectual flexibility of their children. This is shown in the following response from one of the participants:

*When teachers encourage children to acquire sustainable learning whilst in multilingual classrooms, then they are also investing in the child intellectually. (T2)*

Another teacher's observations on this matter was that: *"sustainable learning help immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms to become great thinkers, be able to socially adjust to different social settings, improve their reasoning skills and their cognitive abilities also enhanced"* (T3).

Sharing the same observations, (T1) also supported (T3) by indicating that immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms do better in school than those who speak one language. One of the teachers, (T1) provided the following response, which was comprehensive:

*“My experience as a teacher in a class where there are immigrant learners, I have noticed that the immigrant learners have always performed well. These children have never taken low positions in terms of academic performance.”*

Most immigrant learners in the FGDs agreed to the above observations. Susan clearly stated that:

*If I look at myself from the time I arrived here up to now, I am seeing a really different person. I love the person I am now. Long back, I used to give up easily on some school tasks. Now I am able to research for new knowledge on an issue I am not understanding [SIC]. The skills I learnt in the multilingual classroom are helping keeping me going.*

Sharing the same sentiment, immigrant learner Brendon stated that:

*Learning in a multilingual classroom has really helped me, and improved my performance and reasoning. You know, meeting with learners from diverse backgrounds and abilities sometimes helps you pushing up all the time. My grades are now better than before. I have really improved in all areas of my learning, due to the experiences we come across.*

The need to improve intellectual as well as creative skills was also found to be one of the reasons for sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms. These skills are very important in the learning of immigrant learners, who may face extensive challenges as witnesses of xenophobic attacks caused by the competition for resources with local citizens. Hence, through sustainable learning, the immigrant learners may gain intellectual skills that may help in fulfilling their academic endeavours. These skills can also help in overcoming the challenges that the immigrant learners face when learning in multilingual classrooms. UNESCO (2018) reports that when immigrants attend school, they seek to benefit both intellectually and socially.

As pointed out in the literature review, sustainable learning equips immigrant learners with the basic skills that help them to live well and be able to face any life challenges with ease (Bruntland, 1987). Accordingly, calls have been made by most researchers including the UN Global Goals

(SDGs), for schools to see to it that sustainable learning is offered in order to lessen the interruption of people and the natural environment. In so doing, immigrant learners in multilingual schools are equipped with skills that enable them to improvise, adapt, innovate, and create ideas in any situation. Immigrant learners would also become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and team workers in society.

### **5.3.4 Compatible skills in today's job market**

Most research participants agreed that the learning does not only benefit immigrant learners in terms of academic performance, but are also prepares them with suitable skills to compete fairly in today's job market.

The Immigrant Teacher (IT) who mentioned this had the following words to say:

*Besides the academic and professional credentials, employers also look for fluency in the desired languages as an added advantage. Therefore, being a multilingual is a plus to any job seeker in this generation and age.*

The teacher went on to say that this can only be realised if sustainable learning for immigrant learners is established in the multilingual classroom. Thus, it is imperative to necessitate sustainable learning in the multilingual classrooms in South Africa.

This was also supported by another immigrant parent who said that:

*It is important for our children to gain sustainable learning in order to face the competition in the job market. Immigrant learners face a tough competition in job markets as their being foreign nationals tend to disadvantage them from the possible job opportunity. So as parents we feel if they receive sustainable learning in these multilingual classrooms, they stand a better chance also to match with the locals in the job market as they now have the upper hand in many languages and exposed to different cultures so as to compete successfully in the global economy.*

Susan, a participant immigrant learner from Zimbabwe felt that immigrant sustainable learning in multilingual classroom is needed as it prepares learners to survive the competition in the job market locally and internationally. She had this to say:

*Well, as you know, this is not my country, I am a foreigner here and I am not guaranteed to stay here for life. The education I am receiving here should take me and enable me to work in any country. I hope to go and work in Australia, where my father is now. I do believe with this sustainable learning in multilingual classroom. I have what it takes to survive the job competition abroad.*

Here, the immigrant parents and the immigrant learners involved in the study understood employment prospects that sustainable learning in the multilingual classroom can create. Besides working in the host countries, immigrant learners can also take the educational skills learnt to other destinations and still be competitive.

As indicated in this study, immigrant learners seek sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms so that they can enhance their knowledge and skills to compete in competitive job markets. As also noted by Pettipher (2011), the global movement has seen an increase in the diverse number of learners in the host destination schools. This increase has been fueled by the need to acquire skills that are necessary to compete in the global labour market, which requires individuals with diverse skills. In support of this, Branden (2015) adds that sustainable learning systems are geared towards the acquisition of crucial competences that suit the changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which they can use and further develop on a long-term sustainable basis.

### **5.3.5 Human capital building**

The need to build human capital was also mentioned. Most of the participants were of the view that the knowledge and skills that immigrant learners in this study gain throughout their learning enabled them to realise their potential as productive members of society. Immigrant learners seek to increase their knowledge through various learning areas so that they can acquire many skills useful throughout their lives. It was also noted by the school principal that sustainable learning is needed for the immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, as knowledge of many languages is also a form of human capital. The principal went on to say the following:

*Communication skills immigrant learners get through interacting with other learners from diverse nationalities and languages is an essential example of human capital. So, you can see that through sustainable learning these learners benefit this essential skill).*

In support of this, an immigrant teacher said the following words:

*Immigrant sustainable learning is needed of course. Immigrant learners families left their countries because of some challenges which might lead if not managed well into people becoming criminals in order to earn a living So when these immigrant learners receive sustainable learning, they become educated and in the end can facilitate better development programs in their societies than those who did not have a chance to experience sustainable learning.*

Multilingualism may be a robust source of human capital. Branden (2015) indicates that immigrant learners acquire sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms, so as to gain crucial competences that match with the changes in their changing living environments. These competences include creative skills, leadership skills, problem-solving skills and decision-making skills, which are essential in today's changing world. Building human capital is essential, given the fast-changing global environment that requires individuals to be well-equipped with knowledge to meet all the demands. This is because sustainable learning is concerned with ensuring that knowledge is created, instead of making learners mere accumulators of facts and figures in their heads. According to the Branden (2015), immigrant learners are also expected to learn how to use knowledge in flexible ways in solving complex problems that may arise in different situations and contexts, rather than memorising facts.

### **5.3.6 Building national unity**

Furthermore, the study found that building national unity was among the major reasons why immigrant learners seek sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms. This is because sustainable learning results in immigrant learners learning different cultures and languages, which are critical factors towards uniting nations. When discrimination and victimisation are prevented among citizens of different countries, this means that there will be unity within the country. Another need for sustainable learning was also revealed by participants who stressed the need for building national unity. Thus, the benefits of sustainable learning extend to the whole nation, as this shown in the following response by one of the teacher participants.

*Sustainable learning for immigrant learners in multilingual classroom helps in national unity especially if people learn a common language which they will all understand. National language like English besides their indigenous languages can make people feel connected. In the process, the people concerned will automatically embrace the value of togetherness.*

Another teacher indicated that if taken seriously, sustainable learning through teaching of a common language like the language of instruction, can play a major role in uniting the people of South Africa, especially after the cases of xenophobia that have been rampant in recent years.

In relation to this, another (IT) said the following:

*Immigrant sustainable learning in multilingual classroom is essential and promotes a national language that is a viable roadmap in national unity and development.*

On a similar note, Mohamed (2015) revealed that immigrant learners' development of a sense of belonging is a strength that enables the integration of the learners of diverse cultures thereby showing solidarity with the nationals in the host country. As also noted by Hlatshwayo and Vally (2014), support for immigrant sustainable learning in South African multilingual classrooms has been driven by the increase in xenophobic attacks, which had posed serious threats to peace and caused disunity in the country. Based on this, it was observed that building national unity drives the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. Meier (2014) also believes that understanding various languages and cultures may lead to an understanding of cooperation.

Most immigrant learners, besides being rejected at first by their host or local learners, stated that ultimately they build some strong friendships and actually teach each other about their respective ways of life. This tolerance helped them in knowing each other better, thereby becoming able to co-exist, creating unity nationally.

The above supports the theory of *ubuntu*, which advocates for humaneness in working with visitors. The theory holds that the good of others is connected to the good of oneself. It advocates for decent treatment of humankind, thereby creating a united society.

#### **5.4. Current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom**

In exploring sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, the second objective aimed to reveal the current situation of immigrant sustainable learning. As has been noted from the research data, there is indeed the need for immigrant sustainable learning to equip immigrant learners with basic skills that may help them to meet challenges in life, this objective seeks to determine whether the current activities and curriculum is delivered in a way that caters for immigrant sustainable learning, if so, to what extent? The reasons cited for the need of sustainable learning for immigrant learners were mentioned earlier on.

This research data provides evidence on the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms. The data generated indicated that there are mixed feelings regarding the prevailing situation of sustainable learning within the multilingual classrooms in South African schools, where some are happy with the curriculum coverage, whilst a majority complained about some missing components in the curriculum that helped in equipping learners wholly for the challenges of daily life. The study results revealed that, inasmuch as learners are helped to think critically, a great deal is lacking in trying to meet the mentioned reasons for sustainable learning. Given below are their thoughts on different aspects raised.

##### **5.4.1 Status quo: Becoming multilingual**

When immigrant learners enroll in the host country multilingual school, they are expected to communicate in the language of instruction (LoI) used at that school. Most of the time, the LoI of the receiving school is not the home language of the immigrant learner. In such case, immigrant learners are expected to learn that language of communication in order for effective sustainable learning to take place. So, in a way, it is made clear that immigrant learners gain the knowledge of more than one language. In this research study, all immigrant learners admitted that they are really gaining this knowledge. Rudo and Susan, both from Zimbabwe, indicated that apart from speaking their mother tongue, they are now able to communicate in English. Patrick, also from Zimbabwe,

but with Ndebele as his mother tongue, related that he can also now speak English and isiZulu fairly well:

*I had wanted to speak English for a long time. When I was in Zimbabwe I used to go to a township school where a bit of English was spoken. As a result I was not taking learning it seriously. We enjoyed communicating in our mother tongue. At this school, the LoI is English so you are forced to learn it in order to understand what is being taught. Yes, yes I can now speak more than one language. Actually here I have learnt English and IsiZulu to add to my already spoken Ndebele. So I can speak three languages now.*

Rudo and Patrick also said they are now speaking Shona, English and IsiZulu. This is what Rudo revealed in the semi-structured interview:

*To me, learning English was not all that difficult as I used to speak it at the school, where I was in my home country. The difference is that here the accent is different as we are being taught by white people and Indians who are very fast when talking. You listen carefully, otherwise you won't hear anything. The huddle is in the first additional language (FAL) which is isiZulu. I can now understand simple instructions and conversations. I am now a proud speaker of Shona, English and isiZulu. Immigrant sustainable learning is the best for me.*

Chloe, an 11-year-old Bemba speaking girl agreed with Rudo's views, noting that she had also learned English and isiZulu in this multilingual classroom:

*I came here speaking Bemba only. I could hear instructions in English but I was not comfortable speaking it. Now that it is used every day as a LoI, I am now comfortable in speaking it every day. This has seen me becoming a fluent speaker in that language IsiZulu, though not fully mastered, but for social purposes, I can speak. I am now able to speak three languages.*

Most immigrant learners' parents were of the feeling that these languages are important to their children as they equip them with lifelong skills that will see them breaking a language barrier in their everyday life when meeting with a variety of people in their communities or even at work

places or in negotiating deals in life. Lacking English fluency restricts the development of new social contacts and sense of belonging (Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005).

The two immigrant learners from DRC, Martha and Peter were also happy to learn more than one language in this immigrant sustainable learning. This is what Martha experienced:

*I am happy I am now able to speak English. In my country, the official language is French. Coming from a non-English speaking country, it was not easy for me to learn English. I really struggled, but am happy that I am now able to communicate in the Language although the accent is not the same as the local people speak. But I am glad, here am I able to understand more than one language. I learnt English and IsiZulu here on top of my French and Swahili. So now I can speak four languages.*

The Principal expressed his satisfaction regarding the type of learning given on this multilingual school. These were his actual words:

*This school has a good number of immigrant learners in our classrooms. Yes, they are getting sustainable learning whilst in the multilingual classrooms. Here, they use English as the LoI and speak or learn isiZulu as the FAL. So, they really benefit from the knowledge of speaking more than one language.*

When asked further on what he sees as contributing to sustainable learning in his multilingual classroom, the principal has this to add:

*This is embedded across all our learning areas. Each information the learners learn here is of help to their future [sic]. As you can see here, it is an English speaking school, that language alone will carry them far as it is a global language. And again the additional language (FAL) offered here is isiZulu. If the immigrant learners manage to learn it, they will break many language barriers.*

Chloe, a Zambian immigrant learner also believed that sustainable learning for immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms is offered effectively. She said she has gained critical skills in her life ever since she joined the school especially in learning more languages. She revealed:

*If there is one thing I am grateful for is learning new languages. At first I was not taking the languages seriously but I then realized that they are important to me in the future. Yes now I can communicate fairly in English and isiZulu, which is the local language we do here know as the First Additional Language (FAL).*

Lamb and Markussen (2011) believe that difficulties in LoI are a drawback for immigrant learners to achieve their academic success, in this case, sustainable learning. In order to avoid this drawback, immigrant learners try by all means to learn local languages. Breen (2001) believes that when immigrant learners invest in a second language, this is done with an understanding that they will gain a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will increase their value in the social world. In the present study, the knowledge of more than one language is seen to be gained or offered in the current situation of immigrant sustainable learning in multilingual classroom. Immigrant learners are exposed to English and isiZulu, on top of their own home languages. This serves as investment to the immigrants as they will use the learnt languages in future communications. This is in line with the intention of this research study of sustainable learning, which is seen as the learning of basic skills that may be used in the future to solve the life challenges. In this case, immigrant learners acquire more than one language to overcome language barriers.

#### **5.4.2 Status quo: Understanding cultures**

Immigrant learners enrolled in multilingual classrooms in SA schools are expected to learn with other learners from diverse backgrounds and cultures. A multilingual classroom as explained in the literature review is a classroom where learners and or teachers do not share the same home language. These people, especially in this research study, also have diverse cultures and are expected to tolerate one another in their shared learning spaces. This toleration of one another can only be done if one has an understanding of the culture one is coming from. For an enabling sustainable learning environment in a multilingual classroom, the understanding of different cultures is important. Most immigrant learners contend that they would gain knowledge of different cultures, though some indicated that they were not willing to follow some of the cultures but use the knowledge to interact peacefully in the multilingual classrooms. This is what Rudo shared in the FGDs:

*At this school, we learn with people with different cultures. Some are Whites, Indians, and Black South Africans with also different cultures and us who come from outside this country. Coming from different places also means different cultural practices. In order not to hurt one another, the knowledge of different cultures is learnt here. We share our cultures along the way.*

In the same FGDs, Peter had this to say:

*We learn a lot at this multilingual school. Yes we really gain the knowledge of different cultures here. We celebrate Heritage Day, and on that day we come wearing our cultural attire. We share what we eat, ceremonies and type of dressing and their meanings. This is good to us so as to gain knowledge of different cultures.*

On exploring the knowledge of different cultures on the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms, one local learner said:

*It is not only immigrant learners who gain the knowledge of different cultures, even us the local learners also benefit. Sometimes we talk about our different types of food where we share the food and how it is prepared. Our way of dressing and how we relate in families. This knowledge is as good as we learn to relate and tolerate each other fairly well.*

When asked about Life Skills, Rudo said:

*Well, a lot of things ma'am. Things or skills that teach you to co-exist with others. Like I remember one lesson when we learnt that each person and his or her culture is unique and special, so we need to value each other and their cultures. This helps me to tolerate my diverse classmates including those who tease me here at school saying lam a 'Kwerekwere'. So you see, we are taught to live peacefully with other people whom we do not share the same culture with.*

A literature review indicated that when immigrant learners are deeply embedded in the host country with different cultures, and they build culture awareness that influences their self-perception in relation to the world (Tomlinson & Clarke, 2015). It is also revealed that immigrant

learners in a multilingual classroom meet some other learners from the host culture frequently hence, they come to learn and understand different cultures fast (Costes & Pungello, 2000). I argue that sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom equips all who are involved with the understanding of different cultures. When immigrant learners from different African countries interact together in multilingual classrooms, they share their cultures and come to understand them. This enables them to co-exist not crossing each other's boundaries or do that which is culturally unacceptable to one another.

#### **5.4.3 Status quo: Intellectual and creative skills**

One of the reasons for immigrant sustainable learning outlined in this research study was to gain intellectual and creative skills. Sustainable learning does not teach learners to memorise facts but intend to train the mind to think. Intellectual skills therefore refers to the ways one use to think and solve problems. An example of the intellectual skill may be critical thinking. Critical thinking involves critically evaluating facts and opinions, and coming to a conclusion based on evidence. On the other hand, creative thinking skills involve problem-solving, writing, visual art, communication skills, and open mindedness. To determine whether the current situation caters for this, one teacher had this to say:

*We try to involve these learners in a lot of singing and dancing as a class when sometimes introducing lessons to promote their memory. As a teacher, I have noticed that the singing and dancing empowers learners to initiate rapport building quickly.*

Another learner, Chloe, noted:

*We are given new sight words to read and practice every week. Besides sight words, we also practice our list words to write them and formulate meaningful sentences. Formulating sentences helps us in communication skills as we will have more vocabulary to use. This in a way equips us with intellectual and creative skills.*

One immigrant parent noted that, although sustainable learning is offered perfectly, he feels some aspects are lagging behind, especially the practical subjects like Music, Computers, Home Management and Agriculture as subjects. The parent noted that:

*Not all learners are gifted in academics, so there is need to cater for them in practical subjects that are hands on. You know our children, especially ours who immigrants need these subjects that involve the use of hands or skills as it is difficult for them to secure employment in a foreign land. So, if their talents in these subjects are nurtured early, they will pursue them and in the end use them to earn a living.*

Sustainable learning is regarded as that form of learning that can be continuously used and that empowers learners with skills useful in life (Mamotsheare 2016, p. 177). This researcher sees improved intellectual and creative skills as a way of empowerment to the immigrant learners, as they will not now have to depend on others for solving certain challenges, but may be independent on their own, when they use their skills like in sports or socially in their day to day living. The literature review highlighted the major cause of not accepting immigrants in this country was the belief that they are taking local jobs (Hlatshwayo & Vally, 2014). For this reason, including practical learning areas and improving intellectual and creative skills is argued for here. This also in line with (CER), which seeks to empower those regarded as the marginalised populations, in this regard, namely immigrants, to stand up for themselves (Babbie and Mouton 2001, p.36) and create opportunities for survival without hurting others.

The research findings also reveal that although practical subjects are included in the curriculum, subjects like Agriculture and Home Management as well as Computer Studies require extensive improvement in this regard. The learners need to be fully involved in these subjects, as they equip them with skills that will see them being able to stand on their own in creating employment in Agricultural sectors, as well as Technology. The type of learning they received in these early years would create a strong foundation when it comes to their intellectual skills and creative skills.

The findings are supported in the literature review by Branden (2015), who noted that sustainable learning systems equip learners with crucial competences that suit the changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which in this case, concerns how immigrant learners can develop skills for long term sustainability. On the other hand, Graham et al. (2015) argue that sustainable learning is the education for lifelong skills meant to last for a life time. Thus, in this case, the immigrant learners' later achievements are contingent upon immigrant sustainable learning whilst in multilingual classrooms.

### **5.5 Hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom**

In trying to determine how sustainable learning is experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom, findings that were obtained from the FGDs with the immigrant learners and those from teacher interviews indicate that both teachers and immigrant learners encounter certain hindrances. The worst hindrance is that of language barrier, causing a lack of meaningful communication between the immigrant learner and the teacher.

Another hindrance noted was the immigrant learners' feeling of segregation and being discriminated against. The immigrant learners participants said that they felt intimidated, which made them lose their confidence to make meaningful contributions in class, and as a result, becoming passive onlookers, who listened and waited for any written work, and ultimately quietly wrote down whatever they were instructed.

In this school, the immigrant learners also cited a lack of support as one of major hindrance towards immigrant sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. They said their parents, teachers local learners as well as the Department of Education (DoE) do not fully support them.

