

**SISWATI LANGUAGE AS A SUBJECT IN SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN ESWATINI: LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES IN TWO
SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE LUBOMBO REGION**

**BY
LUNGILE MATHAMANE NXUMALO**

JANUARY 2021

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BY

LUNGILE MATHAMANE NXUMALO

214584282

B.A. HUMANITIES+ PGCE

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The work contained in this dissertation was completed by the author at the University of KwaZulu-Natal between January 2016 and January 2021. It is original work except where due reference is made. The work will not, and has not been submitted for any award in any University for any diploma or any degree except for the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Signature. 

Date. 03 February 2021

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my siblings, my brother in-law, nephews, nieces, my mother; Maqhiki Ngwenya-iqhikiza ley'ntombi zakwaNgwenya, my son; Lindo and my daughter; Sne. Thank you so much for your encouragement and support.

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the experiences of learners on learning siSwati language as a subject in senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. It was based on the notion that for many years in the education system of Eswatini, focus has been on English as an important subject while siSwati as a subject was neglected. However, now, there has been a shift of emphasis from English to both English and siSwati as core subjects and siSwati has been declared as a core subject together with Mathematics, Science subjects and English language at senior secondary school level. The study was based on the following research questions: What are the learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini? How are the learners affected by their experiences in learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini? Why do the learners experience learning of siSwati as a subject in the way they do in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini? The study adopted the interpretive paradigm where the qualitative approach was used. It utilised questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions as data gathering tools. Data were gathered from twenty (20) learners in two schools that were randomly selected in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. Data were analysed using content analysis. The findings revealed that learners liked siSwati as a subject because it promotes their culture as Emaswati, however, there is still not much that they benefit by learning and passing siSwati at senior secondary school apart from the fact that learning it helps them promote it as their mother tongue and that they learn a lot about their culture. The findings also revealed that learners enjoyed and understood siSwati concepts better if they do role-plays, debates, hot sits, class discussions, trips to Eswatini museums and cultural villages. Another finding was that despite that siSwati is now a core subject learners are still punished for speaking it at school. The study recommended that Language policy makers should make a follow up on the policy made to ensure that what is stipulated in that policy is implemented. They should make sure that learners are not punished for speaking in siSwati in schools because the policy stipulates that they are free to do so as siSwati has been made the official language together with English. The study further recommends that teachers should find better methods of teaching grammar so that learners enjoy grammar lessons as much as they enjoy doing the other components in the language. Teachers of siSwati should also make sure that in what they say or do, they should not seem to favour English language as a subject over siSwati.

Key terms: indigenous African languages, Core subject, Learners' experiences.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. SADC- Southern African Development Community.
2. EGCSE- Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education.
3. LIEP- Language in Education Policy.
4. EDSECP- Eswatini Education Sector policy.
5. NGO- Non Governmental Organization.
6. UNESCO- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.
7. IDRA- International Development Research Association.

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the study, which sought to explore the experiences of learners on learning siSwati language as a subject in senior secondary schools in Eswatini. The chapter presents background information to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, location of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, an indication of the contents of the next chapters and conclusion of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

Eswatini is part of the SADC region (Kamwendo, 2009). In this article, the region is described in terms of linguistic zones, which were brought about by colonialism. For example, there are zones in the SADC region, which were colonized by Britain and thus have English as one of the official languages. There are also those, which have French as one of the official languages because they were colonized by France. Kamwendo (2009) also notes that English has become as powerful as a language that even those countries, which were not colonized by Britain, are making means to learn English language, considering the fact that they are surrounded by English speaking countries. Among these countries are Mozambique, which was colonized by Portugal, and South Africa, which despite having eleven (11) official languages has English language as the dominant language in the country. Eswatini was colonised by Britain and therefore uses English as both an official language and a second language.

Eswatini is a linguistically homogenous country (Mkhonza 1987). Defining linguistic homogeneity, Fishman (1967) states that it refers to a country where one language is used by 85 percent or more of the natives of that country. Eswatini was colonized by Britain after the Anglo-Boer war in 1903 and later got independence in 1968. Even though a large population of the country speaks siSwati, which is the Emaswati

people's native and official language, English language, the language of the former colonial power is also an official language in the country (Kamwangamalu & Moyo, 2003).

It is a well-known fact that European countries that colonized African countries imposed their languages on the countries they colonized for different reasons. However, no matter what the reasons were, the fact remains that the language of the colonial power was superior and the African languages assumed an inferior position in status. In their quest for modernization and developing their economy, post-independence African leaders sacrificed the roles of their languages for European languages because of the belief that they were the only vehicles to modernization and economic development, considering the fact that they were the languages used in science and technology (Bamgbose, 2011).

This is true of the situation in Eswatini, for my observation is that in formal education, much emphasis has been put on English as a subject. The reason for this seems to be the same as Bamgbose's (2011) assertion that English has been associated with being learned and belonging to the class of the elite. In schools, English has been the most important subject and language as it has been the medium of teaching and learning. English language, together with two other important subjects; Science and Mathematics, were made core subjects in all schools in Eswatini. Passing these subjects would open opportunities for learners at tertiary level and in the job market. Being core subjects meant that a lot of value was attached to them as important subjects, compared to others.

I developed an interest in undertaking this study after realizing that siSwati has been made a core subject together with the above-mentioned subjects and an official language together with English language, which is a subject that determines whether learners are either accepted or not at tertiary level. Acknowledging and accepting that a language is the main tool that promotes people's culture and that if a language is not used, it might become extinct and thus deprive its speakers of their culture, has resulted in the renewed emphasis globally on preserving African languages (Bamgbose 2011). This might be another reason why Eswatini is suddenly interested in promoting

siSwati language, which has been side-lined in the education system for years in favour of English language.

Advocates of the use of siSwati, generally in the country and specifically in education have geared themselves up to ensure that siSwati is elevated, and that it is learnt as a subject by all Eswatini. In the past, in Eswatini as in other British colonies, being learned was synonymous with a good competency in the English language. Thus if one was good in English, he was considered as an educated person, commanding respect and becoming very influential in his society as compared to those who were not proficient in English language (Bamgbose, 2011). In the education sector as already alluded to earlier, English was the medium of instruction for all grade levels, however, recently, the Ministry of Education has issued a Language in Education Policy, which is giving primary school teachers the liberty to use siSwati to teach and explain difficult concepts in level 1 to level 4 at primary school level, thereafter English continues to be used as a medium of instruction (Education and Training Sector Policy, 2011). This is one of the indicators that unlike what the position has been in the past where English language was predominantly used as a medium of instruction and people's status and education was measured on their ability to use English; emphasis is now put on one's ability to use siSwati. In addition, according to the Language in Education Policy (2011) learners are now free to use siSwati in schools, which has not been the position before. In the past learners were punished for communicating in siSwati within the school premises. Now the assumption is that since siSwati has been made compulsory to all learners who go through the education system in Eswatini, it means it has become as important as these other core subjects.

The introduction of the new curriculum, the Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education' in 2009, has further given siSwati, as a subject, a new status, as it is now a compulsory subject even to those learners whose first language is not siSwati. The siSwati syllabus is now divided into two components; first language siSwati and second language siSwati, which is done by those learners whose first language is not siSwati.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The shift in the emphasis from English to both English and siSwati as core subjects, provides the base upon which the problem is stated. The problem is that for many years focus in education in Eswatini has been on English as an important subject while siSwati as a subject was neglected. In the past, learners in public schools were afforded the liberty to choose between siSwati and French; however, the situation has now changed as siSwati has been declared as a core subject together with Mathematics, Science subjects and English language at senior secondary school level. As a core subject all learners are expected to do siSwati despite their ability or nationality. The assumption is that since siSwati has been made a core subject, it will have the same value as the other core subjects, which is that it is now an important subject and one that can benefit the learners in many ways. The study was therefore aimed at finding out whether according to the learners' experiences siSwati has become as valuable and as important as its new status in Eswatini or not. Hence my interest was to explore learners' experiences on learning siSwati as a subject as well as what learners consider to be best practices in learning siSwati as a subject and the challenges learners experience in their learning of siSwati.

1.3 Purpose and focus of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject at senior secondary school level in Eswatini. It was also to establish reasons why the learners experience siSwati the way they do and to find out how learners are affected by their experiences in learning siSwati in two secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini, as well as to find out about challenges learners experience in their learning of siSwati as a subject. The study focused on learners who are doing siSwati as a subject in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini.

1.4 Location of the study

The study was conducted during an era where section 7.4 of the Eswatini Education Sector policy (2011) stipulates that both siSwati and English should be used equally as official languages in Eswatini. It was also during the time when siSwati language had been made the official medium of instruction in the first four grades of school. Even though teaching and learning materials, which are in English, will remain in English, teachers have been given the right to explain difficult or certain concepts to learners in siSwati where they see fit even in a lesson that is supposed to be conducted in English.

The study was also located during a time when it is obligatory that all learners who go through the school system in Eswatini learn siSwati as it has become one of the core subjects in the country's school curriculum. Previously learners were given the liberty to choose between siSwati and French in all school levels in the schools that offered French as a subject. However, according to the Eswatini Education Sector Policy (2011) learners no longer have that choice. Even those learners whose mother tongue is another language other than siSwati are not excused from this regulation as they are expected to do a new syllabus called Second Language siSwati. The policy also encourages the promotion of siSwati as a language in the country and it mentions that one of the ways of ensuring that the language is given the respect that it deserves is allowing the learners to speak it within and outside the school, premises without being punished as they were punished previously (Eswatini Education Sector Policy, 2011).

The study was conducted in two schools under the Lubombo region of Eswatini. One of the schools is located in a rural area and the learners are coming from nearby homes where like in most rural areas the mother tongue is siSwati language. In this particular school like in all rural schools, learners predominantly use the siSwati language for communication in school as they stopped using English language as a medium of communication after the release of the Language in Education Policy (2011). They only use English in English language lessons where they are still forced to use English. The other school is found in the urban area, as it is located in the

centre of a small town, which is the only town in the region. The school is found along the main road from big towns in the country; Manzini and Mbabane, which makes it accessible to learners from different backgrounds. It is an expensive school, as parents are required to pay exorbitant fees and thus attracts learners from both rich and poor backgrounds, with government subsidising fees for those that cannot afford to pay for themselves. The school also offers boarding facilities which makes it attractive not only to local learners but also those that come from as far as our neighbouring country; Mozambique. It is an English medium school but like all schools in Eswatini it offers siSwati as a core subject even to those learners whose mother tongue is not siSwati as they are expected to learn it as a second language.

1.5 Research objectives

The study intended attaining the following research objectives:

1. To explore two secondary school learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject in the Lubombo region in Eswatini.
2. To establish how learners are affected by their experiences in learning siSwati in two secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini.
3. To find reasons for the learners of two secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini to experience siSwati the way they do.

1.6 Research questions

The study intended answering the following research questions:

1. What are the learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini?
2. How are the learners affected by their experiences in learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini?
3. Why do the learners experience learning of siSwati as a subject in the way they do in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini?

1.7 Significance of the study

It was hoped that the study would be beneficial to the Ministry of Education as it would give an insight on the experiences of learners on learning siSwati as a subject so that appropriate decisions can be taken to help learners see and appreciate the value or non-value of the subject. It was also hoped that the study would inform inspectors, curriculum developers and teachers of siSwati as a subject on the learners' experiences of learning siSwati so that they can determine the appropriateness of the activities done by learners when learning siSwati. It was also hoped that knowing what learners considered to be best practices that teacher's use which are of interest to them could benefit teachers of siSwati. It was further hoped that teachers would also be in a better position of coming up with ideas on how to help learners successfully face challenges that come with learning siSwati as a subject.

1.8 Limitations of the study

I would have liked to conduct the study on a bigger scale but could not because of time and financial limitations as I am working fulltime and have a limited budget as the study is self-sponsored. Therefore, I focused on only two schools and ten learners per school. Some teachers were also not willing to give me enough time for all the activities that had to be undertaken with the participants and I ended up using the learners' free periods. Another limitation was that this was a case study and therefore the findings of the study could not be generalised to the whole country. The findings can however be used to provide explanations in similar situations.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

The study was delimited to two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. It was also delimited to form five learners of siSwati in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region and ten learners in each school. It was further delimited to learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject.

1.10 Definition of key terms

The following terms were used as defined below in this study:

1. Indigenous African languages-original or native languages whether used as the only language or as the mother tongue, historically in Sub-Saharan Africa which does not belong to a single family but are divided among several distinct linguistic stocks (Resane, 2016).
2. Official language- a language that is given a special legal status in a particular country, state or jurisdiction. A country's official language is a language used within the government (Cambridge Business Dictionary, 2021).
3. Core subject-a subject that is compulsory throughout each key stage in the national curriculum (WTM Academy.com, 2016).
4. Learners' experiences- learners' practical contact with and observation of facts or events (Conrad, 2002).
5. Learners' attitudes- a settled way of thinking about something, typically one that is negative or positive towards a certain idea (Liaw et al, 2007).
6. Learners' views- a particular way of considering or regarding something ((Merriman Webster's Visual Dictionary, 2020).
7. Imported languages- languages-mostly European languages which were imposed by colonial powers on the African countries they colonized (Bagmbose, 2011).
8. Commodification of language-languages are called commodities suggesting the existence of a market where these languages like any commodities have an economic exchange value (Kamwendo, 2009).
9. Linguistic market- this refers to the theory of the value of a speaker's choice of language depends on its role in the society and the linguistic value attached to it (Kamwendo, 2009).

10. Globalization-the process of international integration arising from the interchange of the world views (Weisman, 2016).

1.11 Dissertation outline

Chapter one presents an introduction and the background to the study. It outlines the background of the linguistic situation in Eswatini and the shift from English being the most important language and subject at school to siSwati being given a status that is equivalent to English. The chapter also gives the latest developments in Eswatini where siSwati has been made a core subject, a medium of instruction and a language of communication, which was not the case when formal education was introduced in the country. It also provides the purpose and focus of the study, location of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study and the summary of the chapter.

Chapter two provides a review of literature on siSwati language in senior secondary schools in Eswatini. It presents a critical review of literature, which touches on studies that have been carried out in Eswatini, other African countries and countries globally.

Chapter three gives an outline of the methods in which the research was carried out. It represents the research approach, the paradigm, the research design, data generation and analysis methods, instruments for data generation, sample and sampling, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

Chapter four discusses the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

Chapter five discusses data presentation and it addresses the three research questions, the "WHAT" question: what are the learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini? The "HOW" question: how are the learners affected by their experiences in learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini? The third research question, the "WHY" question: why do the learners' experience learning of siSwati as a subject in the way they do in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini?

Chapter six is the dissertation chapter and it addresses the researcher's perspective with regards to the learners' experiences on their learning of siSwati. This is where there is full engagement of the Theoretical frames of reference. It also gives a summary of the whole study, recommendations and conclusions

1.12 Summary of the chapter

The chapter provided an introduction and the background to the study. It gave the background of the linguistic situation in Eswatini, the introduction of formal education and how emphasis was put on the use of English as a subject when it was made a core and official language in the country. The chapter also highlighted the latest developments in Eswatini where siSwati has been made a core subject, a medium of instruction in the first four grade levels and a language of communication within the school premises, which was not the case when formal education was introduced in Eswatini. It also provided the purpose and focus of the study, location of the study, research objectives, significance of the study, limitations of the study, and delimitations of the study, statement of the problem and research objectives and questions guiding the study. The next chapter is the review of literature related to the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on experiences of learners on the learning of siSwati language as a subject in senior secondary schools in Eswatini. It provides a critical review of literature, which touches on studies that have been carried out in Eswatini and other countries around the area of learners' experiences on learning African indigenous languages in Africa and overseas countries. The chapter ends with a summary.

2.1 Language issues, power and politics

The literature that was reviewed reveals that the issue of languages, especially indigenous languages is associated with power and politics. Phyak and Bui (2014) conducted a study in which they looked at language policy and planning from the perspectives of global ideologies, national agendas and local transformations in two (2) Asian countries; Vietnam and Nepal. This study revealed that language issues could never be divorced from power and politics. This conclusion was arrived at after a group of students and an indigenous activist pointed out that they strongly believed that language issues were political, which is why they were of the view that seeing indigenous languages being implemented as subjects in schools was nothing but a dream that would never be fulfilled (Phyak & Bui 2014). The situation in Eswatini is however different when compared to that of Nepal because what has led to the implementation of siSwati as a subject is the relationship between politics and language issues. The fact that language issues are political in Eswatini has made it easy for the only indigenous language; siSwati, to be implemented and taught as a subject in Eswatini's schools, together with English language. The only difference between these subjects is that English language is a passing/failing subject.

In his paper entitled, "Language planning and policy in Botswana," Nkosana (2011) looks at how, "language planning and policy in Botswana are used as tools of political

and economic control” (Nkosana (2011, p.129). He also asserts that English language has been made an important language, as it is the language of education in Botswana. Nkosana (2011) opines that like in many Sub-Saharan countries, “in Botswana, the ruling elite has used English as a power tool of inclusion into or exclusion from further education, employment/economic, or social position and Setswana as a tool for social unity” (Nkosana (2011, p.129).

The same situation is experienced in Eswatini as English is also used as the language for education while siSwati is used as the language for national unity. Nkosana (2011) further asserts that this has resulted in the ruling elite being made up mainly of people who are proficient in the ex-colonial language and these are the people who have been given the task of looking into language planning in the country. If this elite class is in control of the economy and politics of the African country, then it is obvious that its values and ideals will continue being in line with what is good for the ex-colonial language at the expense of the indigenous African languages.

Nkosana (2011) also opines that these ruling elite have made English language the dominant language to improve the country’s relations with other countries educationally, socially and economically. In Botswana as in many other Sub-Saharan countries, English, the ex-colonial language has been allocated that role as the official language and the language of education. Proficiency in English expands “one’s frontiers” (Nkosana 2011, p.129). It is an undeniable fact that most African countries still have ex-colonial languages in their language policies as official languages because these ex-colonial languages are used as languages of communication with foreign countries globally.

Referring to English language in Botswana, Nkosana (2011) says, “As the official language, it is the language of business in government and semi-governmental institutions and also private companies and NGOs” (Nkosana 2011, p.129). The same situation prevails in Eswatini, as English has become the language for trade with foreign investors and the language of communication with non-governmental organisations, which are running various projects in the country. Therefore being

fluent in English language gives Africans a better chance of being employed in these African countries.

Nkosana (2011) asserts that these African countries have made English dominant in their language policies and use not because they have a choice but because they have become dependent on foreign countries politically, educationally, economically and socially. They depend on foreign investors leading to a continued dependence on English; the language that is used globally. Nkosana (2011) makes an example of Kenya where, "English is more widely used and enjoys greater prestige, largely because Kenya's capitalist system, whose success depends on foreign investment, creates a situation for dependence on the English language" (Nkosana 2011, p.131).

In a nutshell, Nkosana (2011) opines that small countries like Botswana have no hope in succeeding to resist the power of English as they still depend on investments from foreign countries to develop and sustain their economy. This is crucial to the study at hand as a lot depends on this when it comes to the attitudes that citizens of a country will have towards studying an indigenous language. For example, if learners in Eswatini think English as the other official language is given more power than their indigenous language; siSwati, then they might not be eager to learn and do well in siSwati.

2.2 The status of African languages in Africa

Speaking on the status of African languages and their use in restricted domains, Bamgbose, (2011) asserts that what contributes to a low status of African languages are many factors, namely; colonial legacy, negative perception of multilingualism, language development status, national integration, modernization and economic development, globalization, negative language attitudes and defective language planning. He argues that colonial legacy led to African languages remaining inferior in that the language of the colonial power was used as the language of administration, commerce and education. This means the language of the colonial power automatically became the official language in the countries which were colonized, resulting to African indigenous languages occupying a low status and remaining in that position even after these colonized countries became independent.

Speaking on negative perception of multilingualism, Bamgbose (2011) opines that the many African languages spoken in Africa led to a situation where one language had to be chosen to be used as an official language to avoid costs that would come with, 'translation, interpretation, and production of documents in several languages.' (Bamgbose, 2011, p.2). In such cases, the language that was chosen as an official language was the imported language, not one of the African indigenous languages.

On the same issue Mlwela and Spencer(2013) assert that present day language in education policies need to be looked into and that teachers should make use of multilingualism to help learners understand their different subjects in schools. Mlwela and Spencer (2013) opine that it is a matter of urgency that changes are made to promote the use of indigenous languages in language in education policies to stop English and other colonial languages from dominating in these policies in Post-independence Africa. They argue that Africans still look down upon their indigenous languages even after independence from colonial powers. These indigenous languages are included in the language policies made; some as the language of instruction in given levels of primary school education, and others as official languages together with the colonial languages but it is still not easy to implement all of that in practical terms. The colonial languages continue to dominate over the indigenous languages.

They give the example of Zambia, which has maintained English as a language of instruction in their schools and Zambia's reason for having English, as a language of instruction in schools is that the language brings unity to the nation. Mlwela and Spencer (2013) argue that it is not true that Zambian languages cannot be used to bring national unity, but it is the presence of social and political inequalities that stand in the way of national unity. These social and political inequalities should be removed so that all Zambians have equal opportunities. Using English, a colonial language as a language of unity denies Zambians of their linguistic human rights in their social and political lives.

They further believe that the linguistic goal in most language policies in African states is improving the elites' proficiency in colonial languages while the rest, which is a big number of native speakers of the indigenous languages become more proficient in the

indigenous languages compared to the colonial languages. The elite will be a few who have access to the English medium schools while the masses go to public schools where they get limited proficiency in the colonial language. All subjects at high school, apart from the indigenous language are taught in the colonial language and if learners have not improved their comprehension skills in the colonial language, they are likely to have problems when it comes to doing well in all the subjects. Mlwela and Spencer (2013) argue that this is because the colonial language is a foreign language, not only for the learners but also for the teachers who are expected to explain different concepts to the learners. This implies that using only the colonial language as a language of instruction in schools has a negative effect on learners' intellectual development. As a researcher I also wanted to find out from learners of siSwati, an indigenous language, if they are affected negatively by the fact that at high school level they only use their language during siSwati lessons as all the other subjects are taught in English at their level.

Language development status also contributed to the low status of African indigenous languages in that most of them were not developed enough to be used in domains where official languages are used. For example, materials had to be produced for the indigenous languages to be used in schools, when the imported languages already had those materials and a wide vocabulary to express different concepts that needed to be expressed in the domains where they had to be used (Bamgbose, 2011).

It is Bamgbose's (2011) view that national integration also contributed to the low status of African indigenous languages. National integration has to do with the notion that these imported languages were believed to be the right tools to unite Africans of different ethnic groups who spoke different languages. However, this was not true as this so-called unifying tool only worked for the few Africans who were competent in these imported official languages. Modernization also became a factor that contributed to the low status of African languages because of the general belief that modernization can be best achieved through an imported language because it was already used globally in science and technology, which was not the case with African indigenous languages.

Globalization, here, refers to the, 'increased contact between countries and regions of the world in terms of communication, trade, technology, information, travel, culture, etc.' (Bamgbose, 2011, p.5). This resulted in imported languages becoming dominant languages over African indigenous languages. It was easy to use an already widely spoken language as a means of communication between countries and regions of the world than using an indigenous language, which was spoken by a minority of the world's population.