Hence, the main hindrances that emerged include:

- language;
- discrimination and segregation;
- lack of proper support; and
- financial difficulties

### **5.5.1 Language as a hindrance**

In answering the question that asked what specific hindrances they come across towards their road to sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, Chloe noted:

*Most of the time I miss what the teachers are saying, because of the way they pronounce their words. Most of my subject teachers here are white with Afrikaans language background, Indians and Zulu teachers. All these teachers' accents are different from what I used to hear in our home country. They speak fluently and fast making it difficult for me to comprehend what they are saying. Sometimes I end up relying on looking at the person sitting beside me to see what she will be doing and follow suit.*

Questioned as to why she does not ask the teacher to repeat herself, Chloe added:

*You do not understand it ma'am. It won't feel good to ask all the time for the teacher to repeat himself or herself. I once did that and the teacher shouted at me, saying I must listen carefully and stop playing, as she has no time to always repeat herself all the time for one person who doesn't listen. All the learners then booed at me, and I felt so embarrassed. From that incident, I just sit in class and try to listen "carefully" to avoid telling the teachers to repeat themselves, which is embarrassing. I know one day I will get used to the accents and learn better.*

Martha from DRC also supports what Chloe experienced, and goes on to indicate that the communication hindrance in sustainable learning also contributed to her loss of self-confidence and self-esteem. In her own words, she said:

*I find the hindrance in communication. This is really a major hindrance insofar as immigrant sustainable learning is concerned. I would know the answer or the contributions to the class discussion but to express myself in the language of instruction becomes a huge problem. Sometimes I feel like saying it in my mother tongue and then I remembers that 'oo, no one hears the language'. As a result, I most of the time become shy to contribute in class or to mix with other learners in fear of being laughed.*

It was also noted by Patrick, a thirteen year old boy from Zimbabwe, that the language hindrance is experienced even with the learners themselves. This is shown in the following response from the learner:

*I find communicating with other learners in English a challenge, too. They would indicate that they cannot hear me because of my accent. Some came to the extent of telling me that why I always want to speak English all the time if I do not know it. They said I must speak a local language not to be full of myself like that.*

On the same hindrance of language, Peter, a 14-year-old boy from DRC shared his experiences as follows:

*I mostly move alone as I find it annoying that when I talk people always make funny out of the way I pronounce some words when there is my mother tongue interference. To make the situation worse, I cannot speak the local language well so most of my class mates leave me behind when they are playing or discussing any school work.*

Most immigrant learner participants shared the same sentiments with Peter. Susan revealed that:

*...it is very difficult to me. Being unable to speak a language of instruction is a challenge, you will sit there with all the knowledge but expressing them is not easy.*

The immigrant learner participant went on to note that in the lessons, they face language hindrances, and this is revealed in the following statement by Rudo:

*When we are learning mathematics, I face many challenges, because the teacher usually does most explanations in isiZulu although it is an English medium of communication school. When I try to ask the teacher or other learners, they would say I am disturbing them, I need to listen all the time.*

To confirm what transpired in her response in semi-structured interviews, Rudo highlighted her concerns about how limited understanding of language of teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom has affected her progress in sustainable learning.

*The local learners here used to mock me saying I was backward as I was not able communicate in English fluently like what they do in their own accent. Most learners in my class do not take me as one of them, they call me a foreigner especially when the teacher is trying to call my surname and is failing to pronounce it they will burst into laughter which really pisses me off and as a result my day in school will become disturbed. I will spend that day feeling rejected and alone with no one to communicate to who really understands me.*

Rudo explained how she managed to keep on in immigrant sustainable learning struggle. She relates:

*Most of the time when I arrive home from school, I try to revise all the work we did in order for me to understand. Sometimes I read the books again or the topic we were doing*

*on my own alone, and that's when I come to understand some of the information said in class. I realised that some of the words I had failed to understand during the teachers' presentations were due to the way the teachers pronounce them. So giving myself extra time to read is tiresome, as you will be repeating the same thing over and over again, so instead of progressing faster you will be held back a bit.*

The teachers also mentioned communication hindrances for sustainable learning caused by language differences in a multilingual classroom. Most teachers interviewed stated that the immigrant learners have little understanding of the LoI at the time they arrive in the multilingual classroom. They said as the time moved, they appeared to have improved and that's when you see a marked improve in their performance. Even their contributions in class appeared to improve significantly.

One of the teachers expressed the challenges and difficulties of teaching an immigrant learner by saying:

*It is really a problem communicating with the immigrants meaningfully. The language is a hindrance to their sustainable learning. Sometimes they appear withdrawn from the other learners. In class they appear more behaved as they do not have any one to talk to in class freely as their English is limited. And in an event that they can speak English fluently, they find resistance from the local learners, who will not want to communicate in English but in their local language.*

As indicated by the findings of the study, language is one of the hindrances of sustainable learning for immigrants in multilingual classrooms in South African schools. Although a few participants indicated that they were happy to learn new languages, including English, which is the LoI and isiZulu the FAL, the results of the study revealed that most immigrant learners still saw language as a hindrance. They said that this was as a result of them arriving in South Africa with the knowledge of their mother tongue and a little knowledge of English. Their mother tongue here is of no help to them, as they may not use it in learning as it is regarded as a foreign language in South Africa and is not used at all in schools and are forced to use either one of the eleven official languages as indicated by Sookrajh et al. (2005, p.6). As a result, this poses as a hindrance of immigrant sustainable learning whilst in multilingual classroom.

The impact of language difficulties in sustainable learning has been widely discussed in prevailing literature. For instance, Meda et al. (2012) found that language barrier was a common hindrance for immigrant learners. As noted by Ngema (2013), the issue of language differences has become a hindrance to the immigrant learners, as they have to learn a new language, whilst at the same time, are expected to grasp the content taught. To confirm this, extant literature notes that the issue of language for immigrant learners added to the already existing emotional instability, which may impact negatively on the learners' social well-being (Perez, 2011; Bangeni & Kaap, 2007), and this hinders sustainable learning.

Learners' responses concerning the language being a hindrance to their learning in a new context, confirming Gu and Patkin's (2013) findings that immigrant learners experience language and cultural barriers in their socialisation process and encounter difficulties as being less proficient in English than their peers. This also resonates with Vandeyar (2010), and Brown and Holloway (2008), who in their various studies identified that language barriers that immigrant learners face that can bring about alienation and loneliness, and may cause one to lose a sense of belonging. In the same view, Ryan (2011) sees barriers in language as the main hindrance faced by Chinese learners that hinder their school performance and social life. The study's literature review also indicated that a multilingual classroom may make use of a language of instruction that may not be a mother tongue to the immigrant learners, the teacher, or the local learners (Coelho, 2012). Language of communication in this case has therefore been proven to be a major hindrance for the sustainable learning of immigrant learners, while being that upon which fitting in remains contingent. Gupta (2009) as cited previously, has pointed out that language plays a critical role for any interaction in the classroom and on the field of play. Sustainable learning for immigrant learners is reportedly affected by their minimum proficiency in the language of teaching and learning as none of the immigrant learners speak English language as home language, where in addition, no programme is in place at school to help the immigrant learners improve their language proficiency faster.

In support of this, present research's findings of language barrier as a hindrance in sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom, the European Union (2015, p. 9) posits that immigrant learners face the task of learning in a multilingual classroom, especially if it is their first time to experience the language of instruction which is in this study English. The

new language of instruction again is meant to be used in their assessments. So, when there is a language barrier, some immigrant learners fail these assessments not because they are limited in their cognitive capacity, but due to misunderstanding based on language. However, some immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms may not face the same degree of difficulty, as they may have resilience to achieve sustainable learning fully.

### **5.5.2 Discrimination**

Data generated from the immigrant learners on how they experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, appeared that immigrant learners felt that they are loners in the sustainable learning spaces. They felt that this is caused by them being immigrants or foreigners to the host country, and their inability to speak the local language and language of instruction in the accent of the host country learners. Also, sometimes the food they brought to school made the local learners discriminate against them. This made them see themselves as worthless, valueless and powerless in the multilingual classroom.

*Sometimes I feel sad because of the way other children treat me as I don't understand isiZulu which is their mother tongue and our FAL. Some of the local learners do not want to speak English even when I ask them, some of them said I must change the group because they can't speak English even at break time because of me.*

Feeling discriminated against and left out in some class discussions made immigrant learners powerless. Not belonging is often accompanied by discrimination. The study found that immigrant learners were sometimes left out of certain group discussions essential in their sustainable learning. The immigrant learners revealed that most of the time, they end up working on their own, as local learners abandon them, saying they cannot communicate well with them. One local learner clearly stated:

*I do not want to be associated with these Kwerekwere. They are full of themselves and try to be smart to the teachers all the time. Every time they want to speak in English as if they are white people. They need to go back to their own countries.*

**Chloe** had a similar experience about being called bad names and discriminated against because of how she physically looked. She said:

*Other learners used to call me bad names because of my dark skin colour. They used to say I am too dark as if I do not bath or have lotion to apply on my body. They in a way mocked people from our country with dehumanising insults. This cause you to have low morale, even in class wondering how everyone is thinking of you.*

The data shows that immigrant learners in South African schools faced discrimination, which sometimes leads to victimisation in multilingual classrooms. Several previous studies have also documented that immigrant learner's face discrimination from other learners of the host country. The degree of discrimination and victimisation is much higher from peers than it is from teachers. As stated by four of the immigrant learners interviewed, discrimination is experienced when the local learners choose not to play or interact with the immigrant learners during break time and sometimes during class group work time, perceiving that they want to show off and that they always speak in English all the time, not knowing that they are unable to communicate well in local languages and preferring English as a bridge. Acknowledging the existence of discrimination and isolation in learning environments, the CER framework, which was used in his study, states that in order for individuals to enjoy sustainable learning, they need to be resilient and adjust to discrimination and stimulate individual freedoms with an independent society.

Several immigrant learner participants indicated that they suffer discrimination. The discrimination is caused by the inability of local learners and community to accept the immigrants in their spaces. Those who discriminate against them regard immigrants as a threat to their resources. This stands in opposition to the supporting theory of the research study *ubuntu*, which advocates for humanness, interdependence, and communalism. In this regard, acceptance of visitors as well as sharing of the available resources to make everyone feel at home is emphasised.

### **5.5.3 Lack of acceptance and safety**

The study showed that one of the challenges hindering sustainable learning is lack of acceptance and safety among the immigrant learners. Lack of acceptance and safety was brought by discrimination. This challenge greatly affected sustainable learning for immigrant learners as immigrant learners are forced not to participate fully in class in fear of being victimised or harassed.

Data analysed from the focus group discussions with the immigrant learners suggested the lack of feelings of acceptance and safety.

*I do not feel safe when I am outside of school because of xenophobic attacks, I have seen so many terrible things and attacks on television where immigrant people were killed and burnt because they were not South Africans. When I first came to school only one boy said to me he cannot talk to me because I am a Zimbabwean girl*

Similarly, **Brendon** also shared a similar experience about an unsafe environment, especially in the community and he stated that:

*I get scared when I see people being attacked and killed, because they are coming from outside countries, and one of my relatives was once attacked. My worst experience was when I saw my uncle being attacked and called Kwerekwere, because of his complexion and accent. I fear this might come to happen to our school.*

In this regard, Crush (2005) noted that due to unfriendly reception of hatred and hostile behaviours towards immigrants, sustainable learning is adversely affected as immigrant learners may live in fear and some suffer from psycho-emotional depression. Acknowledging the effects of the challenge of lack of acceptance, Breen (2001) was of the view that when the immigrant learners are accepted in multilingual classrooms, they find themselves participating fully in class rather than adopting an aloof, unengaged way of participating. As also noted by Giltrow and Calhoun(1992, p.63), lack of acceptance is extremely harmful to sustainable learning as immigrant learners may respond by physically not involving themselves or absenting themselves from class activities when they feel they are not being accepted or tolerated in their failure to communicate in the target language. For this reason, a lack of acceptance in multilingual classrooms acts as a hindrance to sustainable learning.

#### **5.5.4 Lack of proper support**

Moreover, lack of support from teachers for immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms was also mentioned as one of the hindrances to sustainable learning. As noted by previous scholars

such as Gibson (1997) support systems play a critical role in sustainable learning as they help immigrant learners to participate well in school.

In this present study, to attest to the above, Martha confirmed the following:

*In my country we were learning in English, but in the event that you did not fully understand the point, teachers were able to explain in our mother tongue and we would understand. Here, no one explains to you, as the teachers are not familiar with our mother tongue.*

The study by Pillay (2012) found that absence of support impacts negatively on immigrant learners' sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom. These findings of previous studies support findings of the present study, which also indicated that lack of support from teachers influenced sustainable learning of immigrant learners in South African schools. Pillay (2012) further indicated that supporting immigrant learners is critical for sustainable learning, as this would make immigrant learners able to maneuver the world with proper support, as well as benefitting the basic skills for survival.

School is an important setting, where young learners build relationships with each other in a significant way that may have an impact on their sustainable learning (Bygren & Szulkin, 2010). The behaviours towards immigrant learners shown in school tend to have an impact upon immigrant learners' sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. In this present study, immigrant learners who did not get support from teachers, parents or other learners were finding it difficult to cope up in this multilingual classroom.

These findings corroborate those of Benner and Graham (2011), which suggest that schools can also provide support to the immigrant learners in their effort to reduce discrimination and victimisation. This also confirms that *ubuntu*, where the school might be seen as a home that can help reduce anxiety that children experience by providing social support, remains a concept that is exclusively applied.

#### **5.5.5 Financial difficulties**

The study has revealed that immigrant learners faced financial difficulties which pose as a hindrance to their pursuit of sustainable learning whilst in multilingual classroom. The school

principal revealed this when he indicated that most immigrant learners just vanish without paying the school fees despite them knowing that it is a fee-paying school. These difficulties like what Rudo also revealed cause the immigrant learners not to be able to provide for all their school needs like the glue, crayons, and sometimes presentable food to eat during break time. As a result, immigrant learners find themselves losing confidence and self-worth and respect from their peers as they will be known of always borrowing from others. Susan shyly noted that this does not sit well with her, and that she is embarrassed by this.

Previous research has also shown that financial difficulties are unquestionably the most persistent and common challenges faced by immigrant learners during their stay and schooling in foreign countries. The major reason for this is that due to strict immigration laws and regulations their parents may not be able to secure well-paying jobs, and that they are far from their lifetime relatives and friends who can financially assist them whenever they need help. Mundi (2012) notes that foreigners face the challenge of resource shortage particularly financial resources to sustain them, whilst learning in foreign schools due to strict regulations that may prohibit the learners' parents from seeking formal employment as well as limited education grants to foreign learners.

### **5.5.6 Cultural adjustment difficulties**

The above-presented findings indicated that immigrant learners face the challenge of adjusting to the culture in the host multilingual school. All the immigrant learner participants made it clear that their indigenous culture did not balance with the culture of the current society. The participants felt that the behaviour shown by their fellow local learners in school differs from what they were taught in their home schools. In this research study, it was shown that most immigrant learners displayed poor cultural adjustment to the host culture and none of the participants could define themselves as South Africans. This is what Brendon, a 14-year-old Zambian boy, had to say:

*I am struggling to fit into some of the cultures of this school. You know if we go for swimming lessons, we are supposed to go wearing swimming attire, which to me is like walking in under pants, I do not think I will get used to this. I do not feel comfortable at all and as a result ma'am swimming is my worst lesson.*

Also, when it is Heritage Day, boys come to school dressed in animal skins, leaving parts of their thighs naked. Susan, 14-year-old girl from Zimbabwe noted:

*Yoh, some cultures ma'am, they are hard to follow. Even my relatives at home will say that maybe something has gone wrong if they see me doing that, walking naked it's a no to me. I do not wish to follow that even if it happens that I stay here forever. I respect it as their culture not me to follow it.*

On the issue of cultural adjustment, most immigrant learners in the FGDs mentioned that it is difficult for them to adjust to the new culture practiced in South Africa. Rudo, Patrick and Susan, all from Zimbabwe, indicated that even at their homes they follow what they used to do whilst in Zimbabwe. The type of food they cook at home, their music they play and at times the type of games are all of Zimbabwe. Susan came to the extent of saying even the national anthem she sings better attaching meaning to it is that of Zimbabwe. She sings the South African one just for the sake of singing, without attaching emotion or meaning to it. This is what Peter said:

*Myself, I am here to learn but I follow my country's culture. Yes, here and there I may follow the culture here but not always.*

It was highlighted in the literature review that when immigrant learners leave their countries of origin and become enrolled in the host multilingual classroom, they face cultural difficulties and maybe expected to either assimilate, integrate, separate or marginalise into the new culture for the learner to adapt well into sustainable learning whilst in multilingual classroom (Berry, 2005). The mentioned strategies depend on the extent to which the individuals balance the original culture and the new one (Sam & Berry, 2010). In this research study, it shows most immigrant learners are holding their home cultures like Martha and Peter from DRC. The immigrant learners from Zimbabwe are seen to exercise the integration method, as they are maintaining their own culture at the same time having interactions with the local culture of the local learners. Studies done recently indicate that Berry's integration category is often associated with the most favourable outcomes, like better adjustment (e.g., showing positive self-esteem, pro-social behaviours and lower depression) (Chen, Benet- Martinez, & Bond, 2008; Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Jarvis, 2007).

The issue of cultural adjustment difficulties was also highlighted by Lee and Hawkin (2015) ,who argued that immigrant adolescents experience challenges when moving into a new context and unfamiliar with diverse culture. In the same vein, Kasper (2018) also found that a lack of cultural integration influenced sustainable learning in multilingual learning environments in Australia.

Adjusting to the local culture plays an important role in sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

## **5.6 Immigrant learner experiences**

This section presents generated data as per the research objectives and the themes and sub-themes that emerged, drawing from the recorded semi-structured interviews, FGDs, and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were administered to the learners, school principal, teachers and the parents, whilst the FGDs were done by the immigrant and local learners to validate what was found in individual interviews. This was also done in order to make those learners who were shy to express their views as individuals do that freely in a group setting. The generated data from the research participants indicated that positive as well as negative experiences of sustainable learning were realised by those immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

### **5.6.1 Positive experiences of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom**

The presentation and discussion in the present theme include both what was generated empirically through semi-structured interviews, as well as group discussions.

Looking at the generated data, some positive things were experienced by most research participants. These included the acceptance of them as foreign learners in the multilingual host school, engaging in racial diversity, and taking part in many of the school activities like co-curricular activities like participating in sports like swimming, choral groups, and learning of computers. Through some lengthy discussions in the interviews and FGDs with the immigrant learners, all of them indicated that they were generally happy to be in South African multilingual classrooms. Some even noted that their recent school was even better than the former one in their home countries. They said now they are able to communicate more fluently in English. They said the language on its own contributes to the sustainable learning as they will continue to make use of it in the near future in solving life challenges. They indicated that because of being in a multilingual classroom, it is now possible to understand and communicate with a diverse number of people from diverse cultures and countries towards a sustainable future.

One of the participants, Patrick, who is an immigrant learner indicated that he was happy receiving sustainable learning in the multilingual classroom. Patrick had this to say:

*I was so happy because this is a big school, and we learn English a lot. Now I am very comfortable in speaking in English. This school is even better than my former school back home.*

Also, in her own words, Rudo said:

*Well, I am very happy with the education I am getting here. I am now able to communicate in different languages like isiZulu, and fluent English. At home, I was shy to speak in English, but now it comes naturally. Also, as we are learning isiZulu as our other language, I am equipped with many languages that will help me in communicating with a variety of people.*

Other participants, who included Brendon, also indicated that they were experiencing sustainable learning in a positive way. One of the substantiating responses he gave was:

*Generally, I am very happy with the prevailing experiences on sustainable learning I am going through in my classroom as we are enjoying the learning just like other students who are citizens of South Africa. I have never experienced any form of discrimination from our educators although I have come across some victimisation from a few learners. However, I'm generally happy with the way we are being treated as this is better than what other immigrant learners from township schools, where my cousin goes to be treated.*

From the interview data, the researcher noted that some of the immigrant students were satisfied with their learning in multilingual classrooms as they were treated equally and felt accommodated by some of the teachers and classmates. One of the immigrant learners named Peter had this to say:

*I feel satisfied, because we are accepted and we are treated equally just like others. As immigrant learners here, we are given the opportunities to possess leadership positions and we are also included in other school activities and we have three of us who are chosen*

*as monitors and the senior prefect is an immigrant boy. In other words, we are being accommodated.*

In the same line of positive sustainable learning experiences, another participant, Chloe remarked:

*As for me, I am so happy and satisfied with the prevailing environment at this school where I'm undertaking my education here in South Africa. The climate has changed over the years since I joined here as immigrant learner, we are now feeling comfortable and enjoying the learning with minimum discrimination and victimisation. I can safely say there is now almost equal treatment for all learners regardless of race or country of origin. I thank the government of South Africa as well as the management of this school for making sure that as learners we treat each other equally.*

### **5.6.2 Negative experiences of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom**

The participants in the study were asked to indicate some of the negative experiences encountered by immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms. The major challenges mentioned by most of the participants include language barriers, discrimination, isolation and victimisation, challenges of securing accommodation, financial difficulties as well as cultural-adjustment challenges.

#### **5.6.2.1 Language barriers**

The participants in the interviews and FGDs highlighted that one of the negative experiences faced by immigrant learners was language barriers which affect the learning process as well as affecting the level of communication. One of the participants identified as Rudo remarked:

*Yes, a lot of things changed. I am not able to communicate in my home language at school. I am forced to always speak in English and or isiZulu at times, which I do not understand well. Some of the subjects are totally different. We are not doing Agriculture as a subject here. And again, I'm definitely not considered a local by my classmates, as I am not able to speak their language. I was sometimes disappointed, and I felt as though I had some*

*disabilities since I could not speak English clearly. I was then forced to study very hard to improve my own communication skills.*

Similar sentiments were also made by another interviewee, who provided that the main challenge was the language barrier. The participant identified as Patrick stated:

*A lot of challenges ma'am. We face many challenges, especially in the first years when all the things will be new. Again, sometimes you will not understand the language well due to different accent used by the white teachers. There will be no one to explain to you in your mother language for you to understand better so as a result you fail to do the things you actually know due to language barrier. This makes me sad. Sometimes I would be knowing the answer in my home language, but then fail to express myself well in English, resulting in some learners laughing at me. When this happens, next time I become shy to answer and participate in class fully.*

Other participants in the study also indicated that the language barrier was among the main challenges faced by immigrant learners in most multi-cultural educational systems in South Africa. Some of the substantiating responses from the teacher participants are provided as follows:

*During the first year at a South African school, most immigrant learners face the challenge of language barrier. Personally, I have taught many of them who were failing to understand instructions in English during their first year as an immigrant learner at this school in South Africa, They failed to understand many spoken words due to the ascent or the rate of speech and pronunciation by English and local learners. However, after some time, mostly at the end of their first year, I have noticed that they will understand English very well. Now, they can hear any piece of conversation (Immigrant teacher).*

*At first, my English proficiency was not very good. Sometimes, I could not really understand what was said by the teachers and reading was very difficult. They were also many words I could not understand. At some point, I was deprived of a chance to lead in the discussion group due to the language limitation and this clearly disturbed my*

*sustainable learning process but there was improvement with time. (Peter, Immigrant student).*

*My first year here was so challenging. I found as if teachers were literally singing, as they seemed to be talking so fast in English, and it was extremely difficult for me to follow and concentrate in the classroom. Before I came to South Africa, I had to listen to recordings of English teachers to familiarise myself with the South African English. At one point I could feel to stop the teachers or telling them to slow down so that I can meditate. It was very hard for me to capture the content of most the lessons as I failed to understand the language. This does not mean I did not even understand any English words, but the accent was different, hence it took me time to adapt (Rudo, Immigrant student).*

#### **5.6.2.2 Discrimination, isolation and victimisation**

Discrimination against immigrant learners by other learners was also identified as one of the hindrances to sustainable learning of immigrant learners in multilingual classroom. The challenge of discrimination was mentioned by most of the participants. One of the interviewees, Rudo gave the following account:

*Yes, quite a lot. Some learners are so mean, especially if you try to speak in English during break time. One learner actually said to me 'Makwerekwere, why do you speak isiNgezi during break. Don't you have a language?' This actually demoralises me and I lose my confidence and self-worth. In the end, it affects my performance in class as I will not be able to ask questions in English freely fearing victimisation and bad comments from my fellow classmates. During the first days of my classes, I realised that most foreign learners were walking or playing alone or among themselves.*

In the same vein, another participant in the interviews identified as Patrick also said that immigrant learners faced the challenge of discrimination from other local learners and this disturbed the learning system of the immigrant learners. The participant had this to say:

*Yes, they do happen. Some learners are so segregatory, especially if you try to speak in English all the time. One learner also said to me “Makwerekwere, why do you eat such filthy food? He was holding my lunchbox showing others my food. I felt ashamed and the next day I left my lunchbox at home and bought the food at school. I ended up eating the food I did not enjoy in fear of being laughed at. This actually demoralises me and I lose my confidence and self-worth. In the end it affects my performance in class. So yes, I have once experienced victimisation and received unfavourable comments from my fellow classmates.*

Another participant, Susan remarked:

*...And again, I’m definitely not considered a local by my classmates and at times they exclude me from their birthday parties at their homes. Due to this treatment, sometimes I feel powerless even to take part in discussions that concerns SA citizens. In some instances, I felt discomfort in the class because my classmates could pretend not to have understood what I could say such that I end up saying one thing several times and they could laugh at the way I pronounced or my ascent. This made me feel more uncomfortable and felt unwanted and isolated.*

Brendon, one of the immigrant students, stated that immigrant students face different forms of discrimination at the hands of South African learners. Brendon had this to say:

*The main form of discrimination we face name-calling. Most immigrant learners experience derogatory name-calling, teasing and embarrassment. These name-calls include terms such as ‘ingogongo’, ‘amakwerekwere,’ crocodile drivers’ and ‘kwang’. We are also called some ugly names, which I have forgotten. As immigrant students we also experience discrimination from South African learners in the form of how they stare, their looks, and glaring.[sic] Discrimination also happens in classrooms in the guise of teasing which may not be noticed by the teachers. There are also unkind comments such as “they ran home from hunger”, “the poor”, “they must go back to their country”, “and they came to make our country dirty” among others...*

From the teachers' views, one of the participants who was a principal of the multilingual school also raised the issue of discrimination making the following statement:

*We have had many cases of foreign learners being humiliated and embarrassed and in some instances resulting in xenophobia attacks. I have also come across immigrant learners who have experienced humiliation and embarrassment when communicating using English in the classrooms. Humiliation sometimes comes in the form of being embarrassed by local students who may laugh at them because of the way they articulate certain words, their accent, or when they use wrong words. In some instances, pronouncing words with French or Portuguese accent is described as "weird" and leads to teasing.*

Similar experiences were also shared by one of the learners who were identified as Peter and Chloe. The following accounts are their responses:

*We have faced some different forms of discrimination from our classmates and this has resulted in loneliness as we end up feeling ignored. Personally this makes me feel ignored, feel bad, feel upset about my classmates and I feel very lonely. In most instances, one can see South Africans in one place and Congolese such as me in their own place. This really affected me, and could feel out of place in class. I felt that I was an outcast. Because I did not speak the English language well, it did not mean that I could not understand what was going on in class. It was not until after a year or two that the teacher knew what I was capable of when I started performing like other students in my class (Peter, Immigrant student).*

*Well, personally I feel that there are no opportunities for us foreign learners in South Africa to interact with other classmates except in one or two class discussions. As for me, I ended up telling myself that I came to learn and not to make friends in this country. For my classmates, we sometimes do not talk much on personal things. I have then noticed that South African learners have their own friends, whilst immigrant learners also make friends among themselves. Usually, the classmates disappear after school and we feel isolated and lonely.*

### **5.6.2.3 Financial difficulties**

Previous research has also shown that financial difficulties are unquestionably the most persistent and common challenges faced by immigrant learners during their stay and schooling in foreign countries. The major reason is that due to strict immigration laws and regulations, their parents may not be able to secure well-paying jobs, and that they are far from their lifetime relatives and friends who can financially assist them whenever they need help. Financial difficulties were also found to be among the major challenges faced by immigrant learners' families, which consequently affected their sustainable learning in foreign countries. The following accounts are some of the verbatim statements of the participants after they were asked to highlight some of the challenges faced by immigrant learners which affect sustainable learning. Brendon noted:

*I also encountered financial difficulties. Although my parents are working money is still not enough. A lot of money is needed in making sure that we acquire the study permits which are so expensive. So at times we may fail to raise money for leisure like what other learners do.*

Regarding financial problems, the Principal through the semi-structured interview openly said:

*We have a number of these immigrant learners here and most of them do not pay fees. They fail to pay and most of them just disappear with our monies, you know this gives the school a burden as the money will not be recovered. That the major problem they have of not affording the fees in the middle of the school year.*

### **5.6.2.4 Cultural adjustment**

The findings of this study revealed that failure to quickly adjust to the learning culture in South Africa was among the major factors hindering sustainable learning of immigrant students. The interview participants were overwhelmingly in agreement about the cultural adjustment difficulties in their first years in multilingual schools. One of the immigrant learners who participated in this research identified as Peter had this to say:

*Also, academic adjustment has also been quite difficult for me, especially in my class because of my unfamiliarity with the South African education system. My first day in class was challenging. Basically, I expected something quite similar to my home country. I realized that the facilities here are great, but the area of human relations was lacking. I was lucky I met a foreign teacher who was very helpful to me. She tried to give me an insight into South African learning culture, and I started learning right from there.*

*During my first day in class I was a little bit worried about what would be the expectations of the teachers. I did not know the teachers. I was expecting to get a mentor who would teach me the ropes. I wanted someone who will explain in my mother tongue for me to fully understand. I was worried much about the learning culture here in South Africa but I later adjusted.*

The immigrant students also mentioned that they faced some difficulties in trying to adjust to the South African academic culture. One of the students identified as Chloe commented:

*It is culturally inappropriate to debate with a teacher or an elder in my country. I noticed here in my class that American students are not afraid to have a casual conversation and sometimes argue with teachers in class. In my country, students are supposed to respect teachers. We do not argue with the teacher in class and do not deny following the teacher's instructions. It was a culture shock for me to see students behaving that way. However, I later got used to it.*

Susan commented likewise:

*The primary education system in South Africa is totally different from that of my home country. In my country, one teacher teaches most of the main subjects in class. The learners will only be taught practical subjects like Agriculture, Computers and Music by other teachers, but most of the time, your grade teacher teaches you all the subjects. But when I came here, I found that the teachers teach us different subjects. It took me time to adjust to this learning culture in South Africa.*

In support of the above, participants still on the same issue of cultural adjustment difficulty, two teachers who were interviewed both agreed that the immigrant learners in their early years at the

multilingual classroom find it difficult to fit in smoothly into the culture of the school. They all agreed that the immigrant learners at first would be lacking confidence to fully take charge of their learning. They highlighted that they usually acted as if they needed assurance from someone all the time, and this in a way affected their attainment of sustainable learning. One of the teachers revealed that:

*It is when you randomly pick the learner up to give an answer when you realise that the child has a brilliant contribution, but was putting his hand down and keeping quiet. As a result, in my class, I am now randomly picking learners to say something, even when they are not raising their hands, to make them share something in class.*

It can be seen from the responses that for the immigrant learners, negative experiences override the positive experiences they have encountered in the classroom. Although a few participants indicated that they were happy to learn new languages including English and isiZulu in order to be accepted and treated well by their fellow local learners, they also suffered a myriad challenges including language barriers, discrimination, isolation and victimisation, and cultural adjustment difficulties.

## **5.7 Support**

It was this research study's objective to determine suitable ways of supporting immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom to achieve sustainable learning in an enabling environment. Hindrances were got from the generated data and presented. Subsequently, the ways of supporting the immigrant learners in sustainable learning were obtained from data, and are presented below. When they were asked how they hoped to be helped, the immigrant learners came up with different suggestions. Brendon had this to say:

*You know what, Ma'am, when we come here to learn in a foreign country, no one at this school talks to us as a way of welcoming us and showing us the way. They just take us as local learners. So you will be faced with trying to adjust to the home living conditions and the change in school environment too. At least an orientation and telling us to feel at home at home will be appropriate.*

Corroborating the above sentiment, T1 expressed that in her class learners were having a tendency of laughing when immigrant learners were talking in their accents. They were also laughing when the teacher called these learners names and surnames. This made the immigrant learners not to feel at ease at all and felt discriminated, isolated and victimised. As a result, I talked to them, telling them:

*We are one family and we need to respect and tolerate each other despite our differences in where we come from. The fact that we are in the same class means a lot, so we need to fight for each other and look after each other and avoid laughing at each other.*

From that day, no laughing was experienced, and learners were treating each other well.

The above sentiments are in line with *ubuntu* theory, which advocates for an understanding of the self as a product of the happiness and wellbeing of others. So in this case, immigrant learners felt the need to be welcomed and shown how to follow cultural mores, in order to feel at home, as well as leading to greater reciprocity. So, immigrant orientation is needed to overcome hindrances of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

Another teacher shared her strategy to overcome the challenges of language as a barrier to immigrant sustainable learning by stating the following:

*Language is a big challenge, because most immigrant learners do not put enough effort in making sure that they learn the language of instruction. In order to make sure that immigrant learners are not left behind in sustainable learning, I vary my activities in my lesson delivery to cater for them. I include games, group work, songs and plays that they may understand the message put across either by singing or role play. In this way, the immigrant learners might want to interpret what they were singing thereby learning the language.*

In trying to overcome the language barrier, Patrick noted that it was better for them to be involved in sporting activities where they practice every day, thereby communicating and creating team spirit with the other local learners. In this way, he noted that frequent communication would boost the language learning as well as breaking the discriminatory spirit among learners as they would find something good to praise the immigrant learners for in sporting activities.

In overcoming cultural adjustment difficulties hindrances, most immigrant learners contend that it was a tough task to get past on their own, but with a great deal of support, they were able to persevere. Most immigrant learners believed that if functions like cultural exchanges are held regularly in schools, this will help as learners talk about their own cultures sharing with others in the end gaining a feeling of respect in the multilingual classroom. When the learners share their cultures with other learners, I do believe that it helps them feel more valuable.

Another thing put across was the need of explaining classroom customs at the start of the year so that immigrant learners know what is expected of them and be able to settle down swiftly in a non-toxic setting.

Another point noted on trying to overcome hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom is the formation of support groups. These support groups are to be made by the immigrant family in the school. They may also in a way be given a chance to talk about their feelings to other learners on gatherings. They said that the move would make the local learners understand them more, and start seeing them in a different positive way. By sharing experiences in support groups, the immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom help each other in overcoming hindrances of sustainable learning.

Above all, most parents' participants and teachers highlighted that learners need to be involved in sporting activities that interest them both in and outside of school. Teachers believe that team activity in relevant subjects would assist learners to integrate more effectively. This they say will also boost immigrant learners' confidence when they receive some moral support from the cheering of other school mates when they perform well in the chosen sporting activities.

### **5.7.1 Inclusive learning**

Teachers elucidated on how they need to ensure inclusivity of all learners including immigrant learners, and also how they ought to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It was also revealed that even though teachers wish to give full support to the learners, they are always confused by the language barrier, they cannot even code-switch, as teachers themselves do not properly understand any of the indigenous languages. Additionally, immigrant learners originate from different foreign countries. It becomes even worse for immigrant learners, because other

learners are able to assist each other using their mother-tongue. Moreover, they shared the importance of knowing the learners' background in evaluating the strategies of assisting each learner as they represent diverse backgrounds. This is what one of the teachers had to say:

*I had a problem understanding this one child who always wanted me to repeat myself, because when you look at them you cannot see the difference as they all look the same, until I got to understand about her background and all the challenges she had with my accent, as I seemed to be very fast for her. I also made an effort to communicate with her parents, my relationship with her parents worked very well, because I gained an understanding of her background, which enabled me to be accommodative and supportive to her situation. After every lesson, I would call her and find out what she did or did not understand, after that I tried to slowly explain it to her.*

Another teacher also shared a similar sentiment, on the strategy to pair learners so that they assist each other. She stated:

*I ensure inclusivity of all learners in a learning process by pairing immigrant learners with the learners who are able to assist them as it is difficult sometimes to attend to each learner. Even though they help each other, I often monitor if they are still on the right track. If I realise that there is no connection amongst the learners I paired them with, I outsource with the permission from the parent.*

Likewise, the principal reaffirmed what other teachers articulate, but he further elucidated how immigrant parents show lack of interest in their children learning isiZulu. This is what he had to say from his experience as a teacher:

*During my service as a teacher, I tried to show support and ensure inclusivity of all learners during the process of teaching and learning by giving attention to all learner needs. Having an immigrant learner in my class who did not understand our indigenous language (isiZulu) that I teach, I made them seat with the learners who helped him. Although sometimes they did not trust their peers, I tried to explain things to them one-on-one.*

### **5.7.2 Teacher support**

In determining whether support is useful, the students were asked to indicate whether their teachers were supportive. Data suggested that most learners felt support from the teachers and teachers were sensitive to what they were experiencing as immigrant learners in a new context. This is what Patrick and Martha had to say:

*Teachers in this school treat all of us the same way. They are not discriminating against me because I was not born in South Africa.*

However, not all the learners feel that teachers were supportive and sensitive to their situations as immigrant learners. This is what Brendon said:

*I do not like my teacher because she does not like me, she always blames me for the things I did not do. I think she ill-treats me because I am not a South African. Other learners are telling me that she is a racist. If I have a problem I do not even think about sharing it with my teacher since my parents are not here.*

Likewise, John articulated a similar encounter by stating that:

*Teachers are nice but my first additional language teacher used to make fun of me if I ask as a result of not understanding instructions, which used to make me feel that she didn't care about me.*

These findings reveal the need for support from the teachers to ensure sustainable learning of the immigrant students in the multilingual classrooms.

### **5.7.3 Parental involvement**

The responses concerning involvement of immigrant parents in the social well-being of their children in a new context revealed that when it comes to the experiences and challenges with which immigrant learners are faced, parents play a major role to play in assisting learners to effectively adapt to the new context and to navigate the challenges with which they are faced.

According to the responses from the English and Life skills teachers about parental involvement of immigrant parents, they articulated that parents need to be involved in their children's education. One English teacher said:

*I have a good relationship with my immigrant learners' parents, we communicate almost about everything that concerns the learner and they assist her in doing her home works. This works very well and this should be done by other teachers in the school.*

However, the response from this English Language teacher was contradictory to those of the Mathematics teacher. Her response revealed lack of parental involvement. He said:

*Most parents of immigrant learners show no interest in wanting to find out about the progress of their children in isiZulu. Some of the learners start school late in January or after each term when a lot of work has been covered, nobody from home come to report or write a letter letting me know the reason for the learner to start late, and to ask what has been done while the child couldn't start school on time. Most of them do not do their homework, and it is as if nobody cares. There is need for teachers to write letters to the parents to know what their parents have to say.*

Another response from one of the immigrant students also stresses the importance of parental involvement in the sustainable learning of the students. Peter, a twelve-year-old boy from DRC who went through many challenges, because of being an immigrant learner, affirmed positive responses by some of the teachers with regard to parental involvement by saying:

*I got into so many troubles whilst trying to fit in and dealing with all the challenges. The only people who got me out of all the trouble were my parents who gave me good advice which is helping me cope with all the challenges. After listening to my parents and following their advice about behaving in a good manner and ignoring all the discriminating voices, I am now doing very well even with my studies.*

Similarly, Susan, whose experiences were never negative, had this to say to echo what Peter shared about his parents' intervention:

*I never experience any challenges, because my father often tells me that I should always be positive in life. If my friends speak in a language that I do not understand, I ask them for the meaning, that way I get to learn the language.*

The data reveals that parents always have a vital role to play in the adaptation of the immigrant learners in the new context. Most challenges are experienced on their arrival to the new environment. The only people that the learners trust at that time are their parents who understand what they are experiencing. It was also revealed that coping with the anxiety of being in a new school in a foreign country, immigrant learners needed their parents' intervention. For most schools, the issue of parental involvement is always unresolved, because many parents do not realise the importance and the value of their involvement in their children's' education. Good parents are those who are involved in their children's' education.