Bamgbose (2011) also draws our attention to what he refers to as negative attitudes and defective language planning. He argues that speakers of African indigenous languages have a negative attitude towards their languages. They consider them inferior to imported languages, which are considered as the languages of the elite, which is why even low class groups strive to make sure that their children are taught in imported languages. Speaking on defective language planning, Bamgbose (2011) asserts that language planning in most African countries is not done properly resulting in a situation where languages are not given a definite status or specialized roles in the language policy. This has led to African indigenous languages remaining inferior even after the countries' language policies have certified that they have become important languages.

On the issue of language planning, Nkosi (2014) concurs with Bamgbose (2011) when she notes that, 'on paper, South Africa has the most democratic and the most pro-African language policy, but in reality English still dominates in most government institutions and in the private sector' (Nkosi, 2014, p.2). This is true of many African countries, where on paper, African indigenous languages have been elevated to the status of official languages, when in reality it is still English or other imported languages, which are the most important languages in those countries. Nkosi (2014) gives an example of the language policy in South Africa, which stipulates that African languages should be used in institutions of higher learning, when in reality most university programs still use English as a medium of instruction. The same factors can contribute to the low status of siSwati language in Eswatini, considering the fact that Eswatini was once a British colony which maybe the reason why English, the language of the former colonizers continues to be the dominant language over siSwati. English

language is also considered as the language of modernization and economic development as it enables Eswatini to become part of the world, which has become a global village.

When speaking about language policy framework in post-colonial Africa Alexander (1999) talks about reasons for maintaining colonial languages as the only official languages in African countries. Alexander (1999) asserts that this is because the elite are not comfortable with change. They want things to remain the same as they were during colonial times. It is like exchanging white faces for black ones, for it has become easy for the elite to continue doing things as they have always been done instead of promoting the indigenous languages into positions of power. The elite consists of a few individuals who make important decisions pertaining to language policies in post-colonial Africa while failing to include the majority of African people in those significant decisions. Alexander (1999) argues that multilingualism should be viewed as an advantage rather than an obstacle towards the betterment of African countries. Research has to be done to show that just like the colonial languages; African indigenous languages can be used in important functions such as medium of instruction in the education system. The most important thing is that Africans themselves should start acknowledging the fact that indigenous languages can be used in important functions just like the colonial languages instead of looking down upon them. Alexander (1999) is optimistic that as natural resources, African indigenous languages can lead to well established national language industries and thus creating job opportunities for Africans. As mentioned earlier in Eswatini as it is in most post-independent African countries, English; a colonial language was made an official language together with siSwati; the only indigenous language in the country. Again, it was interesting to find out from learners' experiences if siSwati is given the same importance as English in the education system and in the country.

Moto (2013) discusses issues surrounding language power and society. He shows how language becomes an instrument to gain, sustain and firmly secure power using a study in Malawi after independence and during the reign of Dr Hastings Banda. During this time in Malawi, language was associated with the country's wish for nation building, promoting national identity and uniting the nation. His description of the

complex relationship between language, politics and education is related to Joseph (2006)'s assertion that if language and politics were a country, education would be its capital city. This means that education plays a significant role in whatever happens in language and politics. It is what determines decisions that are taken pertaining to language and politics. Therefore, education is the driving force behind what happens to language and politics.

Education plays a major role on how language policies lead to some languages becoming dominant while others remain inferior. Getting an education in a certain language would mean belonging to either a dominant social group or an inferior one; thus creating social hierarchies in society (Moto, 2013). He opines that language policies are controlled by, and linked to political, social and economic aspects of society. Decision makers in post-independence African countries usually belong to the high class by virtue of having received an education on the dominant language and they are the same group that is involved in making up language policies in their countries. This gives them the opportunity to manipulate what is stated in those policies to help promote their interests and this leads to social and linguistic inequalities. Through exploring experiences of learners of siSwati as a language at high school level in Eswatini, I got to know whether they think getting an education in that language helps them to belong to a dominant social group or not; especially when they compare getting an education in siSwati or English.

Like in most African countries, as Bamgbose (2011) notes, Eswatini has accepted siSwati language as the main instrument that informs people of their culture. This is based on the belief that if people are not exposed to their mother tongue, they will also lack knowledge about their culture. That is the reason for the on-going campaigns in Eswatini, such as 'the siSwati day', which are meant to promote the language. Bamgbose (2011) also points out that modernization and development are key aspects that most African countries want to achieve. No African country wants to be left behind when it comes to technology and industrial development. Like all African developing countries, Eswatini is also working towards improving her economic status. This study therefore sought to find out from the experiences of learners if siSwati as a language has any value in their lives and whether the language is used in any important

functions in the country. By looking at siSwati language as a subject, the study also wanted to find out if it gives those learning it the opportunity to benefit academically, economically and politically or whether it is just a waste of time even if they do well in siSwati.

2.3 The attitudes of speakers of indigenous languages towards their own languages

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) define attitude as, a psychological tendency that is shown by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of liking it or disliking it. Noursi, (2013) also gives a similar definition. Available literature that is related to this study reveals that most African people prefer the use of English as a medium of instruction in schools than their own indigenous languages as a result of the attitude that they have against indigenous languages. This according to Nkosi (2014) is because they view English as a language of power, a language that is more important than their own indigenous languages. Nkosi (2014) argues that such a view is attributed to apartheid laws in the South African context, which have given English a prestigious status while lowering the status of indigenous languages. She also attributes this state of affairs in most African countries to colonialism. In a poem, Mateya (2012) in Nkosi (2014) says the behaviour of Africans shows that even after being independent for many years, their minds are still colonized because of the negative attitude they display towards their languages.

In her paper entitled, 'Post graduate experiences and attitudes towards isiZulu as a medium of instruction at the University of KwaZulu-Natal', Nkosi (2014) notes that what would help elevate the status of indigenous African languages would be the change in attitudes of the people involved in their use. This therefore means if the people involved in the use of these African indigenous languages could have a positive attitude towards them, then they can be accorded the same status as English. This is what the study sought to find out; learners' attitudes towards their learning of siSwati language, which will be revealed through learners' experiences in the learning of siSwati as a subject. Davis (2014) in her paper, 'Engaged language policy practices', holds the same view as Nkosi (2014) that the assurance if not the reality of socio-

economic gain from learning English language can negatively influence learners when it comes to choosing to learn indigenous African languages. This means learners' attitudes towards languages may be influenced by the value that society attaches to those languages and the economic gain that they stand to achieve after learning those languages.

Speaking on language of instruction and attitudinal problems, Birgit et al, (2004) say, "Language development or degeneration, devastation or restitution depends on attitudes" (Birgit et al, 2004, p.48). This therefore means that the success and failure in developing languages, especially indigenous languages lie in people's attitudes towards that language. The attitudes that people have towards a given language will determine whether the language becomes important to individuals or the society. For a language to acquire a certain status in a society, it all depends on its speakers.

Bhayiji (1976) (as cited in Birgit et al, 2004) undertook research, which was looking at attitudes of both teachers and pupils towards using Kiswahili as the language of instruction. Generally, from the interviewed teachers and pupils, it was found out that both were in favour of English remaining the language of instruction. How can Africa as a continent change the negative attitudes Africans have towards their indigenous languages? Birgit et al (2004) believe that attitudes are learned, they are not inherited. Therefore, these call for a drastic change in the way people behave so that the younger generation can learn from them and start having a positive attitude towards their indigenous languages.

In a study conducted in twenty four (24) public secondary schools in Igembe South District, Meru county in Kenya, on the influence of students' attitudes towards the implementation of Kiswahili curriculum, it was discovered that secondary school students in Igembe South District have a negative attitude towards Kiswahili as a subject and this has resulted in a negative impact as far as its implementation is concerned (Kobia & Ndiga, 2013). Just like siSwati in Eswatini, Kiswahili is said to be the national and official language together with English in Kenya and it is a commonly used medium of communication (Kobia & Ndiga, 2013). Moreover, Kiswahili and English are core subjects as it is necessary that they be learnt in both primary and

secondary schools in Kenya. Like in Eswatini, where siSwati is only used as a medium of instruction during siSwati lessons, Kiswahili is also used only during Kiswahili lessons as all the other subjects are taught in English. However, unlike siSwati, which is just a national language for Eswatini in Eswatini and in some parts of South Africa, "Kiswahili is one of the working languages of the African Union; it is the national language in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. It is one of the four national languages in Zaire and it is extensively used in Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Mozambique and Somalia" (Kobia & Ndiga, 2013, p.2). Looking at how this language is extensively used, one wonders why learners are not eager to learn it and if there is any hope for minority languages like siSwati. The negative attitude that learners have towards Kiswahili as a subject has had a negative impact on their performance in the subject. Kobia and Ndiga (2013) also opine that one of the contributing factors to the negative attitudes that learners have towards learning Kiswahili as a subject are the teachers who teach it, who also have a negative attitude towards Kiswahili.

While conducting the study, Kobia and Ndiga (2013) discovered that learners had a negative attitude towards learning Kiswahili because they do not like the fact that it is compulsory and examinable, especially because it is a second language for many learners in Igembe District. Another reason why learners are not keen on learning Kiswahili as a subject is that they view it as merely a Bantu language that is not that important compared to the European languages. It was also discovered that learners use neither English nor Kiswahili as a means of communication around school even though these are supposed to be the official languages that have to be used around school. This could be another contributory factor to the low performance exhibited by learners in Kiswahili, as it is a well-known fact that for one to do well in a language, a lot of practice is required. It is worth noting that this particular situation might not apply in Eswatini secondary schools as learners use siSwati as their only vernacular to communicate around the school premises, so they have ample time to practice using the language.

On another note, in a study exploring chances of bringing in an African indigenous language as a medium of instruction at Wits university in South Africa, Kadenge (2013) revealed that students and their lecturers showed a negative attitude towards the

initiative while showing interest in English as it is believed by many people to be the language that helps people access better opportunities in life. These findings attributed this negative attitude to the politics of language where it becomes difficult for people to promote an African language when it is competing with English; a well-established language. This is because users of languages always attach value to language and African indigenous languages cannot compete fairly with colonial languages like English as they are considered international languages.

Looking at first year University of KwaZulu-Natal students' attitude towards the use of either English or Zulu, Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013) believe that, it is only on paper that the South African government recognises the fact that to empower African people, it is important to develop African indigenous languages so that they can be used as medium of instruction in the education system of the country.

Their study was based on a recent development in the University of KwaZulu-Natal where it was decided that isiZulu would be made a compulsory subject for undergraduate students from 2014. They believe that this is a controversial issue since it is taking post-apartheid South Africa back to the apartheid era where black South Africans were subjected to what is called Bantu Education. Bantu Education refers to a policy that was put in place by the white apartheid regime in 1953 which required that black South Africans be taught in their mother tongue in schools. Kamwangamalu (2004) opines that black pupils were against this policy because they saw it as a road leading them to self-destruction. Black learners perceived this policy as a tool that the South African white government of that time was using to make sure that black South Africans did not have the means to compete with white South Africans for good jobs and good career opportunities in the future (Kamwangamalu, 2004). Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013) acknowledge the fact that putting isiZulu in a position where it is expected to compete with English "is comparable to David fighting Goliath" (Rudwick & Parmegiani, 2013, p.87). This means it might seem impossible to expect isiZulu to succeed in competing against English for even though there has been some negativity associated with English, it still plays a much important role in the sciences and research locally and internationally.

Moreover, they assert that being proficient in English is still a ticket to getting good jobs in the South African market. It is against this background that Rudwick & Parmegiani (2013) wanted to get students' attitudes towards learning isiZulu as opposed to learning English. It is also worth noting that,

The University of kwaZulu Natal language policy states the need to achieve for Zulu the institutional and academic status of English and promises facilities to enable the use of Zulu as a language of learning, instruction and administration as well as the need to foster research in language planning and development. (Rudwick & Parmegiani, 2013, p.88).

Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013) conducted the study to find out if the students would support the initiative, looking at their attitudes towards learning isiZulu. The University of KwaZulu-Natal even went to the extent of declaring isiZulu as a requirement for all undergraduate students before they could graduate. The study indicates that helping students to use both English and isiZulu in their different career fields has come with benefits as students who have done this course, "have reported that basic knowledge of Zulu not only helped them to establish a rapport with their clients, but also facilitated their integration into South African society" (Rudwick & Permagiani, 2013, P.90). This means that now students who have gone through the initiative find it easy to work with people in their societies.

Even though there are benefits of learning isiZulu for undergraduate in the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Rudwick and Permagiani's (2013) study revealed that most students are not comfortable with using pure isiZulu in their reading and writing, which is why they tend to code switch, using both isiZulu and English. According to these researchers, one of the reasons why some students are not comfortable with using pure isiZulu is attributed to their educational backgrounds. They attended English medium schools before university and they do not regret going to those English medium schools, as they believe that even though isiZulu is important as a subject, they still need English language more as it is the language that one needs to learn in life in order to succeed.

In a nutshell, the study conducted by Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013) revealed that even though students in the University of KwaZulu-Natal are proud of the language policy for they can see advantages and benefits of its implementation, they still believe that their professional development is dependent on them learning English. In other words the implementation of this language policy has not changed students' views or attitudes towards learning isiZulu; they still think English is more important than isiZulu for their future careers.

In principle, it might be a good idea for them to be educated in their mother tongue and to promote and develop indigenous African languages but practically English is still the important language. The situation might change if what Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013) propose in their conclusion could be done. African languages need to be assigned higher value in the entire educational system and we endorse strategies such as those advocated by Lafon (2010) that would make an African language compulsory for the secondary certificate. Of course broader changes in the South African economy and industry, where indigenous African languages "require empowerment are also highly significant" (Rudwick & Parmegiani, 2013, p.99).

It is obvious then that for African indigenous languages like isiZulu to compete fairly with European languages like English, a radical change has to happen in the African countries' economy and industry to accommodate job seekers who have done well in African indigenous languages. In the study by Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013) it is clear that students in the University of KwaZulu-Natal have nothing against their mother tongue; isiZulu. They want it to be developed and in fact, they are proud that there are measures put in place to promote it but they are worried about what they will benefit professionally in the future if they concentrate more on isiZulu at the expense of English.

According to Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, the status of isiZulu has to be elevated first before students can see the importance of learning it. Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013)'s study is relevant to the study at hand as it also sought to find out the experiences of high school learners in

learning siSwati, which is an African indigenous language like isiZulu, in contexts where both isiZulu and siSwati have been made compulsory subjects.

2.4. Languages as commodities

Eswatini, where the researcher based her research, is a SADC member state and Kamwendo (2009) notes that in these SADC states, when it comes to the implementation of language policies, UNESCO prefers the use of both indigenous languages in the form of African languages and global languages like English. This is because of appreciating the fact that we are living in a globalized world where learners need national and global languages like English. Based on this undeniable fact, Kamwendo (2009) concludes that learners do not need to choose an African indigenous language over an international language as a subject of study but they can do both. Ndhlovu (2015) concurs with Kamwendo (2009) as he asserts that all languages; irrespective of the fact that they are indigenous or ex-colonial have a significant role to play, "in promoting economic development" (Ndhlovu, 2015, p.113).

He asserts that the SADC protocol on culture, information and sport mentions that SADC states should make up language policies, which are aimed at elevating African indigenous languages for socio-economic development and in his conclusion, he contends that for these indigenous languages to gain the status of national languages, they should have some economic value. Kamwendo (2009) is optimistic that this will result in the, 'creation of a vibrant African languages industry. It is this industry that will create jobs in the form of teachers of African languages, translators, interpreters, editors, journalists, lexicographers, researchers and other categories of language professionals.' (Kamwendo, 2009, p.15). The creation of these jobs will ensure that those who learn these African indigenous languages improve their economic status and in that way, it will be worth it getting an education in these African indigenous languages.

Kamwendo (2009) compares languages to currencies, which means people will always go for languages that have high economic value as opposed to those which are considered weak economically. The commodification of language is defined as a situation where an economic exchange value is attached to language. Linked to the

commodification of language is the language industry, which refers to a sector of activity that deals with activities like, translation, interpreting, subtitling, language teaching, editing and reporting. This implies that learning languages can generate money or employment because there are professions that depend on languages. This is related to the study at hand, as the study sought to find out if learners of siSwati as a subject benefitted anything from learning and passing it.

If languages are called commodities, it means there is a linguistic market or markets where these languages and their varieties are sold like all commodities. This also implies that as commodities, these languages have an economic exchange value attached to them (Cameroon, 2012). Cameroon (2012) further notes that English has become a highly valued commodity in the global linguistic market and she mentions that what has contributed to this state of affairs is the modern English language teaching. In light of this, the researcher wanted to find out if siSwati as a language can be considered as a commodity in the linguistic market and if there is any value attached to it from the views of learners of siSwati at senior secondary school level in Eswatini.

“Utterances are not only signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also signs of wealth, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and signs of authority intended to be believed and obeyed” (Bourdieu, 1992, p.66). Bourdieu (1992) therefore asserts that language does not purely work as a medium of communication but its role is also to show the speaker’s value in a society. Language becomes valuable in relation to its market. This means its value is counted according to the power the language holds in society when it is compared to other languages.

In her study involving indigenous immersion schools, Hermes (2007) discovered that learners of indigenous languages are more concerned about what they are going to benefit by learning a particular subject, which includes learning their indigenous languages. She says one student was worried about why they were taught about their culture as they were learning their indigenous language because he felt that he did not need anyone to teach him how to be an Indian because that is what he already was. He felt the time used to teach him his indigenous language could be used to

teach him, for example, how to become a doctor; which he thought was more important than learning his indigenous language. Most learners of indigenous languages feel the same way; that it is a waste of time to learn their indigenous languages and culture because they think these are things that they already know about. They feel that learning their indigenous languages will not benefit them in anyway.

However, Hermes (2007) asserts that research in reading has revealed that learners need to read and write in their first language before they can be able to gain proficiency in a second language. This means apart from revitalising indigenous languages, learning an indigenous language helps learners to easily learn other languages. She also opines that merely speaking the language is not enough but teachers need to directly teach grammatical concepts in the language to improve learners' fluency. While engaging with learners of siSwati language at high school level in Eswatini I got the opportunity to find out how they feel about learning their indigenous language. Do they also feel that just because they speak the language at home and know something about their culture, then they do not need to learn it at school? It was hoped that it would be revealed if learning siSwati helps them to easily learn other languages because they still learn English at their level. It was further hoped that would also say whether learning siSwati benefits them in anyway when it comes to understanding certain concepts in other subjects that they learn at their level.

On another note, Batibo (2005) believes languages are used to convey cultural experiences from one generation to another. "It provides a means of self-identity that is the ability of one group to distinguish itself from others" (Batibo, 2005, p.35). Batibo (2005) believes that it is true that groups of people can differentiate themselves by means of racial features, dress code, food they eat and other practices but it is still language that clearly marks the difference between groups of people.

Moreover, language plays a significant role in the lives of humans as they use it to convey their thoughts and ideas. Language is also closely related to one's thinking ability and intelligence (Batibo, 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising to hear native

speakers of a language saying that in order for them to speak in a foreign language; they have to first think in their native language. What Batibo (2005) says is true of African indigenous languages as most of the time the culture of Africans is embedded in their languages. They are able to talk about different concepts in their culture using the indigenous languages. He opines that each language is linked to a certain culture and that language makes people to see the world differently. The speakers' cultural experiences are embedded in each language (Batibo, 2005). The researcher wanted to find out if that is true about siSwati from the learners who do siSwati language as a subject at high school level in Eswatini.

Batibo (2005) asserts that language can be a very powerful tool for the society, which speaks that language, especially if it is utilized to its full potential and that it can contribute a lot towards developing that particular society. (Batibo, 2005). Languages can be used as vehicles to develop the nations, which speak those languages, especially if they are promoted to a status where they will be respected globally. Unfortunately that has not been the case with most African indigenous languages because after many African countries gained independence from colonial powers, they "took a short cut," (Batibo, 2005, p.44) by using the colonial languages, especially in those countries where there was more than one indigenous language to bring national unity among different ethnic groups. This has disadvantaged the indigenous African languages in that the ex-colonial languages have used their position as official languages to continue developing and strengthening themselves while indigenous languages were pushed to inferior positions (Batibo, 2005).

Batibo (2005) advocates for the development of African indigenous languages in official domains as he opines that they are valuable. He compares their value to that of minerals like gold and wildlife. He asserts that African indigenous languages have unique features linguistically compared to colonial languages. African indigenous languages are also culturally rich, as they have been accumulating their speakers' experiences over many years (Batibo, 2005). His view outlines the importance of helping speakers of different indigenous languages to change their negative attitudes towards their languages. If speakers of these indigenous African languages abandon

them for foreign languages, then these languages might become extinct together with all the values and the wealth Batibo (2005) refers to.

Speaking about speakers of minority languages, he says they usually find themselves in a state of uncertainty because they need their languages for self-identity while they also need foreign languages to access better education, good career opportunities and be able to communicate globally. Opting for the first means the preservation of their origins and choosing the second option means losing their self-identity (Batibo, 2005). This is what the study at hand sought to find out; whether high school learners of siSwati often find themselves in the same dilemma where they have to choose to do well in the ex- colonial language instead of passing their native language just because of the benefits that come with passing the ex-colonial language.

It is Batibo (2005)'s view that when two languages which are not equal socio-politically or economically get to be used in the same domains, "a pressure-resistance relationship will arise." (Batibo, 2005, p.64). He illustrates this using the following diagram:

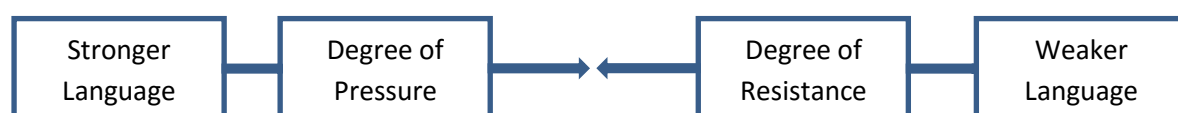


Figure 1 (Batibo, 2005)

The stronger language will eventually be used in all domains while the weaker language is ignored. This will result in learners not doing well in the weaker language while doing better in the stronger language, which gradually becomes the superior language in their lives (Batibo, 2005).

2.5 Language skills as a form of human capital

Speaking on the issue of immigrants acquiring language skills for the purpose of getting jobs in the countries they move to, Chiswick (2008) argues that the language skills that these immigrants acquire are a form of human capital. This means that

learning a language involves costs and benefits; it is just like learning to do a certain job that will help one make a living. He describes fluency in a language as a level of development in each of the four language skills; speaking, hearing, reading and writing (Chiswick, 2008). He opines that being fluent in a language comes with benefits when it comes to job opportunities at the immigrant's country of destination.

The economics of language is defined as the study of the factors that affect language fluency and the outcomes of obtaining fluency in the language (Chiswick 2008). While economics, on the other hand is defined as studying the distribution of scarce resources in a situation where people are competing for those resources. The resources are said to be scarce because people have to give up something in order to get them (Chiswick, 2008). One of these resources can be acquiring a language, which under economics of language, deals with microeconomics. Microeconomics refers to the attitudes of individuals towards language (Chiswick, 2008).

He further argues that acquiring a language is some form of investment with the hope of benefitting something in the future. If people learn a language, they hope to get a high monetary income.