#### **5.7.4 Multi-dimensional communication skills**

Responses also showed the need for multidimensional communication skills, where participants argued that these should be used both in the school for the purposes of getting the learner access to both content and skills. According to the Principal, this will help the learner to acquire and retain the content and various communication skills. One of the teachers provided an example thus:

*For multidimensional communication skills to be enhanced, this calls for the involvement of language education communication skills, which is an essential tool for the development of the learner's speaking and writing abilities.*

Corroborating this, a counsellor argued:

*Application of communicative language teaching focusing on linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, socio-cultural, social and strategic competences and drama can help in the achievement of multilingualism in education. These can be realized by continuous use of these competences in education.*

Another comprehensive response was also provided by an English teacher, who said the following:

*...grammar translation, direct method [teaching using the target language), reading method, use of audio lingual and audio-visual approaches can also be applied in teaching languages in a multilingual set up. This enhances sustainable learning.*

The responses show that when foreign and indigenous languages are included in the multilingualism practices in education, then we should always try to avoid imposing these languages to the learners. A keen measure and clear framework ought to be taken into account because imposing languages to people is dangerous, and may cause tensions amongst different communities.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

The aim of the study was to explore sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom in an effort to find hindering factors and work towards supporting learners overcome the hindrances in immigrant sustainable learning. This chapter presented, analysed and interpreted the data generated from the research participants. The generated data revealed that indeed sustainable learning is experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom and also these learners face some hindrances in successfully gaining the required skills. Strategies or support that need to be given to alleviate the hindrances were also discussed. These include the need for inclusive learning where every learner's needs are met, teacher support, where they will be helped to deal with classes with a diverse number of learners, in this case immigrant learners, parental involvement, where parents must be fully involved in their child's learning. In this view, the team spelt out the need for collaboratively working together to overcome these hindrances. Immigrant learners felt that if the discussed ways of support are implemented, then, they will be in a better space to experience sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom. As this study is a PAR one, then action must be taken to change the situation for the better. Chapter 6 details the interventions taken in order to overcome the hindrances of sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **INTERVENTION TO OVERCOME HINDRANCES ON SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of the study was to explore sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, in order to find out ways of supporting them in any hindering circumstances. The previous chapter discussed the findings that there are some hindrances these learners face that block them from fully accessing the sustainable learning while in a multilingual classroom. The immigrant learners suggested ways in which they feel if implemented can help in supporting them overcome their hindrances and experience sustainable learning positively. The study took the CER lenses in that view. This research study used the PAR methods and as such action was to be taken as an intervention to overcome hindrances highlighted by the generated data. PAR researches centers on research whose drive is to allow action. For this reason, this chapter concentrated on the implementation of the activities that was suggested by the research team involved in the study. The intervention workshops are evaluated and their effectiveness in supporting immigrant learners to overcome hindrances of sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom discussed.

#### **6.2 Action taken**

Having highlighted all the suggestions for the support of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom towards their sustainable learning, the suggestions were actualized in order to assess their efficacy. The team suggested that this could be implemented in the Second Term from April to November, and assess how this would have helped the learners. In this regard, workshops were

held at the school to explain to teachers, immigrant learners, local learners and the parents what was found, and to discuss on how to implement the suggestions in support of the immigrant sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. In these workshops, the Vice Principal was the facilitator, who happened to be part of the research team. The workshop were termed Development Workshops in relation to immigrant learners (inclusivity). The workshop details are attached in Appendix 3.

### **6.2.1 Workshop with teachers**

Having highlighted all these suggestions in FGDs, it was now time to actualise the suggestions and assess their efficacy. The team suggested to implement the suggested interventions from the second term of April, and assess how it worked during the teaching-learning episodes. Thus, acknowledging the prevailing circumstances, the school saw the need to hold a teacher development workshop on inclusive education. The workshop also covered aspects on classroom management. bearing in mind that the classroom is composed of different types of learners from diverse backgrounds, including those immigrant learners who are the focal point in this study. For this reason, teachers who were recently graduates with less experience were finding it difficult to maintain discipline in the classroom, while at the same time neutralizing power issues. The workshop covered aspects like the teachers' conduct in a multilingual classroom; maintaining focus and tolerance among learners; and the proper way of disciplining unbecoming behaviours of learners in class. The point of reference was the South African Council of Educators (SACE) document on the relation between the teacher and the learner, bearing in mind that CER does not tolerate unequal power relations. The workshop was meant to empower teachers with the knowledge on how to support immigrant learners on their sustainable learning. The workshop was attended by the staff. The deputy principal of the school, who also was part of the research team facilitated the workshop and it was a discursive one (Appendix Q).

After the workshop, most teachers alluded to the fact that it was really an insightful experience for them. They admitted that indeed they were not considering that they had also learners who are immigrants and are learning everything from the scratch. Insofar as they were aware that some of their learners are not South Africans, they did not consider how this might have affected their experiences in sustainable learning. One teacher attendant had this to say:

*This workshop really helped me a lot. You know, I used to shout at these learners anyhow not realising that they also need respect like anyone else. The SACE code of conduct document really made a difference in my conduct with my learners. I will no longer shout at them anyhow.*

The above sentiments showed that teachers really appreciated what they learnt during the workshop presentation. In a way, the objective of the workshop was achieved as teachers promised to be better teachers who have a listening ear to every learner in a multilingual classroom as they are now aware of what they are expected to do through their SACE document which is their guide.

One of the immigrant learners, who was asked of his views also proudly stated:

*I do not know what happened to our teachers, they are all nice these days. They even ask you how you are feeling, which they never did previously. Due to their changed behaviours, I am also now feeling comfortable to be part of the class and my zeal for learning has improved knowing that the teachers are supportive and are concerned about my welfare. Whatever they were told in their meeting is working fairly well for us.*

Another Grade Six educator who also benefited from the workshop had this to say:

*I really thank this workshop as it really helped me to be a better educator, who will now try to look at each learner differently. I hope this will go a long way in my learners achieve sustainable learning smoothly.*

A male educator who recently joined the school as a Music teacher said:

*These kind of workshops ought to be carried out often to remind us of some of the things we might take for granted and seem to ignore. I really benefitted a lot from this.*

The teachers' comments after the workshop show that most teachers were empowered and mutual understanding was fostered among the teachers. The teachers then agreed to continuously hold these staff development workshops designed to help them in dealing with various learners and their needs. They revealed that some of their learners' bad behaviours were in actual fact caused by their own inability to control the class appropriately. Most teachers felt that being reminded of one's duties helps in reviving oneself, especially when in the field with the learners. They revealed

that due to the empowerment they received through the workshop, harmony prevailed in their classes, and sustainable learning for immigrant learners was realised in a conducive environment. They agreed to hold such workshops once per term especially at the beginning of each term.

### **6.2.2 Workshop with learners**

The immigrant learner participants and the local learner participants all indicated that they are sometimes not comfortable with one another. This was made clear by dehumanising names they sometimes called each other, or the unacceptable behaviour of laughing each other and belittling one another. To address these matters of helping learners share knowledge, equipping skills to overcome challenges and be able to stand up for themselves, a workshop was also held with the learners. Due to COVID-19 restrictions that did not allow outsiders to enter the school premises, a Life Skills teacher who also happened to be a lay counsellor at the school and also part of the research team, facilitated the workshop.

The following responses were noted:

*I really learnt a lot from the workshop. You know, I was not treating my fellow learners from other countries well. I thought they were different from us and do not deserve to be here. I was seeing myself as better than them and as a result was not comfortable to play with them as my best friends. From now on, I will treat them well and help each other towards our educational goals. I really learnt a lot.*

Another local learner also indicated that:

*I am inspired by the discussion we had. From today onwards, I will treat everyone better than I used to do. No one is powerful than the other at this school. We are all the same and I will be friendlier to everyone.*

In the workshop, I observed that immigrant learners felt loved and recognised, and that this motivated them to keep on trying in their sustainable learning, even if this seemed difficult. The issues discussed in the workshop transformed the learners, and they now felt a sense of positive self-regard. This new feeling brought hope to the immigrant learners towards their sustainable

learning. Most of them said they were now able to build and maintain friendships with local learners easily after the workshop.

### **6.2.3 Workshop with the parents**

The results of the study revealed that parents play a pivotal role in the sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. They are the ones who provide for the learners and provide a support base. As a result, the research team also saw the need to hold a workshop with them on ways of supporting learners achieve well in school. The issues discussed were regarding how to support children in school and duties of parents to their learners and teachers. Due to the limited numbers of gatherings due to COVID-19 restrictions, few parents attended the workshop. These were the immigrant parents and the SGB members. One SGB parent chaired the workshop.

The parents' comments after the workshop showed that they benefitted from the workshop. One of the parents said:

*The workshop really opened my eyes. I learned that working together with my teachers' child is of great benefit to my child. Sometimes as parents we do not ask what the child had learnt at school and any challenges she or he is facing, leaving our children without any support at home.*

Another parent added

*Workshops like these must have been done earlier. As parents, we now know which issues to say to our kids. To tell the truth, I was calling my child's friend 'your Kwerekwere' friend is calling you, not knowing that I am promoting hate speech to my child, and also causing emotional unrest to the friend. From now on, I won't say anything unacceptable to my child. Our children learn from us.*

From all the parents' sentiments, the workshop proves to have instilled the need for change of behaviours and attitude in the attendant parents. This change was made possible due to the interactions between them that also gave birth to a new insight of trust and understanding of one another and their world around them. The teachers reported their parents were now supportive,

and they are collaboratively working together in helping their children achieve sustainable learning. This show that the parents and teachers feel empowered as they approved on something together without anyone dictating for them. As with the teachers, the team agreed to hold parents meetings at the beginning of each year and again at the end of each term.

### **6.3 Evidence of success**

The workshops held with different groups proved to be successful. It was easy to measure the success as the research study took long to complete, and the researcher had ample time to observe. Based on the researcher's observations and teacher's comments, all learners' attitudes towards one another and towards sustainable learning changed for the better. The immigrant learners began to see their challenges as a springboard to their own success. They made it clear that because of the various workshops held, some teachers now understood them well. They were no longer shouting at them as they had before, but rather, they ask if the learners had understood or if they were familiar with what was being said or done, and teachers were took the time to explain. It also felt great to hear their teachers and parents communicating together with a sense of mutual understanding. The teachers' and local learners' attitudes toward the immigrant learners also changed in a positive way. The immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom proudly said that they are now not ashamed of whom they are. Their self-esteem improved and as a result could easily experience sustainable learning in a relaxed and conducive mood.

The school also saw the need to include practical subjects like Music and Art through establishing a School Governing Board (SGB) post of a Music and Art Teacher, who was recently hired. Sporting activities like soccer, netball, and swimming were revived, and learners are now competing in these sporting activities. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, much of the competitions have been temporarily placed on hold. The learners were only doing the activities at school. The Art and Music Teachers were happy with the progress in their practical subjects. They revealed that their learners were doing excellent work.

The teachers also felt empowered. They indicated that of late, they were not being fair with the immigrant learners, but had really changed their attitudes towards them. One isiZulu teacher even offered extra lessons to the immigrant learners so that they catch up in their isiZulu FAL in speaking and the phonics. She indicated that knowing theses phonics would help learners to catch

up, as they are usually done in the lower grades. This was received with great joy by the immigrant learners and parents. This researcher observed that the learners who are part of the extra classes only took a period of three months at most to master the basic phonics in isiZulu. In her own observations, the isiZulu teacher proudly said that some of the immigrant learners were by then able to write perfectly well. This is reportedly helping one immigrant learner as follows:

*At least I can understand isiZulu instructions and able to construct words and sentences easily now. Learning phonics with this teacher is really helping me. Even discussing in class with others is now not a problem. Now I can focus well on my sustainable learning as there is no language barrier now.*

The action taken of the workshops and the implementation of what was learnt in workshops changed everyone's perception towards immigrant sustainable learning. The parents started working together with their children's teachers amicably. The teachers are now not concerned with covering the syllabus but also tries to understand their learners and giving a listening ear always. This collaboration as a result brought the feeling of "we belong" to each and every one in the multilingual classroom, thereby overcoming hindrances of immigrant sustainable learning.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

The aim of the study was to explore sustainable learning, as experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom, with the aim of finding ways of supporting them. The hindrances the immigrant learners face are that of lack of support from the locals and being powerless due to language and cultural limitations. They also face loneliness as they cannot be involved in long lasting friendships because of fear of being mocked on and dehumanizing treatment foreigners receive in the broader community and as such, find limitations in pursuing their sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom freely. However, the research team concluded that it was vital to collaboratively work together and try to help the immigrants get past their hindrances, where this chapter concentrated on ways to overcome these hindrances for an enabling environment for immigrant sustainable learning.

Workshops were held with the teachers as well as the learners to empower them with the skills needed. After the workshops, all the concerned groups accepted that they were really helped and found themselves changing the attitudes they were having before on immigrant sustainable learning. The immigrant learners felt transformed and empowered with the life skills that help them develop positive self-images since they stopped looking down upon themselves. They were also able to make and maintain friendships with their local learners, as there was then trust among them, which then made it simple for them to participate in group tasks during their learning experiences. To them, this was a great change for the better. The local learners also felt that they were not being fair with the immigrant learners as most of the time they were speaking in their mother language, without considering whether or not they understood. Due to the workshops held, the local learners said they learnt to accept, appreciate and co-exist with their fellow immigrant learners thereby exercising *ubuntu* values and principles (Letseka, 2012). They also learnt how to accept each other and in the end work collaboratively to achieve their sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. In a way, practicing *ubuntu* created a conducive sustainable learning environment as learners were now relating well and had class solidarity, which are essential in group work in class.

The chapter also equipped the team with knowledge of self-transformation, empowering and neutralisation of power, as well as enabling individuals to stand up for themselves and try to solve issues that concern them, in order to change their situations. They also learnt to accept and tolerate one another as well as working as a team in sharing their knowledge and sharing lifelong skills. All in all, working in a collaborative way proves beneficial in attaining sustainable learning. Teachers in the research site school were also empowered with the essential knowledge in dealing with the marginalised learners (immigrant learners) and giving them a chance to voice their hindrances and experience towards sustainable learning.

The next chapter provides reflections, conclusions and make recommendations.

## CHAPTER 7

### REFLECTIONS ON FINDINGS OF SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM

#### 7.1 Introduction

The study sought to explore experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in the host SA primary schools with the aim of finding necessary support. This chapter reflects on the findings, gives solutions and recommendations, limitations of the study, as well as study's contributions and the final conclusion.

The sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom might seem easy considering that these learners are accepted at affluent schools, and are able to communicate in English. However, if one occupies their shoes in an attempt to get their experiences from the insider perspectives, one can come to the understanding that these learners have got a lot to deal with on their road to sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, as this was revealed by the data, and also confirmed in the review of the related literature. The research study's results, shows that as far as there are some positive experiences of immigrant sustainable learning, most learners face some challenges in one way or the other. Based on the findings and literature review, a number of hindrances were identified. The research data confirmed that many of these hindrances require support from the significant others, their parents, teachers, as well as the community at large, in order to see the smooth and sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in South African schools.

This section presents reflections of the key findings from the research within the CER framework and *ubuntu* theory as proposed in Chapter Two, and where appropriate, relates them to the related literature in Chapter Three. It also aims to provide answers to the critical question which reads: 'How is sustainable learning experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual

classroom?’ On top of answering the critical question, the chapter also attempts to explicate answers that meet the study’s objectives which were:

- to explore the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom;
- to examine the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom;
- to examine the favorable conditions of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom;
- to identify and discuss hindrances for sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom; and
- to propose, based on the findings, ways of overcoming hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

## **7.2. Status quo**

The research findings have provided insight on the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms. The findings indicated that there are mixed feelings regarding the prevailing situation of sustainable learning within the multilingual classrooms in South African schools, where some are happy with the curriculum coverage, whilst majority complained about some missing components in the curriculum that help in equipping learners wholly for any life challenges. The study results revealed that in as much as learners are helped to think critically in learning areas like Mathematics, Sciences, Life Skills and languages, much is found wanting in practical subjects like Agriculture and/or Building. Most immigrant learners’ parents were of the feeling that these learning areas are important to their learners as they equip them with lifelong skills that will see them creating their own employment and or creating the job opportunities for the communities in which they live. This researcher sees this as a way of empowerment to the immigrant learners as they would not have to depend on others for employment, but may be independent on their own. This would also reduce the fighting between local citizens and immigrants as the scrambling for the white collar jobs would be reduced. The literature review highlighted that major cause of not accepting immigrants in this country was the

belief that they are taking locals' jobs (Hlatshwayo & Vally, 2014). So, taking into account practical learning areas is in line with to the framework of the study (CER), which seeks to empower those regarded as the marginalised populations, in this case, immigrants, to stand up for themselves (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 36) and create opportunities for survival without hurting others.

The research findings also revealed the end product of the sustainable learning in South African schools to be the ability to 'fit in' in any educational space in the world. The school Principal proudly revealed that most of the learners who transferred going back to their countries or who migrated further overseas, usually communicate with them, sharing their ongoing achievements. It is this researcher's understanding that the type of learning they received in these early years made a strong foundation on their later achievements, and that as a result their learning strategies proved sustainable. Such an assertion is supported in the literature review by Branden (2015), who has noted that sustainable learning systems equip learners with crucial competences that suit the changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where in this case, immigrant learners can rely on and further develop on a long term sustainable basis. On the other hand, Graham et al. (2015) support the Principal's view when they argued sustainable learning as the education meant to last for a life time. Thus in this case, the reported immigrant learners' later achievements would result from the acquired foundation of immigrant sustainable learning whilst in multilingual classrooms.

While previous research has focused on the psychosocial challenges of immigrant learners (Mahembe, 2012), the effects of xenophobia as experienced by immigrant learners (Krueger & Osman, 2010), these results demonstrate that insofar as immigrant learners are accepted in multilingual classrooms in South Africa's public schools, the type of education they receive is in different from what they used to get from their home countries. Results indicated that it can sustain them to achieve better in life depending on the attitude one has towards the sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, as indicated by the Principal. The data also contributes to a clearer understanding of the importance of practical subjects like Agriculture, Woodwork, Metalwork, and Home Management, which are not included in the CAPS curriculum. I feel these should be taken into account when considering a sustainable learning curriculum in future, which aims to empower learners and remove the 'looking for job' syndrome. These results are in line with the CER framework, which seeks to transform immigrant learners to be able to stand up for

their chosen position and to interrogate sources of information including the CAPS document (Mahlomaholo, 2009).

### **7.2.1. Discussion**

The qualitative findings of the study have indicated that there are several reasons for sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom. All the participants who included the immigrant learners' parents, the teachers and the immigrant learners themselves were asked on their opinions and experiences. The major aspects determined by this research are:

- knowledge of more than two languages;
- understanding different cultures;
- improved intellectual and creative skills;
- competitive edge in the job market; and
- human capital building and national unity.

The findings are supported in existing literature and also is in line with the CER theory.

### **7.2.2. Knowledge of more than two languages**

Responses showed that the need to know more than two languages was the major reason for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms, and this led to other benefits such as understanding of different cultures, improved intellectual skills, and the need to have competitive edge in the job market. According to Cenoz and Gorter (2015), most immigrant learners have the strong desire to use and acknowledge more than one language in the teaching and learning process. Increased knowledge of more than two languages is also essential, as it addresses the challenge of language barriers, thereby resulting in achievement of sustainable learning for the immigrant learners. Meier (2014) also believes that acknowledging a variety of languages in schools and learning different languages may help in meeting linguistic needs and may lead to sustainable learning. Hence, most immigrant learners may seek to understand more than two languages.

In a world where migration is as commonplace as it has become, people need to have knowledge of more than one language for easy communication with diverse populations. It is raised in the literature review that language difficulties are the main cause that inhibits immigrant learners from fully participating in the classroom, thereby causing academic limit (Lamb & Markussen, 2011). In case of immigrant learners, this knowledge helps them not be outsiders to their communities, in as far as communication is concerned. In this research study, it emerged that those immigrant learners who managed to acquire the host language quickly did not have problems with mixing with others at school, and this also empowers them in a way. I do believe that if you have the knowledge of more than one language, it would be easy to mix with people from diverse nationalities sharing ideas in a comfortable manner, as you would be understanding each other. The language barrier would be the thing of the past. CER lenses used in this study believe that individuals ought to transform themselves and to overcome limitations, in this case, language.

Another aspect raised in this research study on the need for immigrant sustainable learning was that it enables learners to have an understanding of different cultures. Most immigrant learners who came to South Africa all confessed that at first they were not aware of isiZulu culture and cuisine. To most of them, Heritage Day challenged their sense of what constituted appropriate cultural dress. This was the case as their knowledge of culture was only based on their own. When individuals have no knowledge of a culture, this poses as a problem in all interactions in the communities. The literature review supports the above findings from the present study, where it reveals that immigrant learners need to effectively adjust to the cultural norms of a host school by understanding or integrating to the host society's culture (Berry et al., 2006).

### **7.2.3 Understanding different cultures**

The need to understand different cultures was also mentioned as one of the reasons for the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners. Understanding different cultures is crucial, as it will address the challenge of failing to adjust to new cultures. Cenoz and Gorter (2015) add that multilingual classrooms house learners of different cultures, where immigrant learners are to adapt to the culture of the school in order for them to experience sustainable learning in a positive way. There is therefore the need to understand different cultures by immigrant learners. The findings indicate that immigrant learners may have the strong desire to understand the culture in the host country so that they may feel a sense of belonging, as proposed in the concept of *ubuntu*.

#### **7.2.4 Improved intellectual skills**

The need to improve intellectual skills was also found as one of the reasons for sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms. These skills are very important in the learning of immigrant learners who may face language barriers. Hence, through sustainable learning, the immigrant learners may gain intellectual skills that may help in fulfilling their academic endeavour. These skills can also help in overcoming the challenges that the immigrant learners face when learning in multilingual classrooms. As also indicated in the UNESCO (2018) report, when immigrants attend school, they seek to benefit both intellectually and socially.

#### **7.2.5 Competitive edge in the job market**

As also indicated in the findings of the study, immigrant learners seek sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms so that they can enhance their knowledge and skills and become marketable in the market. Given the competitiveness of today's job market, employers seek out competent individuals. As noted by Pettipher (2011), the global movement has seen an increase in the diverse number of learners in the host destinations schools. This increase has been fueled by the need to acquire skills that are necessary to compete in the global labour market, which requires individuals with diverse skills. In support of this, Branden (2015) adds that sustainable learning systems are geared towards the acquisition of crucial competences that suit the changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which they can deploy and further develop on a long-term sustainable basis. However, on the contrary, Kasper (2018) indicates that some learning institutions do not offer a conducive environment for preparing individuals to face life in a modern, open, competitive society, due to lack of cultural integration.

#### **7.2.6 Building human capital**

The other reason for the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners is the need to build human capital. Immigrant learners seek to increase their knowledge so that they can acquire much knowledge. The findings are also supported in extant literature. For instance, Branden (2015) indicated that immigrant learners seek sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms so as to acquire crucial competences that suit the changes in the 2<sup>st</sup> century. These competences include critical leadership skills, problem -olving skills, and decision-making skills, which are essential in

building knowledge required in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Building human capital is essential given the fast changing global environment. This is because sustainable learning is all about trying to make sure that knowledge is created, instead of making learners mere accumulators of facts and figures in their heads. According to Branden (2015), immigrant learners are also expected to learn how to use knowledge in flexible ways in solving complex problems that may arise in different situations and contexts, rather than memorising facts.

### **7.2.7 Building national unity**

Furthermore, the study found that building national unity was among the major reasons why immigrant learners seek sustainable learning in multilingual classrooms. This is because sustainable learning results in immigrant learners learning different cultures and languages, which are critical factors towards uniting nations. When discrimination and victimisation are prevented among citizens of different countries, this means that there will be unity within the country. On a similar note, Mohamed (2015) revealed that immigrant learners' development of a sense of belonging is a strength that enables the integration of the learners of diverse cultures thereby being in solidarity in the host country. As also noted by Hlatshwayo and Vally (2014), support for sustainable learning in South Africa has been driven by the increase in xenophobic attacks, which pose a serious threat to peace and caused disunity in the country. Building national unity drives the need for sustainable learning. Meier (2014) also believes that understanding various languages and cultures may lead to an understanding of cooperation.

## **7.3 Favourable conditions**

### **7.3.1 Language**

As indicated by the data results of the study, language is one of those factors shaping the prevailing environment in the multilingual classrooms in South African schools. Although a few participants indicated that they were happy to learn new languages including English and isiZulu, the results of the study revealed that most immigrant learners face a challenge in understanding instructions in English or isiZulu due to the accents and lack of knowledge in that language. They say this is as a result of them arriving in South Africa with the knowledge of their mother tongue alone, which is then regarded as a foreign language in South Africa, and is not used at all in schools and as a result are forced to use either one of the eleven official languages (Sookrajh et al. 2005, p.6). This

deters them from experiencing sustainable learning in a relaxed way. Thus, the immigrant learners, teachers and the immigrant parents all agree that language serves as a favourable condition of sustainable learning as learners need to understand what is being said by the teachers. Without understanding the language of instruction, all the immigrants' and teachers' efforts will be of no use.

The impact of language in sustainable learning has been widely discussed in prevailing literature. For instance, Meda et al. (2012) found that language was a common challenge for immigrant learners. As also noted by Ngema (2013), the issue of language differences has become a problem for immigrant learners, as they have to learn a new language whilst at the same time being expected to maintain their home language. To confirm this, extant literature endorses that the issue of language for immigrant learners added to the already existing emotional instability which may impact negatively on the learners' social well-being (Perez, 2011; Bangeni & Kaap, 2007). Learners' responses concerning the language being a favourable condition to their learning in a new context confirmed what Gu and Patkin (2013) found in their study, namely that immigrant learners experience language and cultural difficulties as they are being less proficient in English than their peers. For this reason, all research participants agreed that for sustainable learning to be fully realised by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, the language of instruction must be understood by all, and taken as a favourable condition.

The study's literature review also indicated that a multilingual classroom may use a language of instruction that may not be a mother tongue to the immigrant learners, the teacher, as well as the local learners (Coelho, 2012). Language of communication in this case has therefore been proved to be a major element for the sustainable learning of immigrant learners as well as making them fit well into the society. Gupta (2009), as cited in the literature review, has pointed out that language plays a critical role for any interaction in the classroom and on the field of play. The sustainable learning for immigrant learners was seen to be enhanced by their maximum proficiency of the language of teaching and learning. None of the immigrant learners speak English language as their home language, and as such, programmes should be put in place at school to help the immigrant learners improve their language proficiency faster as it plays a major role in immigrant sustainable learning.

### 7.3.2 Acceptance, love and friendship

The research data revealed that some immigrant learners in South African schools are not accepted by locals, whether at home or at school. They face a lack of acceptance, love, and friendship from the local learners. Meda et al. (2012) also reported that immigrant learners face significant challenges that include being discriminated against, harassed, and isolated, as well as lacking sense of belonging and identity. This, they say, makes them powerless and worthless in the multilingual classrooms, and affects how they experience sustainable learning. So, to experience sustainable learning fully, there is need for the immigrant learners to feel accepted and loved, and to develop friendships with their peers. Acceptance, love, and friendship is thus a favourable condition for sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom, as revealed in this study.

Several immigrant learner participants indicated that they suffer at the hands of lack of acceptance and love. This results in them being called unworthy names that make them lose their self-esteem. The lack of love and the inability to make friendships is caused by the inability of local learners and the community to accept the immigrants in their spaces. They regard them as a threat to their resources. This stands in direct opposition to the concept of *ubuntu*, which advocates for humanness, interdependence, and communalism. In this regard, acceptance of immigrant learners as well as sharing of the available resources to make everyone feel at home is emphasised and hence becomes a favourable condition for immigrant learners' sustainable learning.

School is an important setting, where young learners build relationships with each other in a significant way that may have an impact on their motivation to sustainable learning (Bygren & ISzulkin, 2010). The behaviours and motivation built in school tend to have an impact on immigrant learners' sustainable learning experiences whilst in a multilingual classroom. In this present study, the immigrant participants who revealed to have established collective lives, good relationships with peers like Brendon, Rudo, and Patrick display positive experiences of sustainable learning whilst in the multilingual classroom. On the other hand, those who claimed to have negative experiences were those who pointed out that they experience a sense of isolation and lack of belonging with the other peers (Osterman, 2000). In this research study, this is revealed by Chloe's experiences, where she notes that she felt unaccepted at school, as she did not know

some of the indigenous games that are played during break time. Also, during group work in class when other learners code-switch to their local language, she felt left out again, thereby affecting the smooth experiencing of sustainable learning whilst in this multilingual classroom.

Benner and Graham (2011) suggest that schools can also provide support to the immigrant learners in their effort to feel accepted, loved and to build friendships. In the same vein, Landau et al. (2005) also indicated that in South Africa, it is likely that most of the African immigrants in one way or the other become victims of xenophobia and/or stereotyping. This also confirms lack of acceptance and love. This is in line with *ubuntu*, where the theorist refers to school as a home that can help reduce anxiety that children experience by accommodating, accepting, and assisting the development of social support. The theory further states that school plays a vital role in socialisation of immigrant learners, enabling the learner to settle down and start life in a new context. For this reason, there are mechanisms within South Africa that are against discrimination and promote love. For instance, the SASSA Act 84 of 1996, Chapter 3 section 12 as amended points out that all learners' educational needs must be served without unfair discrimination. Therefore, immigrant learners need love, acceptance and to build friendships in order to realise sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom in the foreign country.

### **7.3.3. Financial Stability**

The study revealed that immigrant learners faced financial difficulties, which affected their sustainable learning within South African multilingual classrooms. The school principal revealed this when he indicated that most immigrant learners just vanish without paying their school fees, despite knowing that it is a fee-paying school. These difficulties such as what Rudo also revealed, cause the immigrant learners not to be able to provide for all their school needs like the stationery like books, glue, crayons, and sometimes food to eat during break time. As a result, the immigrant learners might find themselves losing confidence and self-worth and respect from their peers as they will be known for always borrowing from others. Susan shyly said this does not sit well with her, and she is embarrassed by this. Previous research has also shown that financial instability is unquestionably the most common challenges faced by immigrant learners during their stay and schooling in foreign countries. So for immigrant learners to exercise sustainable learning, they need to be financially stable in order to be able to pay the fees and meet some hidden costs like the stationery and excursions, as revealed by this research study.

## **7.4 Hindrances**

The study also explored hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom. The findings of the study revealed that there are several challenges that deter sustainable learning in the multilingual classrooms. The major challenges highlighted are language, discrimination, lack of feelings of acceptance and safety from their communities, and lack of proper support from teachers.

### **7.4.1. Language barriers**

As indicated in the findings of the study, language barriers influenced successful sustainable learning of the immigrant learners. Most immigrant learners face challenges in their learning as teachers in multilingual classrooms mostly use local languages. Thus, this challenge of language barriers has been one of the needs for immigrant learners to learn several languages. This challenge has been documented in several studies. For instance, Meda et al. (2012) documented that when immigrant learners are enrolled into the host school, they are likely to face significant challenges, which include language barriers. In agreement with Meda et al. (2012), Graham et al. (2015) also observed that immigrant learners face challenges in sustainable learning due to the language barriers. The literature endorses that the issue of language barriers for immigrant learners added to the already existing emotional instability, which may impact negatively on the learners' social well-being (Perez, 2011; Bangeni & Kaap, 2007).

### **7.4.2 Discrimination**

The study revealed that one of the major challenges faced by immigrant learners is discrimination. Previous studies have also found that immigrant learners are faced with the challenge of discrimination in countries with ineffective discrimination policies. The major factors for discrimination are culture and language differences. Discriminative behaviour goes against the *ubuntu*, which supports good morals among members of society. Discrimination is very harmful to the economy as a whole, as it may fuel disunity in the country and it undermines sustainable learning. The study by Meda et al. (2012) found that immigrant learners face the challenge of discrimination in multilingual classrooms. Similarly, the study by Mohamed (2015) found that

immigrant learners in South Africa face harassment and discrimination, which hinderz sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. From these, it is clear that immigrant learners face the challenge of discrimination from citizens of the host country, which therefore affects sustainable learning for these foreigners.

#### **7.4.3 Lack of feelings of acceptance and safety**

Closely associated with discrimination is the challenge of lack of feelings of acceptance and safety. The study showed that one of the challenges hindering sustainable learning is lack of feeling of acceptance and safety among the immigrant learners. Lack of acceptance and safety may be fueled by discrimination. This challenge greatly influences sustainable learning as immigrant learners may not attend lessons due to fear of being victimised or harassed. In this regard, Crush (2005) noted that due to unfriendly reception of hatred and hostile behaviours towards immigrants, sustainable learning is adversely affected as immigrant learners may live in fear and some suffer from psycho-emotional depression. Acknowledging the effects of the challenge of lack of acceptance, Breen (2001) was of the view that when the immigrant learners are accepted in multilingual classrooms, they find themselves participating fully in class rather than adopting an aloof, disengaged way of participating. As also noted by Giltrow and Edward (1992. p. 63), lack of acceptance is very harmful to sustainable learning, as immigrant learners may respond by physically not involving themselves or absenting themselves from class activities when they feel they are not being accepted or tolerated in their failure to communicate in the target language. For this reason, a lack of acceptance in multilingual classrooms acts as a hindrance to sustainable learning.

#### **7.4.4 Lack of proper support from teachers, parents and other learners**

Moreover, lack of support from the significant others in multilingual classrooms was also mentioned as one of the hindrances to sustainable learning of immigrant learners. As noted by previous scholars such as Gibson (1997), support systems play a critical role in sustainable learning as they help immigrant learners to participate well in school. A study by Pillay (2012) found that absence of support impacts negatively on immigrant learners' sustainable learning in a multilingual classroom. These findings of previous studies support findings of the present study, which also indicated that lack of support from teachers influenced sustainable learning of

immigrant learners in South African schools. Pillay (2012) further indicated that supporting immigrant learners is critical for sustainable learning, as this would make immigrant learners able to maneuver through the world on their own with the basic survival skills.

## **7.5 Support**

Lastly, the study pursued to explore ways that can be employed to support sustainable learning for immigrants in light of the challenges they face. The major strategies mentioned by the participants in this exploratory study include inclusive learning, teacher support, parental involvement and multidimensional communication skills.

### **7.5.1 Inclusive learning**

The study established that one of the strategies to support and promote sustainable learning for immigrant learners is inclusive learning. Inclusive learning, as also stipulated in the UN's SDGs as one of the targets of many nations worldwide. In the context of immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms, inclusive education will play a significant role towards sustainable learning, as it addresses challenges such as discrimination, language barriers, lack of culture integration, and victimisation. As also stipulated in the Education White Paper 6 of 2001 and the Guidelines for Inclusive Schools (2010), schools are encouraged to register, care for, and support learners who have learning barriers. In support of inclusive learning, Lazarus et al. (1999) purport that inclusive schools save for the development of an inclusive society where every individual in the society functions properly and is given a chance to actualise their full potentials. However, many countries face the challenge of ensuring inclusive learning. For instance, Mavuso (2014) has argued that besides many countries being in support of inclusive learning, teachers are not well equipped, as they struggle to provide support for learners experiencing learning difficulties. Nevertheless, given the experiences and challenges faced by immigrant learners, inclusive learning may help towards sustainable learning of the immigrant learners.

### **7.5.2 Teacher support**

Teacher support was also found to be one of the strategies to promote sustainable learning. Support from teachers is crucial towards sustainable learning, as the study also found that one of the hindrances to sustainable learning was lack of support from teachers in multilingual classrooms.

The issue of ensuring teacher support was also suggested in previous research studies. For instance, Mavuso (2014) recommended that there is need for teachers to identify specific difficulties learners come across, and then develop intervention programmes to support immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms. Calling for teacher support, Makarova and Birman (2014) revealed that insufficient support was being given to immigrant learners, pointing out that if relevant support is given to each and every learner according to their different needs, multilingual classrooms would be safe and enjoyable places for immigrant learners to experience sustainable learning. Teacher support is therefore essential, as it helps immigrant learners in overcoming challenges such as language barriers and discrimination.

### **7.5.3 Parental involvement**

From the findings of this exploratory study, parental involvement may also help in promoting sustainable learning for immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms. According to Hao and Bonstead-Bruns (1998), another condition that can help in enhancing sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom is the parents' relationship and support. These researchers observed that the parents' support for their children translates into children's greater educational achievements in multilingual schools. In this regard, parental involvement plays a significant role towards sustainable learning as parents can provide a support base so that the immigrants realise sustainable learning. In support of the finding, Mapasela, Hlalele and Alexander (2012, p. 90) observed that sustainable learning depends on support of parents.

### **7.5.4 Multidimensional communication skills**

The study further revealed that ensuring multidimensional communication skills is one of the strategies that can be used to promote sustainable learning of immigrant learners. These skills are important as they help immigrant learners in addressing challenges such as language barriers, cultural change difficulties and discrimination. In addition, the multidimensional communication skills may aid towards effective communication between learners and teachers which result in sustainable learning. Nusche (2009) indicates that absence of effective communication results in immigrant learners being teased or laughed at by others thereby adversely affecting sustainable learning. In support, Lamb and Markussen (2011) believe that lack of meaningful communication facilitated by a common language inhibits immigrant learners from classroom participation,

thereby limiting academic success. Giltrow and Edward (1992) provided that immigrant learners may feel they are not being accepted or tolerated in their failure to communicate in the target language. In this sense, multidimensional communication skills may help towards sustainable learning of the immigrant learners in multilingual classrooms.

All in all, looking at the research's guiding theories, I argue that immigrants can overcome their challenges if only they are able to voice them and try to seek solutions to their own problems. CER advocates for those pushed to the margins to stand up and be heard and in a way transform themselves (Mahlomaholo, 2009). CER's basic principles of empowerment and emancipation in this study has a mandate for freeing immigrant learners from the constraints limiting ways of thinking (Herring et al., 2004, p. 22; Merrian 2009, p. 22) in sustainable learning whilst in multilingual classrooms.

*Ubuntu* on the other hand, according to Letseka (2011) incorporates the values of caring, forgiveness, sharing, empathy, and harmony for others. In this study, where learners display these values, there is a great desire to achieve sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. The philosophy of *ubuntu* as the chosen supporting framework for the study also guides the discipline so that safety of the immigrant learners as well as the other staff is ensured thereby creating a favourable condition for immigrant sustainable learning.

## **7.6 Summary of findings**

The critical question of the study is whether sustainable learning is experienced by immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom. The generated data as well as the literature that was reviewed indicate that immigrant learners experience sustainable learning with difficulties. They experience hindrances like language barriers, discrimination, non-acceptance, lack of love from peers, and name-calling that result in them having a sense of powerlessness. These challenges in a way make the immigrant learners experience sustainable learning in a negative way. However, the research study acknowledges that some immigrant learners have strong resilience and as a result their experience in sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom is not affected at all. Furthermore, the study found that some initiatives develop teachers when it comes to immigrant sustainable learning, assisting learners to achieve sustainable learning in an enabling environment.

When it comes to the current situation of sustainable learning, the study revealed that there was need to take seriously the teaching of practical subjects that will help immigrant learners to be hands on and help them earn a living by utilising their hands. This saw the need for hiring some Music and Art teachers at the school. The school was transformed in a way as it is now offering some of the important subjects with experienced teachers. The artifacts they are making will go a long way towards sustaining learners in the future.

The conducive conditions to steer the study were to identify hindrances and then planned action for transformation. Diverse processes were placed under consideration, like coming up with a research team dedicated to explore immigrant learners' experiences and finding hindrances, favourable conditions, and planning workshops to equip teachers in ways of assisting learners and leading to the analysis of a mutual vision.

PAR is utilised in the research to facilitate processes of collaboratively working together, thus empowering individuals, in this case teachers, learners, immigrant and parents through holding of workshops. Allowing immigrant learners to voice their experiences and hindrances in multilingual classrooms was important in identifying ways of supporting.

The study found out that sustainable learning is needed by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom to equip them with lifelong skills that help them build resilience to face life's challenges. In experiencing sustainable learning, the study also noticed some hindrances that slow down the acquisition of sustainable learning. To overcome these hindrances, the study saw the need to hold meetings with different stake holders like teachers, learners, parents and the community at large. The meetings served to induct teachers on dealing with immigrant learners in an inclusive multilingual classroom.

## **7.7 Solutions and Recommendations**

Most of the recommendations were made by the participants in the research study and this researcher integrated suggestions provided per each research objective and offered a whole, thorough recommendations, at the same time offering her own critical comments.

Concerning the teachers' preparedness in dealing with immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom, they need to be empowered through induction workshops as was seen in this PAR

research. In this research, all teachers felt empowered after attending the workshop that revived them in some way. This research study therefore recommends the holding of workshops for teachers by the District that keep in mind the needs and challenges of immigrant learners, thereby helping them achieve sustainable learning on the same foot with the local learners.