2.6 Challenges on the development of African indigenous languages

Most African people view English as the language that denotes power and it is viewed more economically prominent than other languages and this leads to indigenous African languages being seen as inferior and not as languages, which can be used to benefit in any way.

Kamwangamalu (2004) asserts that English and Afrikaans for the whites in South Africa during the apartheid era ensured that white South Africans acquired the language that came with power and benefits that were linked to these languages. That is why black South Africans rebelled against Bantu education in 1953 because they realized that it was meant to make sure that they did not get the same opportunities as white South Africans when it comes to high income generating jobs and prominent career opportunities. This led to the unfortunate situation where black

African people started to associate being educated in their own languages with education that is of less importance and the stigma that was attached to these indigenous languages has remained up to the post-apartheid era. English language has remained the important language in the education system of most African countries because of its international status and the power it has when it comes to the socio-economic status of these African countries.

Learners continue to demand that they be taught in English language because of the social, economic and political power that the language has over their own indigenous languages locally and internationally. Kamwangamalu (2004) is of the opinion that if policy makers really want to promote African languages, then they must seriously look into the matter of connecting these indigenous languages with economic issues. The issue of education in African indigenous languages should be viewed as a marketing problem-how it is going to benefit those who are educated in these indigenous languages. Kamwangamalu (2004) further argues that for the promotion of African languages to be successful, these languages should be treated as commodities in the market and means should be made to market them and make them attractive to their users. Language, as a product will only be attractive to users if it enables them to benefit economically, socially and politically. Languages should be viewed as linguistic products on which certain value is attached. At the moment in most African countries, the only language that is attractive to people is English language because it is highly valued in the linguistic market.

Kamwangamalu (2004) also notes that to elevate the status of African indigenous languages emphasis must be put on the importance of letting them be used in higher domains like in education, media and government administration. Looking at the South African language policy, he notes that research reports on language use in the areas mentioned above and other areas show that the policy has not been able to achieve the objectives it was meant to achieve as far as using African languages is concerned. He maintains that the situation is still the same, as it was during the apartheid era, as English and Afrikaans still dominate in education, media and government administration. He notes that the only slight change might be in the fact that English has become more important than Afrikaans.

Kamwangamalu (2004) implies that the reason why the South African language policy cannot achieve its goals is that language policy makers did not take into consideration the connection between language and the economy. English and Afrikaans have remained the important languages despite the fact that there are other official languages because they have been given the same status only on paper, while the socio-economic value is only attached to English and Afrikaans.

Kamwangamalu (2004) argues that if language policy makers want to achieve their goals as far as the use of languages in South Africa is concerned and if African indigenous languages are to be embraced by their own speakers and view them as important as English and Afrikaans, they must be given the same socio-economic value that is attached to English and Afrikaans in the South African linguistic market. Doing this will ensure that South Africans gain employment, participate in the politics of the country and are able to climb the social ladder.

In conclusion, Kamwangamalu (2004) says that South African children have not been given a choice as far as being educated in European languages or African indigenous languages is concerned because they, "are only too well aware of the socio-economic and political power of English to ask for education in any other language and by the fact that their own languages have no economic cachet either locally or internationally," (Kamwangamalu, 2004, p.137). Kamwangamalu (2004) further argues that for the South African indigenous languages to appeal to the South African population, they must be given the same economic value that has been assigned to English and Afrikaans. They must be associated with the same benefits, prominence, power and material gains that are associated with English and Afrikaans in the South African context. In other words, these are the factors, which have for a long time contributed to the indigenous languages remaining inferior to English.

Bourdieu Pierre in Wright (2002) concurs with Kamwangamalu (2004) when he says,

Linguistic utterances or expressions are always produced in particular contexts or markets and the properties of these markets endow linguistic products a certain 'value.' On a given linguistic market, some products are valued more highly than others. (Wright, 2002, p.18).

This just goes on to confirm that if we want languages to be used by the linguistic clients, we must attach certain values to them and view them as goods in a linguistic market. It also confirms that people will always go after languages that are highly valued in a given society other than those that are considered worthless.

Therefore, if South African policy makers want to promote African indigenous languages, changes have to be made to make sure that these African indigenous languages are as attractive as the European languages to their linguistic clients. Emphasis must be put on the fact that languages have to be viewed as goods or commodities in the linguistic market, which are assigned value or a price for people to be interested in using them.

He concludes by stating this most important point that, for language consumers what is important is whether the language they are made to learn will benefit them or not and this is what is going to determine whether a language is promoted or not in a given society (Kamwangamalu, 2004).

Nkosana (2011) holds the same view as Kamwangamalu (2004) as he explores the consequences that may be faced by Africans if they resist the use of ex-colonial languages like English by giving the example of Malaysia when it was under the British rule. The Malays insisted on keeping their language, culture and religion, and this got them into trouble as the government excluded them from social and economic power. Nkosana (2011) opines that the same predicament might be experienced by other African countries if they were to ignore ex-colonial languages in all the important domains and start using their indigenous languages.

Another example that Nkosana (2011) gives on the difficulty faced when trying to resist the power of English is that of Tanzania where it was decided that Kiswahili would be the only medium of instruction at primary level. The plan was to extend this initiative to secondary schools in Tanzania as the country had decided to promote the state of ownership and independence as a country (Nkosana, 2011). However, as Nkosana (2011) contends, English has become so important in the world such that it becomes difficult or even impossible for African countries like Tanzania to stick to policies meant to promote African indigenous languages like Kiswahili. It is because of

this reason that countries like China and Malaysia decided to go back to promoting English in their language policies in the 1980s and Tanzania might be required to do the same (Nkosana, 2011).

Birgit, et al (2004) assert that what is happening in Madagascar and Tanzania shows that with the required willingness politically and joint efforts from decision makers, indigenous African languages can be improved and given the power that is enjoyed by foreign languages so that they can also be useful globally (Birgit et al 2004). Birgit et al (2004) have discovered that in other African countries, Africans have no interest in promoting these indigenous languages. Disagreements among stakeholders make it impossible to make decisions that would help elevate the state of the African languages in these African countries. Each one of the stakeholders is accusing another of contributing to the state of affairs in these African countries, where we find the indigenous languages occupying a low status as compared to European languages, like English.

An example of this is what we read from the article, "*Mother tongues are dying in South Africa*" which appeared in the, "Saturday star, Johannesburg, 8 November 2003" where the then spokesperson for the Pan South Africa language board, Philipine Masemola was blaming parents for not putting any effort in trying to help their children to use African indigenous languages (Birgit et al, 2004). However, the question is; what is the board, which she represented then doing to promote the indigenous African languages in South Africa? In the case of South Africa, eleven (11) languages are recognized as official languages including English and Afrikaans but little is done to promote the nine (9) indigenous languages.

Phaswana (2003) in Birgit et al (2004) asserts that members of parliament contend that expenses that would be incurred while trying to develop these African indigenous languages, attitudes that the speakers of these languages have towards using them and the fact that their vocabulary is not wide enough for them to be used in different spheres of life like the foreign languages contribute to failure to promote these nine (9) official indigenous African languages (Birgit et al, 2004). However, Matusse (1998) in Birgit et al 2004 refutes these claims. Matusse (1998) opines that even though these

claims may be valid, the truth is that many of these African countries are developing new nation states based on the same foundation left by the colonial powers, which has led to them failing dismally to develop these indigenous African languages. They have continued to promote European languages like English, French and Portuguese and this has led to the continual sustenance of a privileged few, who's economic and social desires are different from those of many Africans (Abdulaziz, 1980 as cited in Birgit et al, 2004).

This therefore means that even though there are policies in place to promote the African indigenous languages, nothing practical has been done to develop these languages and things have continued happening in the same way as they were happening during the period of the colonial powers. This has resulted in a vast majority not being catered for because the aspirations that are promoted are those of the elite who are proficient in the European languages. Therefore, who can blame parents for wanting to give their children an opportunity to learn a language that will make sure that they continue climbing the social ladder in society?

Abdulaziz (1991) (as cited in Birgit et al ,2004) puts this clearly when he says one's proficiency in English in Kenya identifies him or her as an educated, modernized and westernized individual despite the person's colour or dress code. Being competent or proficient in these European languages is of benefit even in very minor matters in the society, like evading fines from traffic police officers. In Eswatini, like in many African countries if you come across traffic police roadblocks and you start speaking to them in a European language, you have the privilege of not being searched or interrogated by the police officers. This happens, maybe because it is difficult for most of them to communicate in these languages but most of all because they will think you are an important person just because you sound educated.

Abdulaziz (1991) as cited in Birgit et al (2004) gives a good example of this when narrating what happened in Maputo on their way to collect data. He says police officers in a roadblock stopped them and their contact person, who was also their driver immediately, remembered that he had forgotten his driver's license at home. Therefore, to evade paying fine for the offence, he started talking to the police officers

in Portuguese in a Lisbon accent. It is said that the police officer started apologizing and saluting him. The police officer did this because he thought the driver was educated and that he was an important member of the society (Birgit et al, 2004). What would have happened if the driver had spoken to them in their native language? Obviously, they would not have given him the respect that he was given in this incident and he would have been fined for driving without a driver's license. This shows that if Africans themselves still exhibit such attitudes toward their own languages in their own countries, then we still have a long way to go in trying to develop, improve and make important the African indigenous languages.

Another factor influencing the attitudes of indigenous language speakers towards indigenous languages is economic growth. Even though in most African countries there are policies put in place to make sure that these indigenous languages are taught as subjects in schools, the problem still lies in the fact that these languages are not considered as important as foreign languages. Foreign languages are still considered beneficial in sustaining development and thus decision makers do not see the need to fund indigenous languages so that they can develop to the status of foreign languages (Birgit et al, 2004). This then results in parents and learners having a negative attitude towards these languages because they do not see any economic value attached to them.

The world has become a globalized society and the language for communication in this society is mostly English such that even in countries like Tanzania where a lot of progress had been done to promote the use of Kiswahili, Kiswahili is still in danger of losing favour to English with the native speakers. English is still considered as a tool to getting better job opportunities and a good life (Birgit et al, 2004). Birgit et al (2004) are also convinced that training has also been seen as another factor that contributes to the negative attitudes towards indigenous African languages. They opine that teachers who teach these indigenous African languages are not properly trained and the curriculum followed at tertiary institutions has remained stagnant, as teachers do not give feedback that could be used to improve the curriculum. The teachers themselves are said to have developed a negative attitude towards these indigenous languages, which is automatically transferred to the learners. A good example of this

is an observation made by the senior inspector of siSwati in Eswatini during the 2015 world mother tongue day. She said most teachers of siSwati in Eswatini are so embarrassed of being teachers of siSwati such that when asked about the subjects they teach in the schools, they would merely say they teach, "languages" and avoid to directly say they teach siSwati.

The teaching of these indigenous languages is sometimes so looked down upon such that it is believed that it is enough just to be a native speaker of the language to teach it, one does not need training, which is not true at all. The media is not making the situation any better because it is not encouraging young people to use it as a means of improving in their use of indigenous languages. Newspaper editors, television and radio announcers lack proper training in that they do not use the terminology that learners expect them to use, which is the terminology they learn at school. As a result, learners become confused as to which indigenous language they should learn; the one in the media or the one found in their books. (Birgit, et al, 2004).

Ndhlovu (2015) discusses some of the aspects that people claim influence them to prefer European languages to African indigenous languages which he claims to be fallacious. Among these fallacious arguments, he mentions that African languages have proved to be inadequate when it comes to expressing present day ideas, especially when it comes to science and technology. There are not a lot of books written in African languages and that; English is a language that is used globally. We do not need to use a lot of our time and resources on African indigenous languages because their use is limited only to the countries where they are spoken (Ndhlovu, 2015). He argues that all these claims are not true as there is no evidence to prove that they are true. This is related to the study at hand, as it sought to look into the attitudes of learners of siSwati towards learning the subject. They might have a negative attitude towards learning the language simply because they also believe that siSwati, as an African indigenous language is inadequate in their general development as individuals.