When learners fail to attain the expected goals in education, they are simply indicating that they are incapacitated by a system that requires collaborative effort by all the stakeholders. Thus, the teacher being the prime stakeholder ought to be equipped with the basic skills of dealing with the diverse needs of learners. This may call for the teachers to also embark on research that involves all stakeholders.

The teachers as researchers need to collaborate with all stakeholders and assist each other in finding the nature of the problem and the strategies that can be used to overcome the problem. Thus improvement on one's teaching comes about when all the stakeholders are involved as informants during interviews and focus group discussions, in order to identify challenges and subsequently suggest intervention strategies. In this study, it was noted that in order for immigrant learners to experience sustainable learning positively, care and approachable relationships with the teachers and other learners ought to be exercised. The immigrant learners need to feel accepted and appreciated in the classroom. This acceptance in a way builds their self-worth and a positive self-regard.

Through engagement in PAR, solutions to the problems in the teaching-learning situation can be generated by involving all the stakeholders. The problems that the learners encounter in their learning are not of their own making *per se*, but they are of the other stakeholders. The other stakeholders ought not to blame one another for the existence of the problem, but ought to work collaboratively to mitigate the problems, or at best to completely do away with them. There should not be externalisation of the problems, since every stakeholder would have contributed in one way or the other to the existence of the problem. When stakeholders work together, power issues will be neutralised and every learner will have a sustainable learning enabling environment in the end moving in the same pace with the local learners. It is the duty of the teacher to teach or instil in all learners acceptable values and ethical behaviours. When learners are taught *ubuntu* values, all will feel valued and accommodated in a multilingual classroom as well as at school, and as a result will

see themselves building a zeal to sustainable learning. It is again recommended that the schools induct new teachers and remind them of their guiding policies such as the South African Council of Education (SACE) and the South African Schools Act (SASA).

This research study recommends for the immigrant learners to be given a chance to voice their concerns for mutual understanding regarding their experiences in sustainable learning. I learnt in this research study that when learners are denied the chance to voice their feelings towards something, in this case sustainable learning, they build a feeling of withdrawing themselves from the class activities as a way of dealing with the supposedly oppressive matter. So in trying to avoid this scenario, and to show respect for the immigrant learners' feelings, schools and all its officials ought to respond to the issues that are hindering, and lend their support so that they experience sustainable learning without any hinderance factor. Thus in PAR, there is the need for introspection on the part of of each stakeholder.

Above all, there is need to support inclusive education. Inclusive classrooms should cater for the needs of all learners whether local or immigrants. Those concerned with inclusive education from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) as well as the curriculum officials should put in place methods that cater for immigrant learners putting in mind that they are second language speakers of the languages used in schools. They should also include learning areas that are practical in nature that will see immigrant learners able to use their hands in overcoming future challenges. Apart from practical subjects, curricular activities such as sports and or drama ought to be taken seriously as they help to boost confidence of the immigrant learners.

### **7.8 My recommendation on the theoretical model of supporting immigrant sustainable learning**

The approach towards assisting immigrant learners towards experiencing sustainable learning positively can be aligned to CER theory complimented by *ubuntu*. These theories give an understanding of what it means to be an immigrant who wishes to be empowered at the same time accepting how they are and try to be equipped in the foreign land with lifelong skills that will enable them to meet life challenges. According to the findings of this research study, in order to be able to achieve this, these two theories are to be merged to come up with a suitable theory that best describes immigrant sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. In this new

theory, aspects like acceptance, love, and friendship make the basis for sustainability of immigrant learners. These are derived from *ubuntu*, which takes cognisance of the need to see oneself in others.

Secondly, after the immigrants are accepted, loved and have built friendships, they then need to be equipped with meaningful, lifelong learning in a language they all understand. This in a way is empowering the immigrant learners with the important education that includes practical subjects like Agriculture, Computers, Home Management and or Building Technology. I refer to this stage as empowerment.

When the immigrant learners feel empowered, they will be able to stand up for themselves and be able to transform their fate. In this way, they are able to identify hindering factors and voice them and collaboratively find ways to change their fate thereby transforming themselves in a way.

Lastly, for immigrant learners to experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom, support from the parents, teachers, local learners and the education department authorities need to be given. All these stakeholders collaboratively need to come together and try to support immigrant learners.

## **7.9 Contribution of the study**

The purpose of the study was to explore sustainable learning as experienced by immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom. The immigrant learners are regarded as marginalised and lacking power, thereby becoming a vulnerable group in South African Schools. The reason for exploring the experiences was to determine hindrances and then try to find ways of supporting them overcome these hindrances. After finding the ways in which immigrant learners ought to be supported, workshops were held where the discussion of the support was discussed for it to be implemented. After some implementation, the participants in the workshops were asked for their experiences after the support and most of them acknowledged that there was a great change in how they are experiencing sustainable learning as all parties are collaboratively working together in support. This as a result contributed to the discovery of the new theory of love and inclusion of the immigrant learners. Then the second layer involves the immigrant learners being in school and empowered with the language, lifelong skills from the curriculum coverage, and practical subjects.

Thus in terms of empowerment, immigrant learners will stand up for themselves and find solutions to change their fate. After finding how they want to be supported, then support from the parents, teachers, local learners and the education department authorities need to be given. All these stakeholders collaboratively need to come together and try to support the immigrant learners. Through collaborative working together that the immigrant learners will have positive experiences of sustainable learning.

This research study contributed in determining experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classrooms, towards sustainable learning. The research's argument was based on looking critically at the lives of those marginalised learners and the hindrances they face in sustainable learning so as to find ways of supporting them overcome their hindrances in the multilingual classroom. Although immigrant learners are receiving sustainable learning in the host country, they also come across some hindrances, which deter them from fully experiencing sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. As such, having taken a PAR study, the learners were able to participate in coming up with ways to overcome the hindrances they encounter in their sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. The collaborative participation in this case substantially alleviated their struggles. The study managed to challenge the teachers, school principal, parents and local learners and taught them that immigrant sustainable learning needs a strong support base for it to be successful.

Teachers, parents and other local learners and the community at large were empowered and enlightened on offering support with the aim of overcoming hindrances of immigrant sustainable learning. The participants were empowered as to how to conduct a research using PAR methods. They also learnt the importance of collaborative working in finding ways of overcoming hindrances for those who seem powerless. Seeing their opinions and contributions valued in the study was the motivating aspect to the research team.

Last, but not least, the study saw the implementation of extra classes for immigrant learners to learn a language whilst being offered extra help by an immigrant teacher using the interventions got from the study. The study also saw the combined use of the two theories to come up with another new one thereby contributing theoretically and to the body of scientific knowledge. The study also added to the increase of related literature in immigrant sustainable learning.

### **7.10 Limitations and Conclusion of the study**

The major limitation of the study is that the participants were all limited to one primary school and it may happen that the results obtained from this research site might not be the same if a different primary schools situated elsewhere, making it unsuitable to generalise the study's results. However, a comparable study can be conducted with other primary schools who host immigrant learners to explore their experiences in a different setting. The District Manager of education was not involved as a research participant or involved in any way in the study, leaving limited data pertaining to policies of immigrant learners' requirements for inclusion in public schools and the policies in place, if any of supporting them. Also, the success of the interventions of the study will be fully determined over time, depending on whether the suggested support discussed in different workshops are practiced by those involved.

In conclusion, PAR requires a patient and well-focused individual as participant, since it works mostly with other team members. The PAR approach is useful though challenging because it is determined by other people's attitudes, including those who may not have the same vision as you. In a way, despite its drawbacks, there are many good empowering aspects gained throughout the study that include being able to collaboratively work together for a common vision of changing lives of those seen as marginalised in society.

### **7.11 The PAR journey**

This journey road is made up of eight chapters. In every chapter, I explained the issues that were under discussion on immigrant sustainable learning. Chapter One is an introductory chapter describing the journey to be embarked on. It was in this chapter where I claimed that immigrant learners need sustainable learning while in a multilingual classroom, but there seems to be lack of knowledge as to how they experience it and to some extent ways in which they wish to be supported. I therefore used key participants who are in a way part of the problem to examine how they fare and wish to be assisted to change their fate. I explained that the immigrant learners need some form of learning that empower them to challenge long term life situations. The immigrant learners, being foreigners in the host country, face a lot of challenges on their way to sustainable

learning. Thus, it was these challenges which the team unpacks and also suggest solutions to their problems put to test to determine how they can change their fate. I argued that the stakeholders need to collaborate in trying to make life easier for the immigrant learners. Several scholars like Chidarikire (2017); Nkoane (2012); Msimanga (2017) and Dube (2016) who also use CER in their studies to find a common ground and promote dialogue on challenging situations, where immigrant learners are seen to be powerless and marginalised. I stressed that immigrant learners really needed support in order to realise sustainable learning while in a multilingual classroom. I explained the need to have *ubuntu* principles when dealing with the marginalised and foreign learners. I ended Chapter One by specifying that the road to immigrant sustainable learning is learnt in different chapters.

In Chapter Two, I examined CER and *ubuntu* as the guiding theoretical frameworks of this study. I chose CER because of its methods that link it to the study through dialogue, levelling of power, emancipatory and transformation ideologies. The principles of CER such as social justice, education and learning environment become user-friendly and in a way help immigrant learners in multilingual classroom towards sustainable learning. *Ubuntu* complements the CER. The practicality of these theoretical constructs was covered in the data presentation analysis and interpretation section in which I described the original findings. Engaging these theories provided a lens to understanding the extent to which the participants shared power and played the chief role of serving the interests of others to derive their happiness. So, combining the two theories pointed to the key purpose of examining the experiences of immigrant learners on sustainable learning and ways to offer support.

In Chapter Three, I examined the existing literature concerning immigrant learners and sustainable learning. In this chapter, I argued that while immigrant learners are receiving education in the host country, it seems their challenges and type of learning are not examined. I learnt that though researchers had done work on migrant learning, there was not much literature regarding sustainable learning in the primary school context, let alone in the multilingual classroom setting. Hence, I filled this gap. I began by dividing sustainable learning into its various related concepts namely sustainability, usefulness and support needed to see it through. I started by conceptualising sustainable learning, meaning once realised, how it will continue to be effective in immigrant learners' lives. In this study, sustainability meant that the current education was incomplete if it

failed to support its beneficiaries, in this case immigrant learners in everyday lives. With regard to immigrant learners, to different authors it refers to a group of people living in a foreign land accessing formal education in public or private host countries in a multilingual classroom. However, I made a point that in order for immigrant learners to access the sustainable learning fully whilst in a multilingual classroom, there was need for acceptance, tolerance, and support of these immigrant learners. In this research study, immigrant learners participated to seek solutions on their own problems collectively.

Chapter four was concerned with the methodology. In this chapter, a variety of tools and actions were applied when exploring new knowledge was explained (Van Wyk, 2006). In this regard, I discussed the research design and methodology and I reported that the study was located within the critical paradigm and used PAR methods. To generate data, I employed a variety of instruments like semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. I also stated that the study was qualitative, seeking to explain, understand, and capture the lived experiences of all the participants in their natural settings. The study also used PAR methods which involve countless steps.

In Chapter Five, I presented the data. The chapter provided the whole picture of experiences of immigrant sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. Sustainable learning in its current state, the need for immigrant sustainable learning, as well as experiences of immigrant learners on sustainable learning, were analysed. The generated data indicated that indeed immigrant learners need sustainable learning in order to be equipped with skills that will see them manage to confront and challenge whatever they will encounter in life in the near future, thereby empowering them. In their road to sustainable learning, the immigrant learners face some hindrances, which in a way make them experience sustainable learning negatively. This PAR study went further to find ways of overcoming hindrances and find ways of supporting the immigrant learners in sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom.

Chapter 6 dealt with the intervention strategies to overcome hindrances. In this chapter, workshops for teachers, learners, as well as parents are discussed. It was through these workshops that immigrant learners, teachers, parents as well as local learners collaboratively work together in trying to solve the situation. After the workshops, a conducive sustainable learning environment was realized with the participants all agreeing to have benefitted from the workshop.

In Chapter 7, I reflected that all the partners involved need to work together to support the immigrant learners achieve sustainable learning while in multilingual classroom. And as the last chapter, I gave solutions and recommendations.

### **7.12 Conclusion**

Research in education is undertaken in order to investigate or explore new developments that bring about improvements and excellence in education for all learners, in this case immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom. This research study's recommendations are not binding upon parents, teachers, local learners, school administrations or DoE. This researcher recommends that learners be given a chance to reveal their challenges and effort be made collaboratively to find solutions of supporting them get past any hindering factor. However, different individuals and institutions prefer their own methods of doing things. Therefore, recommendations here are based on my own argumentation. The limitations of this study are based upon different ontological stance and epistemological beliefs. Not only PAR, CER and CDA can be the custodian of academic truth. Consequently, this study had to be criticized or is open for critique. The framework used, theories, and all methods are subject to academic critique.

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**APPENDIX A**



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

29 August 2018

Mrs Guvakuva Rose 216076580

School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Rose

Protocol reference number: HSS/0408/018D

Project title: Sustainable learning for immigrant Learners in a Multilingual Classroom.

**Full Approval — Full Committee Reviewed Application**

With regards to your response received 23 August 2018 to our letter of 09 July 2018, the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have 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

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Dr S Naidoo.

Dr S Naidoo

*/px*

cc Supervisor: Dr V Jairam and Prof D Hlalele cc Academic Leader  
Research: Dr SB Khoza cc School Administrators: Ms M Ngcobo. Mrs S  
Jeenarain and Mr S Duma

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)/Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001 , Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (O) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (O) 31 260 4609 Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za) I  
[snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymanm@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za) Website:  
[www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

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Westville

## APPENDIX B



education

Department:  
Education  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:2/4/8/1471

Mrs R. Guvakuva

22 Strelitzia Gardens

15 Lily Vale Road

Ashley

Pinetown

3610

Dear Mrs. Guvakuva

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

Your application to conduct research entitled: **‘SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM’**, 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. The 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 01 March 2018 to 09 July 2020.
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 Phindile Duma 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. George-Cato Primary School.



Dr. EV Nzama

Head of

Department: Education

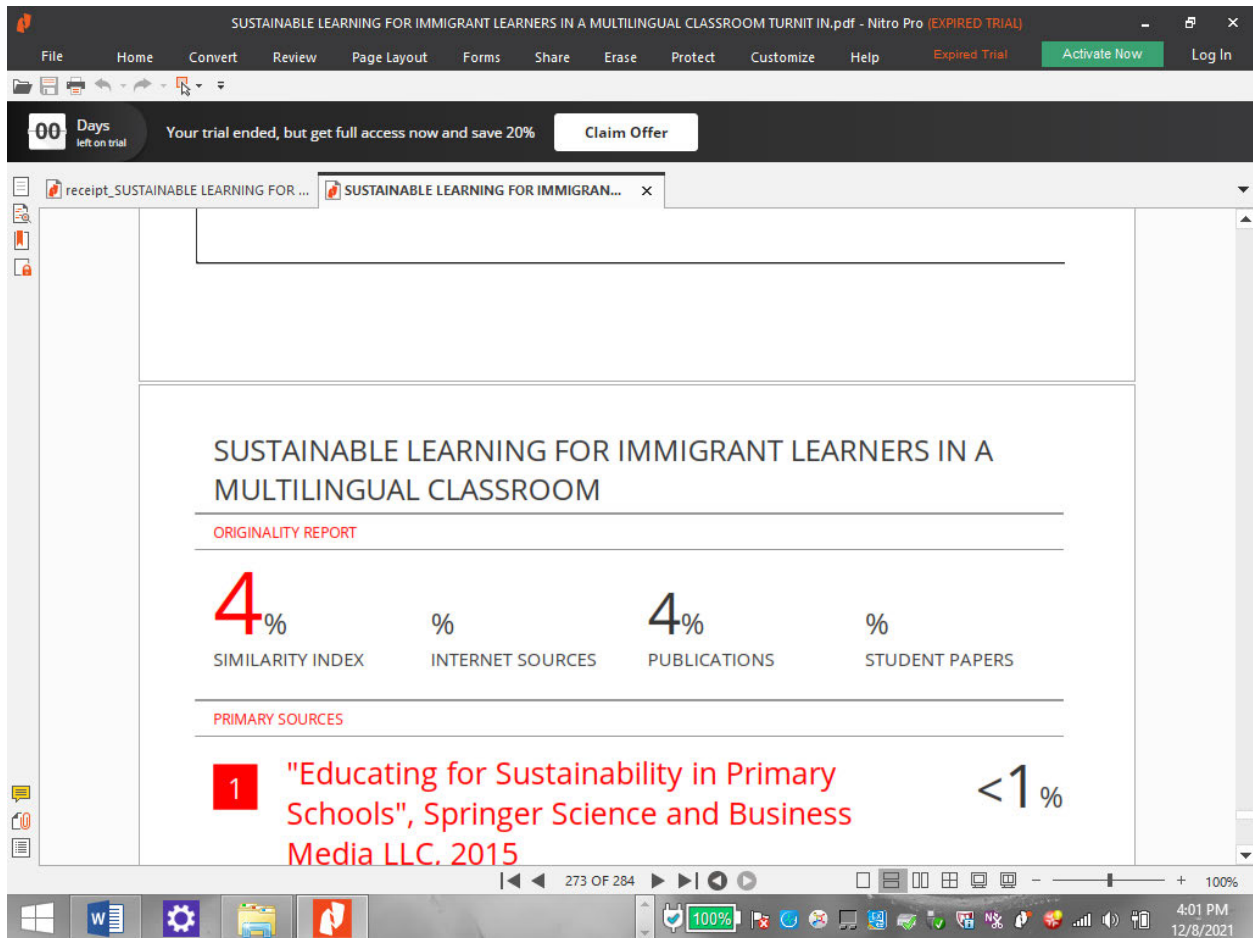
Date: 01 March 2018

## APPENDIX C

### TURNITIN REPORT RECEIPT



receipt\_SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM.pdf



SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM TURNIT IN.pdf - Nitro Pro (EXPIRED TRIAL)

File Home Convert Review Page Layout Forms Share Erase Protect Customize Help Expired Trial [Activate Now](#) Log In

00 Days left on trial Your trial ended, but get full access now and save 20% [Claim Offer](#)

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SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM

ORIGINALITY REPORT

4%	%	4%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	"Educating for Sustainability in Primary Schools", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2015	<1%
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273 OF 284 100% 4:01 PM 12/8/2021

## APPENDIX D

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

### *1. Are you informed about the immigrant learners?*

1. Are you aware of the existence of such learners and their number in your school or class?
2. What language do you use to communicate with them?
3. Do these learners usually participate in group work or take a leading role in class discussions? If not, what do you think might be the reasons?
4. What kind of behavior do they generally exhibit in class towards their learning?
5. In your own understanding, what do you think sustainable learning is?
6. Is there a need for immigrant sustainable learning?
7. At present, how is sustainable learning experienced by the immigrant learners whilst in a multilingual classrooms?
8. Are there any challenges you experience in dealing with such learners and how do you overcome those challenges, if any?
9. How is their academic performance? Is there any need of helping them achieve their sustainable learning goals?
10. Have you been trained to assist these learners?
11. What are the favorable conditions you think are needed to enhance their learning?
13. *What* do you think are the main hindrances for immigrant learners in a multilingual class towards sustainable learning?
14. How do you usually deal with their learning challenges or hindrances in class for sustainable learning?
15. What is the general feeling with regard to migrant education here at school, are they really benefitting or are they in need of assistance in order for them to reach their full potential?

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS**

1. What is your name? In which country were you born? When did you come to South Africa and how old were you by then?
2. What language do you speak in your home land? What is the difference between the way of life in your homeland and what you are experiencing here? What foods did you eat, did people dress differently, and what do you miss about your homeland?
3. What was the reason for relocating here in South Africa? What experiences did you have in settling here?
4. Before you come here, how did you imagine life in South Africa to be like?
5. When you started school in South Africa, what were your experiences? YOUR FEARS, CHALLENGES, Was it different from what you imagined? Explain.
6. Were there any challenges you encountered in adjusting to the school culture here in South Africa? Did you change the way you learn? Did you have to learn a new curriculum? Is the curriculum helping you in achieving sustainable learning?
7. What challenges has learning a new curriculum created for you? Did you encounter any problems? How does that make you feel?
8. Have you ever experienced any discrimination at school? How did this affect your school work? How do you wish this issue of sustainable learning be addressed?
9. How do you feel about your lessons? What about your teachers? Do you feel you are really benefitting from their help in achieving your educational goals? What about the way learners behave in the classroom? What is your feeling towards that?
10. If you were to be given a chance of being in control of the education system here, where would you want to see some improvements in order to enhance your sustainable learning and that of other immigrants ?