Batibo's (2005) view is that many language policies in African countries have not promoted the use of indigenous languages even in cases where these indigenous

languages have been made official together with the ex-colonial languages. Usually these ex-colonial languages are given a higher status compared to African indigenous languages. This has led to its speakers failing to attach value on them or to have a negative attitude towards them. They begin to feel that these African indigenous languages are useless, especially economically. This negative attitude towards African indigenous languages results in their speakers; either forsaking their mother tongue or depending on the ex-colonial languages even though they may not be as proficient in them as they are in their mother tongue (Batibo, 2005). In Eswatini, where the researcher bases her research, siSwati has been made an official language together with the ex-colonial language, English. However, because it is not given specific functions as a language in the policy of the country, English tends to be used in most of the domains where language needs to be used even when the speaker is speaking to people who understand siSwati as English is perceived as the language of power and prestige when compared to siSwati.

In his article, 'Denigrating the local, glorifying the foreign: Malawian language policies in the era of African Renaissance' Kamwendo (2010) is critical of the Malawians' susceptibility to look down upon local products, including their indigenous languages while going after everything that is foreign. He asserts that like in many African countries, African indigenous languages are not perceived as being useful when it comes to the media of teaching and learning or languages that can be used for developing African nations (Kamwendo, 2010). He says that indigenous languages still suffer the consequences of colonial discrimination even though it has been many years now since these African countries have gained their independence from European colonisation.

Kamwendo (2010) further asserts that Africa as a continent is still burdened by the fact that it is still dependent on ex-colonial languages like English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. This burden is so heavy and destructive such that he describes it as being enormous and crippling to Africans. Kamwendo (2010) suggests that there is a link between the African Renaissance and the various indigenous languages spoken throughout the continent. Kamwendo (2010) defines the African Renaissance as the revival of Africa as a continent after many years of being controlled by other countries,

which means the continent has been born again. If the African continent has been born again, then it means its values should be different from those that it had during the colonial times. As Africans, we should see the change in terms of what is held at high esteem in the continent.

Sadly, however, there seems to be no change in the way things are happening in the African continent even after its rebirth. The ex-colonial languages are still as important as they were during colonial times and the indigenous languages are still trampled on. Kamwendo (2010) makes an example of what the editors of, *The African Renaissance*; the new struggle says about the link between the African Renaissance and African languages. One would expect that in these past colonial times Africans would use their indigenous languages to express themselves on issues affecting the continent but the editors lament the undeniable fact that they still use foreign languages like English and they wonder whether they will be successful in trying to promote the continent's rebirth by using foreign languages.

Neville Alexander who is a well-known South African language scholar feels the same way as he also thinks that it is futile to talk of an African Renaissance before deliberating on important issues of developing and using African indigenous languages in the same status that is currently enjoyed by ex-colonial languages (Kamwendo, 2010). Therefore, this means that the use and development of African indigenous languages is important if Africans are to truly achieve the rebirth of the African continent.

Looking at the history of languages in the colonial era, Kamwendo (2010) opines that ex-colonial countries like Britain acknowledged the importance of using indigenous languages in their colonies only as a media for evangelisation, which resulted in indigenous languages being taught as subjects in schools but only in the lower grades at primary school. From secondary level up to tertiary level, English remained the dominant language of instruction. Eswatini, where the study was undertaken, is one of the former British colonies and sadly, the situation in Eswatini's schools has not changed much from what Kamwendo (2010) describes as siSwati is allowed to be the

media of instruction only at the lower grades of primary school, which are grade 1 to 4. English has remained the media of instruction from grade 5 to tertiary level.

Even though over the years, there have been policies put in place in African countries like Eswatini, which seemed to elevate the status of indigenous languages to that of ex-colonial languages, nothing has changed much as ex-colonial languages are still superior to the African indigenous languages. Even after so many years after independence, Africans still consider ex-colonial languages better than their indigenous languages. Kamwendo (2010) concurs with this idea when he asserts that, the exaggerated honour that has been given to ex-colonial languages including English is part of an attitude that started during colonial times. African indigenous languages have always been looked down upon. Language policies made, have always been meant to make Africans lose confidence and respect for their indigenous languages which has resulted in the ex-colonisers' languages holding a high status (Kamwendo 2010).

Relating the history of the reign of president for life, Hastings Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Kamwendo (2010) seems to imply that the president's decision making on the languages to be used in Malawi was influenced by the many years that he spent in the United States of America and Britain studying. He asserts that this was even seen from his dress code as it is said that he was always dressed as a Briton even when the weather in Malawi was not allowing it. Kamwendo (2010) suggests that even though Banda was encouraging the promotion of indigenous languages, especially Chichewa, his indigenous language, he always delivered his speeches in English. This is ironic and prevalent with most African leaders. For example, the first King that ruled Eswatini after independence; King Sobhuza 2 studied in Lovedale, Cape Province in South Africa. Even though he did not study in Britain, he was also famous for speaking good English even when a majority of his audience were his people with an interpreter to interpret for them. He was also fond of wearing suits, coats and a hat just like those worn by Britons.

It is no wonder then that in Eswatini, English is still held at high esteem than siSwati. This might be because the leaders have been influenced by the British way of life as

the country was colonised by Britain. However, it is worth noting that since talks about promoting siSwati language began in the country, the present King tries to deliver his speeches in siSwati with an interpreter to interpret into English for those who do not understand siSwati. Coming from the leader of the country, this may be the first step into really promoting the country's only indigenous language and elevating it to the status of the ex-colonial language; English.

The same situation described in Malawi prevails in Eswatini when it comes to the King's quest for achieving national development in 2022. The government is consulting with different stakeholders to make sure that the country becomes a first world country in 2022. However, it is disappointing to think of the main definition given to different stakeholders who were invited to a summit held at Sibayeni lodge in Eswatini to unpack the King's vision into sizeable chunks. It is worth noting that none of the definitions the different stakeholders came up with emphasized on language, especially the country's only indigenous language. This is very discouraging since we expect the younger generation to learn from the people who made up this meeting. It makes us wonder about the attitudes that the younger generation will have towards their only indigenous language if such important people in the country have no regard for their indigenous language.

On a different note in a study, looking into what encourages Maori heritage learners to learn teori Maori, Te Huia (2015) concluded that for this particular group, preserving their culture and the renewal of the use of their indigenous language was what motivated them to learn the language. He opines that through language, people can learn a lot about their culture and if they see even the slightest chance of learning about their culture using language, and then they will be motivated to learn it. This group of indigenous language learners were also encouraged by the fact that they will be able to actively participate in cultural activities if they gained proficiency in their indigenous language.

Among other things, they were worried by Krauss' (1992) prediction that in the 20th century most humankind's languages will become extinct. Maori learners felt a sense of responsibility when it came to preserving their indigenous language for generations

to come. They were aware of the fact that if they do not do anything about it, their language will die and this has motivated them to learn the language. Te Huia (2015) opines that one way of helping speakers of indigenous languages to renew their use of these languages is through assisting them comprehend what motivates them to learn these languages, especially this group that he was studying which was able to see a link between their language and their connection with their ancestors. On the other hand, he acknowledges the fact that it becomes difficult to revitalise an indigenous language if it is socially or economically disadvantaged.

Another important aspect of language revealed in this study is that of promoting social identity. Te Huia (2015) asserts that social identity makes people feel that they belong and that they are valuable as members of a group that uses that language. This is another reason why this group of learners might have been motivated to learn Te reo Maori. They had the hope that their indigenous language will promote their shared values. In the case of reo Maori, learners of this indigenous language were also motivated to learn it because knowledge in the language would help them be employed in the public sector. Research findings revealed that CVs that showed high performance in reo Maori stood a better chance of getting jobs in the public sector than those, which did not. This study therefore wanted to find out if the experiences of the reo Maori learners could be true of learners of siSwati as an indigenous language in the case of Eswatini.

Speaking about issues in language development, Ndhlovu (2015) highlights the significance of the role of language in the development of African countries. He argues that, language plays a significant role when it comes to our comprehension of Africa's involvement with herself and the world at large (Ndhlovu, 2015). Therefore, it would be futile for Africans to engage in talks about the development of African countries if language is not given an important role in the discussions. He opines that it is through language that individuals are either respected or looked down upon in a society.

He asserts that language; especially African indigenous languages are so important such that unlike citizenship cannot be exchanged for other languages. This is seen in situations where Africans move from the African continent to other continents. It

remains a fact that they continue speaking their languages even when they are living in other continents and have assumed the citizenship of whatever country they are living in. That is why he makes the bold assertion that because of the migration of Africans with their African indigenous languages to other countries, it is possible to use these languages in different fields as long as their vocabulary is developed (Ndhlovu, 2015). If there is even the slightest possibility that these African indigenous languages can be used globally, then there is a great need to really develop them so that they do not become extinct.

Tupas (2015) discusses inequalities of multilingualism and challenges to mother tongue-based multilingual education. In a study that he did in the Philippines, he asserts that English is viewed as the language of power when compared to indigenous languages and this encourages a lot of people; among them the wealthy and the poor to have the desire to get an education in English as opposed to learning their indigenous languages. In the case of Philippines, good schools are not easy to afford which makes them inaccessible to many Filipinos. Only a few of them complete school with a high proficiency in English. This has led to social inequalities and has determined the social class to which they belong. This is one of the challenges that advocates for mother tongue education have faced. Learning an indigenous language is up against learning English, which is believed to be the language that leads to better job opportunities and socio economic mobility. However what Filipinos forget is that the benefits that come with a good proficiency in English are true for only a few people for learning good English in their country is not accessible to all (Tupas, 2015).

According to Tupas (2015) Filipinos have developed hatred for their mother tongues or vernacular languages. He cites an example of an English medium school where learners were expelled from school just because they were found communicating in vernacular. It is also said that Filipinos view English as a language of modernity, which makes one to be viewed as being learned while their indigenous languages are viewed as languages for those who are backward and illiterate. Mother tongue education in this case is up against many challenges.

Kamwangamalu (2014) notes that it is difficult to elevate indigenous languages to the status of English and Afrikaans because in the South African context they are used only in the first four grades in primary school when they are supposed to be used up to the end of the education system of the country. Another difficulty when it comes to promoting indigenous languages has to do with the fact that during the apartheid era there was a stigma attached to indigenous languages. They were considered inferior compared to English and Afrikaans, which makes it difficult to promote them to the status of English and Afrikaans.

Moreover, the people who are considered as prominent and educated in the society are the few who were taught in English not in the indigenous languages and this makes it impossible for people to have a positive attitude towards indigenous languages when most of their role models are considered learned because they were taught in English language. Kamwangamalu (2014) further asserts that there is an undeniable connection between language and the economy. So if South Africans want to achieve what they have put in place in the language policy of the country, then major changes should be made to make sure that the indigenous languages which have been made official languages are given the same status that has been enjoyed all along by English and Afrikaans.

Learners of these indigenous languages must be given the material benefits and advantages that are currently enjoyed equally by English and Afrikaans. The indigenous languages should be promoted in such a way that they benefit those who learn them when it comes to resources, employment opportunities, politics and climbing the social ladder. If this does not happen, Kamwamangalu (2014) is convinced that the goals set by language policy makers in South Africa when they made these indigenous languages official together with English and Afrikaans are not going to be achieved.

Looking at the role played by English in Singapore, Tan and Rubdy (2008) note that even though the state is trying to promote indigenous languages, which have been made official languages, English continues to be the important language in Singapore. English has become the dominant language globally which is seen by most scholars

as a sign of the continuation of colonization. Language policies implemented by the colonial regime have benefitted both the colonial regime's agenda and people seeking access to the labour market. People who have been educated and who are proficient in the colonial languages have better opportunities when it comes to getting jobs compared to those who are not literate and incompetent in the colonial languages, which are considered as the languages of power (Tan & Rubdy, 2008).