## **APPENDIX F**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS**

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. This interview is part of my PhD Degree in Educational Psychology. All information shared is confidential and all participants remain anonymous.*

*Please answer the questions honestly and as comprehensively as possible. If you do not understand a question, please do not feel afraid to ask me to explain.*

*Thank you*

*Rose Guvakuva*

1. What name would you like to give yourself for this research study?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your understanding of the word “xenophobia”?
4. Do you have any friends at school who are not South African?
5. From which countries do your friends originally come from?
6. In what language do you communicate with your foreigner friends?
7. How do you feel when your foreigner friends speak in a foreign language?
8. How do you feel about foreigners coming to your school?
9. Do you think preference should be given to South African learners for admission to schools?

Explain.

10. What is your opinion of foreign learners?
11. How often do you interact with foreign learners?
12. How do your teachers treat immigrant learners?
13. Were you involved in or did you witness any xenophobic incident at school? Explain.
14. What do you do when a xenophobic / discriminatory incident happens at school?
15. Describe the interaction between South African learners and foreigners at your school.
16. How was your school affected by the May 2008 xenophobic violence?

17. Have you witnessed any forms of xenophobia outside school?
18. What can South Africans do to treat foreigners better?
19. What are the problems between foreigners and South Africans at your school?
20. Is the education system adequate to meet the needs of foreigners? Justify your answer.
21. Are there any further issues that you would like to discuss?

## **APPENDIX G:**

### **LETTER TO THE HEAD**

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
(Edgewood Campus)

Dear Principal

My name is Guvakuva Rose. I am a PhD. student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am required to carry out research to write up a thesis. Your school has been selected to participate in this research project. The title of my research is: **Sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.**

The importance of this study is as follows:

- This study will establish the experiences associated in gaining sustainable learning for immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom.
- The study will also determine how these experiences could be dealt with by parents, educators and learners when they propose ways of enhancing sustainable learning for these learners.
- The findings can be used for professional development purposes by indicating to educators any help in their practice of enhancing sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom in education. This information can be put into practice by guiding the parent at home in monitoring and facilitating their children's learning activities. When educational policies are drawn, the notion of enhancing sustainable for migrant learners in a multilingual classroom, which is a daily practice for social activities should be considered and incorporated, especially for those schools enrolling immigrant children.

The study requests the participation of teachers, and learners in focus group interviews. Participation is purely voluntary, and participants can withdraw from the study at any time if they wish and no harm will befall them. I will observe maximum respect to your institution and

participant anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study as well as in the reporting of findings. Information will be made available to all participants before publication of the study.

Thank you

Yours faithfully,

Guvakuva Rose

**APPENDIX H**

***QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SELECTION OF TEACHERS***

1. Describe your interaction with immigrant learners.

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2. Are immigrant learners coping in the South African education system? Explain.

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3. What is your view of foreign learners?

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4. How would you explain your understanding of the concept of sustainable learning?

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## **APPENDIX I**

### ***ASSENT FORM FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS***

Researcher: Rose Guvakuva cell 0604483283

Dear Learner

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that will take place from 25 FEBRUARY 2019 to 27 July 2020. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

With the great number of immigrant learners witnessed in SA Private and public schools, there emerged a need to explore how these learners experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. Their experiences will then lead into finding ways of supporting them achieve this life long learning. So, ten immigrant learners, 4 local learners, 4 school teachers, school principal and a school counselor are required to be part of the research team. Interviews and Focus Group discussions will be used.

Participants may experience sadness and discomfort whilst sharing their experiences, therefore all possible measures will be taken to ensure that you receive the necessary psychological assistance if required. You may also derive benefit from talking about your experiences.

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in attaining sustainable learning using a Participatory Action Research.

**The objectives of the study are:**

- To explore the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To examine the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom..
- To examine the favorable conditions of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To identify and discuss hindrances for sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To propose, based on the findings, ways of overcoming hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods that I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me; please contact me at any time at the telephone number listed above.

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:

- Your real name will not be used at any point of information collection, or in the final write up of the data.
- The completed interviews (tape recordings and transcriptions) will be treated as highly confidential materials. Only I as the researcher will have access to the raw data. Your name will not be used and you have the choice of referring to yourself by any other name.
- Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice, and the information collected and records and reports written will be turned over to you.

Do you grant permission to be quoted directly? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to the terms:

This research project has been explained to me and I understand what is going to be done, and why. I have talked to my parents/legal guardian about this project and I have decided that I would

like to be part of it. I understand that my parents/legal guardian will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Please do not sign this form if you do not understand the scope and nature of the study.

**Learner's name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/s or Guardian/s:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher obtaining consent:** Name: *Rose G*

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that will take place from 25FEBRUARY 2019 to 27 July 2020. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

## **APPENDIX J: ASSENT FORM FOR SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS**

Researcher: ROSE GUVAKUVA (Telephone number: 060 4483283)

With the great number of immigrant learners witnessed in SA Private and public schools, there emerged a need to explore how these learners experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. Their experiences will then lead into finding ways of supporting them achieve this life long learning. So, ten immigrant learners, 4 local learners, 4 school teachers, school principal and a school counselor are required to be part of the research team. Interviews and Focus Group discussions will be used.

Participants may experience sadness and discomfort whilst sharing their experiences, therefore all possible measures will be taken to ensure that you receive the necessary psychological assistance if required. You may also derive benefit from talking about your experiences.

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in attaining sustainable learning using a Participatory Action Research.

### **The objectives of the study are:**

- To explore the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To examine the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To examine the favorable conditions of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To identify and discuss hindrances for sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To propose, based on the findings, ways of overcoming hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods that I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me; please contact me at any time at the telephone number listed above.

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:

- Your real name will not be used at any point of information collection, or in the final write up of the data.
- The completed interviews (tape recordings and transcriptions) will be treated as highly confidential materials. Only I as the researcher will have access to the raw data. Your name will not be used and you have the choice of referring to yourself by any other name.
- Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice, and the information collected and records and reports written will be turned over to you.

Do you grant permission to be quoted directly? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to the terms:

This research project has been explained to me and I understand what is going to be done, and why. I have talked to my parents/legal guardian about this project and I have decided that I would like to be part of it. I understand that my parents/legal guardian will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Please do not sign this form if you do not understand the scope and nature of the study.

**Learner's name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/s or Guardian/s:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher obtaining consent:**

Name: *ROSE GUVAKUVA* Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX K; PARENT CONSENT FORM (IMMIGRANT LEARNERS)**

Researcher: ROSE GUVAKUVA (Telephone number: 060 4483283)

With the great number of immigrant learners witnessed in SA Private and public schools, there emerged a need to explore how these learners experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. Their experiences will then lead into finding ways of supporting them achieve this life long learning. So, ten immigrant learners, 4 local learners, 4 school teachers, school principal and a school counselor are required to be part of the research team. Interviews and Focus Group discussions will be used.

Participants may experience sadness and discomfort whilst sharing their experiences, therefore all possible measures will be taken to ensure that you receive the necessary psychological assistance if required. You may also derive benefit from talking about your experiences.

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in attaining sustainable learning using a Participatory Action Research.

### **The objectives of the study are:**

- To explore the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To examine the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To examine the favorable conditions of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To identify and discuss hindrances for sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To propose, based on the findings, ways of overcoming hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods that I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me; please contact me at any time at the telephone number listed above.

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:

- Your real name will not be used at any point of information collection, or in the final write up of the data.
- The completed interviews (tape recordings and transcriptions) will be treated as highly confidential materials. Only I as the researcher will have access to the raw data. Your name will not be used and you have the choice of referring to yourself by any other name.
- Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice, and the information collected and records and reports written will be turned over to you.

Do you grant permission to be quoted directly? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to the terms:

This research project has been explained to me and I understand what is going to be done, and why. I have talked to my parents/legal guardian about this project and I have decided that I would like to be part of it. I understand that my parents/legal guardian will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Please do not sign this form if you do not understand the scope and nature of the study.

**Learner's name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/s or Guardian/s:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher obtaining consent:**

Name: *ROSE GUVAKUVA* Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX L: PARENT CONSENT FORM (SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS)**

Researcher: ROSE GUVAKUVA (Telephone number: 060 4483283)

With the great number of immigrant learners witnessed in SA Private and public schools, there emerged a need to explore how these learners experience sustainable learning whilst in a multilingual classroom. Their experiences will then lead into finding ways of supporting them achieve this life long learning. So, ten immigrant learners, 4 local learners, 4 school teachers, school principal and a school counselor are required to be part of the research team. Interviews and Focus Group discussions will be used.

Participants may experience sadness and discomfort whilst sharing their experiences, therefore all possible measures will be taken to ensure that you receive the necessary psychological assistance if required. You may also derive benefit from talking about your experiences.

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of immigrant learners who are in a multilingual classroom in attaining sustainable learning using a Participatory Action Research.

### **The objectives of the study are:**

- To explore the current situation of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To examine the need for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To examine the favorable conditions of sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To identify and discuss hindrances for sustainable learning of immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.
- To propose, based on the findings, ways of overcoming hindrances for sustainable learning for immigrant learners in a multilingual classroom.

You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods that I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me; please contact me at any time at the telephone number listed above.

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:

- Your real name will not be used at any point of information collection, or in the final write up of the data.
- The completed interviews (tape recordings and transcriptions) will be treated as highly confidential materials. Only I as the researcher will have access to the raw data. Your name will not be used and you have the choice of referring to yourself by any other name.
- Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice, and the information collected and records and reports written will be turned over to you.

Do you grant permission to be quoted directly? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to the terms:

This research project has been explained to me and I understand what is going to be done, and why. I have talked to my parents/legal guardian about this project and I have decided that I would like to be part of it. I understand that my parents/legal guardian will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Please do not sign this form if you do not understand the scope and nature of the study.

**Learner's name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/s or Guardian/s:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher obtaining consent:**

Name: *ROSE GUVAKUVA* Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX M: SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNER NOMINATION FORM**

I hereby nominate the following learner(s) to be RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS for the research entitled:

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX N: IMMIGRANT LEARNER NOMINATION FORM**

I hereby nominate the following immigrant learner(s) to be RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS for the research entitled:

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX O: TEACHER NOMINATION FORM**

I hereby nominate the following TEACHER(s) to be RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS for the research entitled:

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM.

- 
- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
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## **APPENDIX P**

Interview with Patrick (Not real name) on Friday August 23<sup>rd</sup>. 2019 at his home in Cato- Ridge. He is from Zimbabwe and in grade seven and speaks Ndebele as his home language. Patrick can also understand and speak English and IsiZulu fluently.

### **Q.1.**

#### **Researcher**

1. Tell me about your personal and family history.

- What is your name?
- In which country were you born?
- When did you come to South Africa?
- How long have you or your family been living here in South Africa?
- How old were you by the time you came to South Africa?

#### **Patrick**

*I am Patrick (not real name) I am a Zimbabwean born in Zimbabwe in Bulawayo town. My family moved here when I was in grade five. This year is my third year here in South Africa.*

#### **Researcher**

2. What language do you speak in your home country?

- Do you speak that same language at home whilst here in SA?

#### **Patrick**

*In our country we speak Ndebele and here at home we also speak Ndebele and a bit of IsiZulu..*

#### **Researcher**

3. What was the reasons for leaving your home country? What experiences do you have in settling down here in SA?

#### **Patrick**

*Our reason for coming was for better living conditions and good paying job for my parents. Well, we settled well at our place. We were staying in a flat in a complex. Each one at that place minds her own business. We just made sure that we had all what we need to use as the locals here were not helpful. Here you do not always find help from anyone as we were not all that used to each other.*

**Researcher**

4. Before you come here, how did you imagine schooling in SA to be like?

**Patrick**

*Well, to be honest, I just imagined it to be the same as what we used to have home except for the language.*

**Researcher**

What were your feelings on your new school here?

**Patrick**

*To be honest, when I saw the school buildings I was so happy. I couldn't believe that I was going to learn on this beautiful school. When I got accepted at the school it was one of my Waal moments, the school is beautiful as you can see and it is good to be associated with it. Yaaa, I feel very proud of the school.*

**Researcher**

What is the difference between the way of life in your homeland and what you are experiencing here? Is the food different? Did people dress differently? And what do you miss about your homeland?

**Patrick**

*Here most of the time we stay at home. You are not allowed to move alone fearing that you might get lost. Also at home we used to stay with our close families like cousins and uncles. Here we do not have those relatives. We do not visit friends and relatives at their homes like what we used to do in our country. Some of the friends here are not friendly, they sometimes use harsh words like 'Kwerekwere' on us and because of this, I feel uncomfortable to visit them and play. We only meet*

*at school. People here dress differently from us, here they wear short or tight clothes and we are used to eating sadza always and here they eat pap and bread mostly. At home, I miss how we used to play with my friends speaking the same language freely and visiting each other and having sleep overs sometimes. Ooh yes, I had forgotten that I miss going to one of my friends' house to discuss and write our homework as a group. It was so interesting and I miss that a lot. I also miss all my close relatives.*

**Researcher**

I see. So, – in settling here in SA, what experiences do you have in settling here?

**Patrick**

We faced few problems in acquiring the study permits but all was fine at last. Some of the problems though minor was that people were not ready to help you especially if you ask in English. They do not accept that a black person can speak to another black person in English. They see it as being proud of yourself. But generally, I'm glad we came to South Africa though most people here are not welcoming if they hear that you are an immigrant or foreigner. They have a negative attitude towards foreign nationals.

**Researcher**

When you started school in SA, what were your experiences? I mean your fears, challenges, and was this different from what was in your imagination? Explain.

**Patrick**

*Well, I was afraid that the other children might not be friendly to me. I was also afraid because I was not a brilliant child.. I was seeing as all the children were noticing that I am not from this country. I started to look down upon myself. Luckily, our teacher was an English speaking white teacher. It was also my first time to have a white teacher in a class with both Blacks, Indians, Coloureds and Whites learners. It was a new and exciting environment to me although I was somewhat afraid and shy. Was afraid that maybe I may fail to perform as expected in this new school.*

**Researcher**

Were there any challenges you encountered in adjusting to the new school culture here in SA? Did you change the way you learn? Was the curriculum different from your home country?

**Patrick**

*Yes, a lot of things changed. I am not able to communicate in my home language at school. I am forced to always speak in English and or IsiZulu.. Some of the subjects are totally different. We are not doing Agriculture as a subject here. And again, I'm definitely not considered a local by my classmates and at times they excludes me in their birthday parties at their homes. Due to this treatment, sometimes I feel powerless even to take part in discussions that concerns SA citizens. I just ignore the coversations and carry on with my books—After all, we are here to learn and empower ourselves.*

**Researcher**

Have you heard of sustainable learning?

**Patrick**

*No at all. But I can try to explain it.....well, I think it is education that will benefit us in the end. Am I correct?*

**Researcher**

Yes you are correct but let me explain further.

Researcher had to explain further giving examples what sustainable learning is.

**Researcher**

Now that you are fully familiar with what sustainable learning entails, is the new curriculum you are learning here contributing to the sustainable learning according to your feelings and experiences?

**Patrick**

*Yes, I think so. Firstly, the language of communication on itself helps us to be able to communicate with a diverse number of people from different backgrounds and countries that use English as their business language. We also learn a lot of life skills here that help us to be better citizens in future like learning our rights and responsibilities. Now I am also able to communicate fluently in English, isiZulu and Ndebele without any fear like before. So these languages as global languages help us in communicating in the near future while carrying out our businesses or advertising them to diverse language speakers. So, in a way the curriculum is helping us in achieving sustainable learning.*

**Researcher**

What challenges has learning a new curriculum created for you? Did you encounter any problems? How does that make you feel?

**Patrick**

*A lot of challenges indeed. We face a lot of challenges especially in the first years when all the things will be new. Trying to adjust to the school culture on itself is a big challenge. Sometimes especially in the first years, you are forced to do what you do not want in an effort to fit in a group especially at break time. You need to act wisely and not challenge the group leaders as you may end up with no friends or no one to walk with so adjusting your emotions again is a challenge so as to please others. Again sometimes in the classroom, you will not understand the language well due to different accent used by the white teachers. There will be no one to explain to you so that you understand better so as a result you fail to do the things you actually know due to language barrier. This makes me feel bad. Sometimes I would be knowing the answer in my home language but then fail to express myself well in English resulting in some learners laughing at me. This will force me not to participate during oral lessons.*

**Researcher**

Have you ever experienced any discrimination at school? How did this affect your sustainable learning at school?

## **Patrick**

*Yes, they do happen. Some learners are so segregatory, especially if you try to speak in English all the time. One learner also said to me “Makwerekwere, why do you eat such filthy food? He was holding my lunchbox showing others my food. I felt ashamed and the next day I left my lunchbox at home and bought the food at school. I ended up eating the food I did not enjoy in fear of being laughed at. This actually demoralises me and I lose my confidence and self-worth. In the end it affects my performance in class. So yes, I have once experienced victimization and received dehumanizing comments from my fellow classmates.*

## **Researcher**

How do you feel about your sustainable learning? Are you being supported enough in achieving sustainable learning? How do you wish the immigrants should be assisted in achieving sustainable learning?

*PATRICK: The sustainable learning is achievable yes and we are doing our best in school although sometimes you lack support from your fellow learners. But, it needs you to work extra hard and ignore all the negative issues you may come across. You need to focus and find your own way out. The teachers came and deliver their lessons. They never asked if you have anything bothering you. Infact, I don't think they ever know who is an immigrant or not. If they know, they never show it that they know. What they are concerned with is their work being done and submitted in time. So, in order not to get into trouble, I always make sure I do all the work as expected. On the other side, the other learners will regard you as you are trying to be smart always by following the teacher's instructions. You will be caught in between, on whether to impress the teacher or be on the other learner's side so that they will hang out with you during break time. So, this disturbs me a lot. The other learners some of them are not serious with their school work at all. One day Siyanda asked me to go back to my country because he said I was annoying him. I just kept quiet and said sorry to him although I knew I had done nothing wrong. My parents told me not to be on their wrong side. She said they are quick to stab so I am afraid of that. If you are not in your own country you just follow what the locals do and not to be forward.*

**Researcher**

Are there other challenges you come across in your sustainable learning and how do you sometimes overcome them?

**Patrick**

*Now I am used ma'am. The things that used to disturb me in the beginning I have come past them now. My parents told me that I need to focus on my school work and ignore all the disturbing issues. They said I need to believe in myself always and try to do my best always as nothing is impossible through hard work and determination. Other learners should not come into my way but I must stand up for myself and express myself without fear. This helped me a lot as I am now able to work without seeking anyone's approval. I am confident now.*

**Researcher**

If you were to be given a chance of being in control of the education system. If you were to become the principal, where would you want to see some improvements in order to help people like you who come from other countries attain sustainable learning easily?

**Patrick**

*I just wish the immigrant learners like me should be helped by being accepted even when they are not able to speak the language well. Laughing at others is not a good thing as it disturbs one's learning. Also, I feel other learners and teachers should be educated on the need to accept and support immigrant learners and know that they have a different culture from theirs so need to be tolerated. Sometimes speaking English all day long might be boring. Also, if the school is an English medium school, the teachers need to make sure that the language policy is adhered to. In that case victimisation on the grounds of language won't be experienced.*

**Researcher**

Thank you Patrick. It was nice to have you on this interview. Enjoy the rest of your day.

## **APPENDIX P**

Interview with Rudo on Monday August 19, 2019 at her home in Hammersdale. Rudo is from Zimbabwe is in grade four and speaks Shona as her home language. She can also understand and speak English fluently. IsiZulu is still a problem to speak but can understand it.

### **Q.1.**

#### **Researcher**

Tell me about your personal and family history.

- What is your name?
- In which country were you born in?
- When did you come to South Africa?
- How long have you or your family been living here in South Africa and how old were you by then.
- What forced you to leave your home country to come here?

#### **Rudo**

*I am Rudo (not real name) I am a Zimbabwean born in Zimbabwe. My family moved here when I was in grade one. My parents were the first to come leaving us with my grandparents. After settling down here, they came and collect us. I had finished my grade 2 eeee and that means I was –a- aa –a let me see- nine years and was to start grade three here in 2018. This year is my second year here in South Africa*

#### **Researcher**

3. What was the reasons for leaving your home country? What experiences do you have in settling down here in SA?

#### **Rudo**

*Our reason for coming was to join our parents who had already came to look for job and were now working here. In settling down here we faced some challenges as we were afraid of xenophobia which was experienced in townships as we were also living in township. I was so afraid though we were living in a secure house.*

#### **Researcher**

4. Before you come here, how did you imagine schooling in SA to be like?

**Rudo**

*I just imagined it to be good and exciting like what we used to have home. I was also nervous by the thought of making new friends at school. As a result on my first day at school I was all alone all the time and very quiet in class.*

*Researcher*

**Researcher**

What language do you speak in your home country? Do you speak that same language at home whilst here in SA?

**Rudo**

*In our country we speak Shona and here at home we also speak Shona and a bit of English.*

**Researcher**

What is the difference between the way of life in your homeland and what you are experiencing here? Is the food different? Did people dress differently? And what do you miss about your homeland?

**Rudo**

*Here most of the time we stay at home. You are not allowed to move alone fearing child abductions. Also at home we used to stay with our extended families like cousins and uncles. Here we do not have those relatives. You play at school and when it is over you go home and be locked inside until the next day at school. People here dress differently from us. Most of my schoolmates tease me a lot saying why our home people wear oversized clothes always, here they wear short or tight clothes. Yes, yes on the type of food, we are used to eating sadza always and here the pap is different. Usually they eat bread. At home, I miss how we used to play with my friends speaking the same language freely. I also miss my grandparents, well let me say all my close relatives.*

**Researcher**

I see. So, – in settling here in SA, what experiences do you have in settling here?

**Rudo**

*I was excited that I was coming to the new country and that I was going to be with my parents. We faced few problems in acquiring the permits but all was fine. I'm glad we came to South Africa.*

**Researcher**

When you started school in SA, what were your experiences? I mean your fears, challenges, and was this different from what was in your imagination? Explain.

**Rudo**

*Well mam, I was afraid that the other children might be mean to me. I was also afraid because I was not able to communicate in IsiZulu. I was seeing as all the children were noticing that I am not from this country. Luckily I was put in a class with an English speaking white teacher. It was also my first time to be taught by a white teacher in a class with both Blacks, Indians, Coloureds and Whites learning together. It was a new and exciting experience to me although I was somewhat afraid. Was afraid that maybe people are noticing that I am a foreigner and attack me like what they used to do during xenophobic attacks that were experienced some time back.*

**Researcher**

Were there any challenges you encountered in adjusting to the new school culture here in SA? Did you change the way you learn? Was the curriculum different from your home country?

**Rudo**

*Yes, a lot of things changed. I am not able to communicate in my home language at school. I am forced to always speak in English and or IsiZulu at times which I do not understand well. Some of the subjects are totally different. We are not doing Agriculture as a subject here. And again, I'm definitely not considered a local by my classmates as I am not able to speak their language.*

**Researcher**

Have you heard of sustainable learning?

**Rudo**

No at all. What is it?

Researcher had to explain what sustainable learning is.

**Researcher**

Now that you know what sustainable learning is, is the new curriculum you are learning here contributing to the sustainable learning according to your feelings and experiences?

**Rudo**

*Yes, I think so. We learn a lot of life skills here that help us to be better citizens in future. Also the learning and communicating in English help us to be able to communicate with many people from different countries that use English as their official language. Now I am able to communicate freely in English without any fear like before. So English as a global language helps us in communicating in the near future while carrying out our businesses or advertising them. So, I can say the curriculum is helping us in achieving sustainable learning.*

**Researcher**

What challenges has learning a new curriculum created for you? Did you encounter any problems? How does that make you feel?

**Rudo**

*A lot of challenges maam. We face many challenges especially in the first years when all the things will be new. Here they use terms like Social Sciences and Physical sciences whilst at home we say Social studies and Science only. Some of the staff are different especially the methods we use in working out some Mathematical problems. Again sometimes you will not understand the language well due to different accent used by the white teachers. There will be no one to explain to you in your mother language for you to understand better so as a result you fail to do the things you actually know due to language barrier. This makes me sad. Sometimes I would be knowing the answer in my home language but then fail to express myself well in English resulting in some learners laughing at me. When this happens, next time I become shy to answer and participate in class fully.*

**Researcher**

Have you ever experienced any discrimination at school? How did this affect your sustainable learning at school?

**Rudo**

*Yes, quite a lot. Some learners are so mean especially if you try to speak in English during break time. One learner actually said to me “Makwerekwere, why do you speak isingezi during break. Don’t you have a language?” This actually demoralises me and I lose my confidence and self-worth. In the end it affects my performance in class as I will not be able to ask questions in English freely fearing victimization and dehumanizing comments from my fellow classmates.*

## **Researcher**

How do you feel about your sustainable learning? Are you being supported enough in achieving sustainable learning by your teachers, other learners and your parents and school community at large? How do you wish the immigrants should be assisted in achieving sustainable learning?

## **Rudo**

*The sustainable learning is achievable ma'am. But, it needs you to work extra hard and ignore all the negative comments you may receive from your peers. No one actually helps you. You need to find your own way out. The teachers came and deliver their lessons. They never asked if you have anything bothering you. In fact, I don't think they ever know who is an immigrant or not. If they know, they never show it that they know. What they are concerned with is their work being done and submitted in time. So, in order not to get into trouble, I always make sure I do all the work as expected. On the other side, the other learners will regard you as you are trying to be smart always by following the teacher's instructions always. You will be caught in between, on whether to impress the teacher or be on the other learner's side so that they will hang out with you during break time. So, this disturbs me a lot. The other learners some of them are not friendly at all. One day Siyanda asked me to go back to my country because he said I was annoying him. I just kept quiet and said sorry to him although I knew I had done nothing wrong. My parents told me not to be on their wrong side. She said they are quick to stab so I am afraid of that. If you are not in your own country you just follow what the locals do and not to be forward. In fact, the experience teaches you to focus and attain your objectives.*

## **Researcher**

How do you feel now about the experiences you get here?

## **Rudo**

*Well, I am very happy with the education I am getting here. I am now able to communicate in different languages like IsiZulu and fluent English. At home I was shy to speak in English but now it comes naturally. Also, as we are learning IsiZulu as our other language, I am equipped with many languages that will help me in communication in future thereby able to make business deals*

**Researcher**

Are there other challenges you come across in your sustainable learning and how do you sometimes overcome them?

**Rudo**

*Now I am a veteran ma'am. The things that used to annoy me in the begging have come past them now. My parents sat me down and told me that I need to focus on my school work and ignore all the disturbing issues. They said as long as I know what I am doing is right and if I am not interfering with other learners' rights I must not worry. Other learners should not come into my way but I must stand up for myself and express myself without fear. This helped me a lot as I am now not a cry baby anymore. I have now gained confidence and can support my actions without any fear.*

**Researcher**

If you were to be given a chance of being in control of the education system. If you were to become the principal, where would you want to see some improvements in order to help people like you who come from other countries attain sustainable learning easily?

**Rudo**

*I just wish the immigrant learners like me should be helped to learn IsiZulu which is the most spoken mother tongue so that some learners might not notice the difference. Also, I feel other learners and teachers should be educated on the need to accept and support immigrant learners especially not to judge them on their failure to speak a local language. Sometimes speaking English all day long might be boring. Also, if the school is an English medium school, the teachers need to make sure that the language policy is adhered to. In that case victimisation on the grounds of language won't be experienced.*

**Researcher**

Thank you Rudo. It was nice to have you on this interview. Enjoy the rest of your day.

**APPENDIX Q: Interview with the teacher**

AN EXAMPLE OF THE INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER

***INTERVIEW WITH Careen***

*(Sat with hands on desk, smiling, very relaxed and co-operative)*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION (VERBAL/NON-VERBAL)</b>	<b>CODE &amp; COMMENT</b>
<b>Researcher</b>	Thank you for participating Careen, Are you informed about the immigrant learners? Are you aware of their existence in your classes and their number?	
Careen	Yes I am and we do have them in our classes. We have a number of immigrant learners at the school from different African countries, mostly from Zimbabwe but Also DRC, Malawi and Zambia	Immigrant learners Countries of origin
<b>Researcher</b>	In terms of ratio, what do you think is their number?	
Careen	I would need to check the stats on that; I haven't had a chance to do so. Probably they may be up to 5 to 10 percent....	Immigrant learners
<b>Researcher</b>	It's okay, What kind of Behaviour do they generally exhibit in class and in terms of communication, how are you getting along with these learners? Are you understanding each other?	
Careen	Our <u>senior primary learners are very well integrated</u> , very understanding, very well .... Many of them are <u>amongst our most competent students</u> We have ..., at the foundation and intermediate phases, we do have some learners who have <u>severe language limitations</u> . They seem to be struggling.	Language
<b>Researcher</b>	And what strategies would you say are in place to help those struggling learners?	

Careen	We do not have any strategy in particular. It's up to the teacher involved to implement his or her own methods as per child's problem but not something put down to follow. At times we only encourage parents to do additional lessons for them but that doesn't happen all the time.	Language
<b>Researcher</b>	Okay, I understand that the school is an English medium school and learners are all expected to communicate in English.	
Careen	<i>That is correct, English is the medium of instruction and English is a first language but you find that during break time or when alone, learners speak in their mother language which is mostly IsiZulu which is a challenge to these immigrant learners.</i>	
<b>Researcher</b>	So how does language impact on sustainable learning of immigrant learners in terms of achievement?	NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE
Careen	<i>For those who have <u>mastered English well, they are proving to be as capable and in some cases they are more capable than a South African learner.</u> But we have others who are really struggling, to the extent of <u>repeating grades because of that language barrier, particularly where the English and IsiZulu support is not present from the home base.</u></i>	Knowledge of more than one Language
<b>Researcher</b>	Have you been trained to assist these immigrant learners? I mean whether training at school or from college.	
Careen	<i>Partially, I may say. At college yes in inclusive Education when dealing with learners from diverse cultures. But you know with all the big numbers of learners we have here in class, it becomes a challenge to really pat attention to individual needs at times. So sometimes or mostly we just</i>	

	<i>treat them like local learners without noticing their extra needs.</i>	
<b>Researcher</b>	In your own thinking, what are the favorable conditions you think are needed to help them achieve sustainable learning easily?	
Careen	Well, I think these learners' needs some kind of orientation where they are assured that they are safe even though they are not from this country. You know at this school we are privileged to have some immigrant teachers who sometimes help us to speak to the learners in the language they understand. This has really helped especially to my learners. I always tell one of the immigrant teachers to talk to them in their language and it has worked for me. If possible, I feel immigrant learners need to take their home country language as the <u>3<sup>rd</sup> additional language in place of a South African language that would be very supportive for them because it would give recognition to the language which they have already mastered.</u>	Language  How can the Department of Education improve/ Overcome hindrances
<b>Researcher</b>	And would you say that immigrant learners are coping in the sustainable learning achievement in the South African multilingual classroom?	
Careen	I...m sure that 'varies vastly from class to class and from learner to learner. <u>I would say here that some are not coping. Some are coping reasonably well, some are coping excellently. Depending on the support base at home.</u>	sustainable learning performance
<b>Researcher</b>	Would you say that the education system has to be amended to be sustainable for immigrant learners that are not coping and what recommendations would you make?	
Careen	I think that the education department need to recognize that	

	<p>We are the leading economy in Africa and we are part of SADC and we are part of the wide African continent and therefore we do have an incoming population and that is not going to change. We need to have strategies in place to help immigrant learners so that they integrate easily into the education system. Some support frameworks need to be in place <u>So we do need to look perhaps at other languages. I know that ..., like French and or Portuguese for those learners from Francophone countries, then we talking Portuguese.</u> French and Portuguese were somewhat downgraded as additional languages. But I think they need to take their place along perhaps with some other South Africa languages that would make it a lot easier for both of <u>those learners to integrate and for also South African learners to increase their sustainable learning skills.</u> These African languages I think are important if we are to help immigrants achieve sustainable learning.</p>	<p>How can the Department of Education improve</p>
<p><b>Researcher</b></p>	<p>And is learning of English as First language helping in their sustainable learning?</p>	
<p>Careen</p>	<p><u>Yes, English is recognized globally and an official language in the country. Particularly as the immigrant learners come to the school aware of the language of instruction and the parents have generally chosen to bring them here with the knowledge that it is an English medium school, with English First language</u> so the immigrants would be able to communicate in a global world.</p>	<p>Language</p>

<b>Researcher</b>	What is your own personal experience in sustainable learning while working with our foreign learners?	
Careen	<p>I have been very privileged at the school with our immigrant learners sometimes it is a <u>real challenge to work</u></p> <p><u>With them, and help them to integrate.</u> They have brought a really enriching element to the school due to their hard work and resilience. <u>They and the South African learners have done things like plays in assembly or talking in Life Orientation classes about their experiences</u> hence educating others on the need to embrace different cultures. And that has empowered them in such a way and South Africans have in a way changed their perceptions in this school on accommodating immigrant learners. And I think that it is a very enriching experience for all of us at school. We have <u>had a cultural day where they also have showed who they are and what they have from their own traditions.</u></p>	Interaction/ EMPOWERMENT
<b>Researcher</b>	So it sounds like they are definitely an asset to the school?	
Careen	I would say most definitely. They are hard workers. It's because of them that local learners now also try to work hard.	
<b>Researcher</b>	Okay, how would you explain your understanding of the concept immigrant sustainable learning?	
Careen	Formalized transfer of knowledge from the teachers to the learners. Can be viewed as being able to transfer knowledge and skills learned in formal school to life situations in the outside world of family, community and work. Sustainable learning in other words is making sure that human development efforts yield life-long or lasting improvement in immigrant learners' lives, in their careers including communities.	Understanding sustainable learning

<b>Researcher</b>	Is this immigrant sustainable learning experienced in multilingual classes?	
Careen	As far as the school is concerned yes, it is experienced. But the continuous attacks on immigrants is a cause of concern as it disturbs immigrant learners' performance. The reasons for the attacks range from the sense that " <u>why foreigners should have places in our school and be the high achievers?</u> " One had comments like "they have taken <u>our top 10 places</u> " and so there was definitely a sense of segregation and unwelcoming within the school. But the interesting thing was that there were many, <u>both South Africans and non-South African learners who quickly challenged those who held those views and now they don't publicly show it.</u>	Sustainable learning experiences  Hindrances
<b>Researcher</b>	And what problems would you say immigrant learners are facing now at school that hinder their sustainable learning?	
Careen	I had been trying to observe quite closely but haven't noticed any major one beside language barrier in early years as I have already said. There seem <u>to be quite a high degree of acceptance from local learners.</u> <u>A lot of immigrant learners are quite assertive and are part of leadership</u> of the school in many cases. So they have not been any problem. And several teachers at school seems to now address any issues well. The language barrier, discrimination and power issues are not a problem now. Local learners in a way have come to realize that they are all the same.	Interaction/ hindrance
<b>Researcher</b>	And those immigrant learners who have just come into school, how are they accommodated?	
Careen	Well, we do not have the school based support team but through discussions with the staff, we do now have the fortunate position where <u>there are immigrant teachers who</u>	Overcoming hindrances

	<u>are now employed at the school. So other teachers in the case that they do not understand an immigrant learner's behavior, we go and ask them and it is helping a lot. Even the immigrant learners feel free to discuss their problems with their other immigrant teachers.</u>	Interaction
<b>Researcher</b>	You mentioned the immigrant staff. What role do they play in supporting the immigrant learners and how do you think they treat the learners as teachers?	
Careen	Well I yes, we have them. They really support the immigrant sustainable learning. One of the advantages I think in our school is that we have a very multi-cultural staff and we have staff from other countries in Africa as well. And there is ...although all staff have their ups and downs, <u>there is a high degree of acceptance and appreciation of the diversity</u>	Integration
<b>Researcher</b>	How would you describe the interaction between South African learners and immigration learners at the school?	
Careen	Currently, generally speaking it is good. But learners are very influenced by what is happening in their environment. So in the areas last year where there was violence one	

	<p>Could see that some of our <u>South African learners were influenced by the views of fellow South Africans around them</u>. So if there is something going on in the wider environment then it does spill over into the school. But the interesting thing was that there were quite a lot of learners who would counter those views sometimes in discussions. But there are platforms in the school within say <u>LO and English where topics like that can be covered</u>. And if it is an issue then we really try and focus on things that are happening in the real world and we try to unpack them. So at the moment I would say that generally it's quite good.</p>	Department can improve
<b>Researcher</b>	You mentioned environmental factors, how would you say that June 2019 xenophobic violence affected immigrant learners in their sustainable learning achievement.	
Careen	<p>As I said, it depends on the extent to which it was happening and our learners come from huge variety of places, sometimes from areas where nothing occurred and sometimes from areas where there was quite a bit of violence, so learners from areas like high density suburbs, areas where there was real uprisings, they were more affected than others and the <u>biggest impact was absenteeism of immigrant learners sometimes because of real threat and sometimes because of perceived threat and families wanting to ensure safety, so I would say was the biggest impact</u>.</p>	Disturbances in sustainable learning.
<b>Researcher</b>	And what attempts were made by the school to assist these learners?	

Careen	We did keep in quite regular contact with them and try to find out if <u>things would be safe, we did assure them that the school was safe.</u> ... I think there might have been 1 or 2 occasions where some of them were dismissed early, I think when there was concern on the part of the parent or the learner, there were no penalties attached to having been away from school and we tried to assist learners to catch up on their work when they returned.	
<b>Researcher</b>	What suggestions and recommendations did you have at the dept. of education to assist sustainable learning for immigrant learners?	
Careen	I think they need to be <u>involved in training of educators because I think that it's the educators who are on the ground, in the school</u> who have to deal with the immigrants so I think possibly workshops and training for educators is the best route and perhaps also could extent that through RCL councils and leader learners within the school to be trained to better deal with differences and need to accept, help and tolerate others at learner level.	Department can improve
<b>Researcher</b>	In your opinion, do you think that the school has done enough to accommodate the immigrant learners in sustainable learning?	
Careen	I don't think <u>we do enough at entry level on the language issues and perhaps going back to the previous question</u>	<b>Department can improve to overcome hindrances</b>
	<u>Something that could be helpful would be if the department could consider perhaps what used to happen in the past when one had immigrant classes and learners would be out of classes with a tutor for a set period of time before they integrated into real subjects.</u> I don't know what the economics of that would be but those immigrant learner classes could be of assistance as long as they are done in the right way and they don't stigmatize or isolate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services of a tutor</li> </ul>

	learners but I think they are done in a constructive way and then they can be helpful.	
<b>Researcher</b>	Do immigrant parents have lots of hope or high expectations of their children?	
Careen	Many do. I think it is because often some of those who come to South Africa are <u>people of capacity and initiative for survival so because of those things they know that they need to survive and they want their children to thrive and so there is a certain amount of pressure and high expectations on their children to have sustainable learning.</u>	<b>Need for sustainable learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable learning for initiative skills</li> <li>• Survival skills</li> <li>• Thrive through difficult times</li> </ul>
<b>Researcher</b>	What can be done to support immigrant learners achieve sustainable learning better whilst in a multilingual classroom?	
Careen	Just that as South Africans we all have a lot of growing up to do and I think we need to learn how to accept and tolerate one another. We need to put ourselves in the shoes of the immigrants and do to them what exactly we would want things to be done to us. They are not different from us. We are the same. Their great achievement is mine too so emotional support is needed. No segregation and hate speech. We also need to be patient with them especially on language issues. All in all, love is the best strategy and having ways in place on how we integrate people who are different from us in humane ways.	<b>How to improve immigrant sustainable learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting immigrant learners interest and needs</li> <li>• Respect immigrant learners</li> <li>• Accommodate and love them</li> </ul>
<b>Researcher</b>	Thank you so much for your time and your contribution, it was very enlightening. Thank you for sharing your experiences	

Careen	My pleasure.	
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**28 MAY 2020**  
**X Primary School**  
**Internal Staff Development**  
**Programme /Session**

**APPENDIX S: LANGUAGE EDITOR**

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**EDITING CERTIFICATE**

**LANGUAGE EDITING SERVICES**

**Date: 2021/12/30**

**This serves to confirm that the document entitled:**

**SUSTAINABLE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN A MULTILINGUAL  
CLASSROOM**

**By**

**ROSE GUVAKUVA**

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**has been language edited on behalf of its author, with recommendations for improvement.**

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