Tan and Rubdy (2008) argue that English has been elevated to a high status because of the importance that the language has been given in the worldwide economy. It has become the language that people prefer to use in business, politics and economic encounters like; the world trade organization, World Bank, and the international monetary fund units. If English has been afforded so much power, the study sought to find out if indigenous languages like siSwati, which the researcher was focusing on, had a place in the world's linguistic market.

Therefore what this means is that it is important that a connection is forged between the indigenous languages and the economy to achieve the objective of promoting African indigenous languages.

2.7 The importance of maintaining the indigenous language

Hays (2008) describes what happened in two international conferences, which were hosted in Southern Africa in 2005. In these two conferences, there were language experts who were invited to talk about how African indigenous languages can be used in the education system. The delegates were coming from different backgrounds but they all agreed that having African indigenous languages being taught in schools comes with more economic and social gains than the expenses that will be incurred while providing such an education. In these two conferences, mother tongue education was made a priority rather than part of a process towards learning foreign languages.

Ball (2011) argues that existing research has revealed that learning a mother tongue improves learners' language skills, helps them to do better academically, improves their self-confidence and cultural pride. It gives them the opportunity to start their

education in the language they know better before they start learning foreign languages. UNESCO also acknowledges the fact that learning a language involves learning the culture of that language. This means that if learners are given the opportunity to learn their indigenous languages, they will be able to preserve their cultural identity, which is important to all individuals. Learning other languages later on would also be of benefit to the learner, as it will help him or her promote intercultural communication and understanding of other cultures. I intended finding out if this is true of learners of siSwati after looking at their experiences of learning their indigenous language.

Speaking on the importance of maintaining the indigenous language, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) in the IDRA newsletter (2000) says having knowledge of the indigenous language helps learners to easily learn to speak and write the imported language, which in their case study was English. They further argue that if the indigenous language is not maintained the child will not only lose his or her mother tongue but also the advantages that come with bilingualism.

They further acknowledge that the child's first language, which could be the indigenous language is important in identifying an individual in a society, helping the individual to hold at high esteem her culture and legacy. The Intercultural Development Research in the IDRA newsletter (2000) also opines that the indigenous language has to be maintained so that an individual remains connected to his family and his other community members for it becomes the means by which he will interact with both his family and his community. They also think intellectual development is disturbed when learners switch into learning the imported language and using it only without their indigenous languages.

Their view is that learning both the indigenous language and the imported language at the same time leads to a higher academic achievement as opposed to choosing to do the imported language at the expense of the indigenous language. They also believe that better job opportunities are available in the United States of America and other overseas countries for people who are proficient in English and other languages. In other words, they do not see any problem in learning and using both the imported

language and the indigenous languages at the same time. In fact, they think there are benefits in doing so. Whether that is true of siSwati language, the researcher wanted to find out from the learners of siSwati.

2.8 Learners' experiences in learning indigenous languages.

2.8.1 Learning Reo Maori-an indigenous language in New Zealand

Jeurissen (2014) discusses the positive and negative impacts of learning an indigenous language in distance Education. In the article entitled, 'Learning Reo Maori via online Distance Education: A case study', New Zealand is said to have had a long record of distance education which dates back to 1922. The six learners who were involved in this particular study were attending both the traditional way of schooling for all the other subjects they were doing and online distance education for their indigenous language-reo Maori. Jeurissen (2014) first looked at a study conducted by Ofsuka and Stevens (1997) which involved 14 students who were studying Japanese by distance education. In their experiences, the learners asserted that learning Japanese by distance education had both negative and positive impacts. They reported that it was an advantage that when learning by distance education, there were a few disturbances compared to face-to-face learning. They also liked the fact that distance education was flexible and they were free to study anytime they wanted. However, they did not like studying in isolation as they missed interactions with other students learning the same language. They also felt that they would have gained more mastery of the language if they were in a classroom situation with the teacher.

In the study involving the reo Maori, Jeurissen (2014) found out that students were highly motivated and devoted a lot of effort to learning their indigenous language. Some mentioned that they liked learning their indigenous language because they thought it would assist them in career paths they had chosen as they were considering taking up teaching as a job in the future. Others enjoyed learning this indigenous language because their families were encouraging them to learn more about their culture and heritage, which they could only learn about through their indigenous

language. Jeurissen (2014) opines that for these learners to choose to learn their indigenous language online when there were other options on subjects they could learn face to face shows that they were highly motivated. One of the learners chose to learn the language even though she was facing opposition from home. Her mother thought learning the language was a waste of time as she thought it was not going to help her in her professional career. Among problems the learners faced in learning this indigenous language is the fact that they had not learnt this language in prior grades so they lacked essential information they needed to progress easily to the next level. According to one of the learners, it was like learning the basics of the language and progress was very slow.

Another difficulty faced by these learners is that they did not have family members or immediate community members who spoke the language. Some admitted to have been exposed to people who spoke the language on a few occasions at family gatherings but they felt that it was not enough to help them succeed in learning the language, as they needed more exposure. The learners also felt that the school was just using them and the programme as a token so that people could think that they valued the language while they did not. However, as the year progressed and after learners had expressed their grievances, the dean of the school started supporting them in the form of bilingual dictionaries, workbooks, a parent volunteer helper and a bilingual teacher assistant on top of the online materials, which learners already had. The researcher also made things better by volunteering to buy language workbooks for them.

Jeurissen (2014) concludes that at the end; however, learners were disappointed that they had learnt a few concepts than they expected in the language. They were not happy with the little they had learnt after putting so much effort in learning the language. Those who are said to have achieved in learning the language were said to have received what they called the minimum passing grade. The learners' failure to achieve maximum passing grades might be attributed to learning the language online and as Jeurissen (2014) asserts, it is hoped that they would do well because after the school had seen how much the learners struggled to learn this language online, they employed a fulltime reo Maori teacher to teach them face to face. It is worth noting

that although this study is also about learning an indigenous language, learners who are involved have teachers who teach them face to face, as they are not learning it through distance learning.

It is true that some of the learners involved in this study did not do siSwati as a subject in the first three grades of primary school as they did their primary school in private schools at a time when the education policy allowed learners to choose between learning siSwati and any foreign language. However, most of the learners started doing siSwati as a subject in grade one. The researcher therefore wanted to find out if the differences between learners in Jeurissen (2014)'s study and the study at hand would make learners experience learning their indigenous languages in different ways.

2.8.2 Learning indigenous languages through Digital story telling

According to Kinshuk and Suhonen (2018) most learners of indigenous languages have few opportunities to learn their indigenous languages in formal settings and they assert that one of the reasons for this is failure to include indigenous knowledge in educational curriculums. In their article, 'I-Digest framework towards authentic learning for indigenous learners', they opine that indigenous learners lack relevant opportunities because indigenous learning depends on places where these indigenous languages are spoken for proper learning of that particular language to take place. They advocate for Digital story telling as the appropriate platform that can provide indigenous learners with authentic and relevant learning opportunities for their indigenous languages. They refer to this kind of learning, as experiential and collaborative because it involves the learners' comprehension and wide knowledge of his cultural background, life experiences and his contact with the community, which is exposed to that particular indigenous language.

I-Digest framework deals with gathering information about the indigenous language using audio, video and image files and this information is gathered from those who know the language well including community leaders. This information is then made

into digital stories, which are entered into the system through what is called knowledge building, making sure that the stories are shared in appropriate forums. The information is then stored so that indigenous learners can have access to it using gadgets like mobile phones, which have been found to be useful tools to use to access the information on that particular indigenous language that is being learnt.

Sharing their experiences of learning through this approach, participants who were interviewed in this study discussed the strengths and weaknesses of I-Digest framework and experiential learning. One of the participants described it as being able to create an inclusive and respectful process for accessing knowledge as it involves indigenous learners of the language and those who are knowledgeable about the language including community members. Another strength from the learners' perspective is that it allows students to share their unique experiences and stories about their language and culture. Most importantly, it still utilises oral traditions to impart knowledge from generation to generation so that even if one is not an affluent writer, he or she is also able to share his or her ideas and thoughts through the audio and visual medium. It has also been found to be easy to access information through this approach as it uses mobile phones, which are used by a large portion of the rural indigenous audiences.

One of the weaknesses of this approach to learning indigenous languages is making sure that right knowledge experts and teachers participate in the design and delivery process. Moreover, participants were worried about privacy, ethics and security issues, as they feared that people who should not might be found visiting indigenous sacred places after accessing information and that information accessed might be misused. Again, looking at how learners experienced the learning of their indigenous language in Kinshuk and Suhonen (2018)'s I-Digest framework, the researcher wanted to find out if there would be a lot of differences in the way learners of siSwati would experience their learning of their indigenous language in this study.

2.8.3 Revitalizing American Indian indigenous languages

According to Hinton (2016) international languages like English are spreading out throughout the world resulting in indigenous languages spoken by smaller populations

becoming extinct together with the people's livelihoods and cultural practices as they are embedded in the indigenous languages. This has led to a movement of language revitalization. Populations from minority languages are realizing that they are losing their indigenous languages and are finding ways of revitalizing them. This is because small as they are, these indigenous languages are important in that they are a symbol of the people's traditional values, religion, culture and they give their speakers a sense of identity, which they would lose if they were to become extinct (Hinton, 2016)

In the article, 'Learning and teaching endangered indigenous languages', Hinton (2016) discusses how American Indian communities have worked hard to establish policies which allow bilingual education in schools which has led to the production of reading materials and literature written in their indigenous languages. Their indigenous languages are now also being taught in schools where they had been forbidden before which has shown children and their parents that their indigenous languages are valuable.

In the case of American Indians, Hinton (2016) describes immersion schooling, which allows learners to learn their indigenous languages as subjects and use them as a medium of instruction for the other subjects from preschool to tertiary level. She gives examples like the Akwesasne Freedom School of the Mohawks, Punana Leo system schools in Hawaii, Ojibwes, Blackfeet and Navajos, which have used immersion schooling to make sure that their indigenous languages survive the pressure that comes with the use of global languages. She also mentions the university of Hawaii campuses, which use Hawaii as a medium of instruction, and all this has resulted in a number of Hawaiians using Hawaiian to communicate in their homes instead of English. Apart from the use of immersion schooling, Hinton (2016) also describes another programme that has been used to revitalize indigenous languages. This one is called 'The master-Apprentice language learning programme', which was established by a committee which was formed by native Californians which they call Advocates for indigenous California language survival. The aim of this programme is to create a pool of new speakers of indigenous languages, especially in those languages where native speakers have realized that there are a few people who can speak the language. It has been discovered that most of these people who can speak

these indigenous languages are the elderly, which might lead to a situation where there will be no speakers at all in those languages in the future.

Hinton (2016) asserts that in this particular programme young people who are willing to learn these indigenous languages are taught in informal settings. The programme makes use of teams, which have a speaker of the native language to be taught and a young person from the community who is willing to learn the language. The advocates for indigenous California language survival provide training to each team. After training, each team goes back to its community where they are expected to come up with various activities that they will use to teach community members the indigenous language in informal settings. This programme seems to have gained some level of success as it is said that some of the apprentices who make up these different teams are now skilled teachers in their indigenous languages and teach in formal classrooms. In California the advocates for indigenous California language survival have been able to provide training and mentoring to over 100 teams in at least 30 languages.

The researcher wanted to find out from learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject if they also value their indigenous language the way it is valued in these indigenous communities. She also wanted to establish learners' motives behind learning siSwati as a subject; whether like these indigenous communities they also think their indigenous language is a symbol of their traditional values, religion, culture and a sense of identity to them as its speakers or not.

2.8.4 Experiences of class one learners learning Kiswahili

Wangechi (2011) discusses challenges faced by class one children learning Kiswahili in Ngong Division in Nairobi. She asserts that teacher's qualifications were significant for proper learning of Kiswahili, which was taught as a second language to these class one children. In her observation in this particular study, she discovered that most teachers who were teaching Kiswahili had not received proper training at tertiary level which led to most of them being uncomfortable with teaching the language. She opined that this did not result in effective teaching and learning taking place in class. It was discovered that the teachers could not use Kiswahili throughout the lesson but at times used English and their mother tongue to clarify certain concepts. According

to Wangechi (2011) only 3 out of 12 teachers said they were comfortable with teaching Kiswahili and this was because the principal of the school whose role is to appoint teachers to teach different subjects was said to be doing this without considering whether teachers were qualified to teach Kiswahili or not. This resulted in teachers having a negative attitude towards teaching the language.

Another reason why learners in class one were found to be having difficulty in learning Kiswahili language was that they never did it at preschools they lacked the basics they needed to learn the language. In addition, Wangechi (2011) observed that learners found it difficult to learn Kiswahili in this study because they were not exposed to the language in the communities they were coming from. It is worth noting that in this study Kiswahili was learnt as a second language so the parents and guardians were using other languages at home and the media from which learners could learn the language used the language to attract their listeners, which was not particularly the standard dialect of Kiswahili that was taught at school (Wangechi, 2011).

Moreover, the researcher attributed the learners' difficulty in learning the language to lack of teaching and learning resources. There were not enough textbooks or Kiswahili storybooks for the class one learners, which meant learners, were not fully exposed to the learning in class.

Mellon (2015) also conducted a study, which was looking into the factors affecting teaching and learning of Kiswahili comprehension in secondary schools in Wareng sub-country. This study was conducted in 15 schools with 360 learners, 15 teachers and 3 heads of department. Mellon (2015)'s study involved teachers who were qualified to teach Kiswahili as a first language to secondary school learners and he also asserts that there were no problems as far as the availability of textbooks was concerned. The schools had an adequate number of textbooks and reference books for teachers to use and they even had newspapers written in Kiswahili, which helped expose the learners to the language. Therefore, unlike in Wangechi (2011)'s study difficulties in learning the language were identified when it came to the teacher's workloads. Most of the teachers were teaching Kiswahili and another subject they had specialized on.

This led to teachers not being as effective as they were expected to be, especially when it came to the teaching methods used in teaching Kiswahili.

Teachers admitted that the poor performance of learners could be attributed to unpreparedness. A few teachers did official books like the scheme book and daily preparation books, which led to confusion when it came to the topics that they were supposed to teach throughout the year, as there was no planning done in the scheme books. The absence of daily preparation books resulted in ineffective methods being used in class, leading to learners' poor performance in learning the language. Because of the workloads that teachers had, they resorted to a teaching method like reading aloud which according to Claessen (1994) becomes detrimental to effective reading comprehension as it slows reading.

The study also revealed that learners, themselves also contributed to poor performance in the subject. According to the teachers, the learners' negative attitude towards learning the language was so intense such that effective learning and teaching could not take place properly as it depended on learner participation in class. From the teachers and learners responses to the interview questions, the researcher saw the need for teachers to go for in-service training so that they can be innovative and come up with new methods of teaching Kiswahili comprehension, which might also help learners change their attitude towards learning the language and begin enjoying it.

From their experiences of learning siSwati as a language, the researcher wanted to find out if learners of two secondary schools in the Lubombo region will also put the blame on their teachers and the siSwati dialect used in the media for not doing well in the language if they are having difficulty passing it. The researcher expected learners to speak about methods of teaching they think worked in helping them learn the language and those that they feel did not work for them.

2.9 Summary of the chapter

The chapter highlighted a review of literature on the experiences of learners on learning siSwati language as a subject in Eswatini. It presented a critical review of literature, which touched on studies that have been carried out in Eswatini and other countries.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods, techniques and procedures that were used in order to design and build up the research. It presents the research approach that was adopted, the paradigm, research design, research tools, sample and sampling procedures, data generation procedure, data analysis methods, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations as well as the conclusion.

3.1 The Qualitative approach

The study adopted the descriptive qualitative research approach and for that reason, it used qualitative research methods to answer the research questions. Uys and Basson (1985) are of the view that the qualitative approach or style focuses on the features of human behaviour.

This means it focuses on the qualitative aspects rather than on the quantitative features of human behaviour that are comparable. Uys and Basson (1985) further assert that the purpose of qualitative research is to give a description, explanation, and prediction of the phenomena being studied. However, this is not done by calculating cause and effect but by making sure that, the researcher understands the subject of study as a whole so that she or he can attempt to discover the intensity and complication of the phenomena (Uys & Basson, 1985).

I chose the qualitative approach because of the nature of the study. The study is descriptive, as it wanted to find out the experiences of learners of siSwati at senior secondary level in Eswatini. The qualitative approach allowed me to work at a personal level with the learners, which resulted in me getting a deeper understanding of the phenomena I was studying, in this case the experiences of learners learning siSwati at senior secondary school in Eswatini.

Maxwell (2005) describes five important aspects of qualitative research. Firstly, it must have objectives where the researcher outlines the reasons why he or she has decided to do the study. Secondly, it must have a conceptual framework, which refers to theories, beliefs, and literature that the researcher will use to gain an understanding of the issue or people he or she is studying. Thirdly, he asserts that there has to be research questions, which the researcher intends to answer using the study. The fourth aspect has to do with the methods the researcher will use in gathering and analysing data. Lastly, he opines that issues of trustworthiness are also another important component in qualitative research. These have to do with reasons why the readers should believe the results of the study (Maxwell, 2005).

In the study, I was able to find results by using the relationships between these five components. With research questions at the centre of everything, I was able to come up with appropriate methods for gathering and analysing data and literature related to the research questions and research objectives.

3.2 Research paradigm

According to Patton and Cochran (2002) a paradigm is a worldview, a general perspective that includes ways in which people understand the world. Lincoln and Guba (2000) further define it as a framework that is guided by people's feelings and beliefs about the world focusing on how the world should be studied and understood. Cohen et al (2011) assert that a paradigm refers to a set of people's beliefs and they refer to these beliefs as assumptions.

A paradigm can be divided into three categories, namely: ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology is concerned with issues that have to do with whether, "social reality is external to individuals or it is a product of individual consciousness" (Cohen et al, 2011, p.5). Epistemology focuses on the relationship found between the person who is doing research on a certain subject and the information that already exists or which is known already. This also involves the processes that will be carried out to get the knowledge (Borg & Gall, 1989). While ontological assumptions have something to do with how the phenomenon that is being studied is, epistemological assumptions are concerned with the bases or source of knowledge, forms and nature of knowledge,

how knowledge can be found, how it can be passed on to other people and whether it can be acquired or experienced. Methodological assumptions deal with how people know the world and how they can gain knowledge about it and because of that they constitute a set of assumptions that relate to the relationship between human beings and their environment (Cohen et al, 2011).

3.2.1 The interpretive paradigm

In this study, the interpretive research paradigm was used to establish the experiences of learners, learning siSwati as a home language at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini. I chose the interpretive paradigm based on the understanding that all research is interpretive and guided by what the researcher believes about the world and also from the fact that social meaning is created and is a result of the interaction between the researcher and the participants of the research according to epistemological perspectives (Cohen et al, 2011).

The interpretive paradigm was also chosen in consideration of Cohen et al (2011) who opine that the interpretive paradigm is concerned with an individual's world and their experiences. Therefore, for one to get the information required from the individual, "an effort should be made to get inside the person" (Cohen et al, 2011, p.22). This should be done so that the researcher can gain understanding of the subject under study from the individual. The theorists also assert that it is through the sharing of experiences and interactions that we can solicit knowledge from those who have it. It is for this reason that interpretive researchers' focus is on dealing directly with individuals' experiences and understanding so that they can come up with their theories and be able to derive meaning from the data gathered from the different sources (Cohen et al 2011). Considering this, I interacted with learners of siSwati language to find out about their experiences of learning the language.

3.3 The Research design

The study is qualitative in nature and it adopted the case study research design. Baxter and Jack (2008) define a case study as a method where the researcher is given the opportunity to look into a phenomenon in its natural setting using a variety of data

generation tools including observations, questionnaires and interview questions. They assert that this is done to assist the researcher to get a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. Looking at this definition, I decided to use a case study as my research design since the purpose of the study was to find out experiences of learners of siSwati in learning siSwati as a home language at senior secondary school in the Lubombo region of Eswatini.

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), a case study allows those participating in the study to be open when it comes to narrating their experiences or views pertaining to the phenomenon under study, thus helping the researcher to study the phenomenon using different data generation tools. The researcher also gets to generate data in the participants' natural setting. Using a case study as a research design, I was able to go to the schools to gather data on experiences of learners learning siSwati as home language and I used different tools of gathering data. These were open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. I used a case study as a design with the hope that my findings could be applied in similar situations even though I was only able to use two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini and only twenty (20) learners with ten (10) learners from each school.

3.4 The data generating process

The data gathering process was divided into three (3) phases. This was because there were three data gathering methods that were used. The first phase of data generation involved the learners' completion of the questionnaires. Twenty learners completed the questionnaire. I left the questionnaires with the learners to complete at their own time and pace, and I collected them after a week as per our agreement with the learners. On the day of collecting the questionnaires, we had again agreed that we would conduct the one on one interviews with the learners, so these were conducted and became phase two of the data gathering process. Each interview lasted for about forty minutes and they were conducted in one office that the head teachers had allocated for this purpose in both schools. The third phase was the focus group discussions that were conducted with the learners. There were two groups that consisted of five learners per group in each school. This therefore gave a total of four

focus groups for the two schools. The focus groups were also conducted in the same office in which the interviews were held. They lasted for about an hour each group.

I knew the names of the schools and the learners who participated in the study; however, their real names were not used in the final write up of the dissertation. This was done to protect their identities in accordance with ethical considerations. Each school and each participant was given a pseudonym. Letters of the alphabet were used to name the schools and these were A and B. The first 20 numbers were used to name the learners so that their names ranged from 1-20. The learners were therefore referred to as for example, Learner 1 from school A or Learner 2 from school B and so on.

3.4.1 Data generating procedures

I made five (5) visits to the schools from where data were generated. The first visit was to seek permission to conduct the study from the authorities and also to meet the prospective participants face to face, for purposes of familiarising them with the study, and to ask them to take part in the study. I also explained to the prospective participants that they had a right to choose to either participate or not participate in the study and that if they chose to participate; they needed to get permission from their parents in the form of consent letters that their parents had to sign. Learners were also assured of confidentiality that whatever they said would remain confidential. In the first visit, after explaining the purpose of the study to the participants and after they had agreed to take part in the study, the participants were given consent letters to give to their parents to sign as a form of agreement allowing their children to participate in the study. On the second visit, I collected the letters of consent that had been signed by parents and then the data were gathered using the three data gathering tools starting with the questionnaire.

The interviews were tape-recorded and I had asked for permission to do this from the parents, and learners beforehand. The data generation process commenced at the beginning of June 2019 and ran through to the end of August 2019.

The individual interviews were carried out with twenty (20) learners. All twenty (20) interviews were carried out at the learners' schools. This was done so that the learners could be free and comfortable. An interview guide which consisted of sixteen (16) questions was used and learners responded to these questions (see appendix E). Other questions emerged as the interviews progressed and as I was probing for more information. I took down expressions such as frowns; smiles, sighs, and non-verbal gestures used by the participants as they gave the responses and these formed my field notes. Each expression was aligned to the person who gave it and the question that he or she was responding to. I felt that these would be useful during the analysis of data. The medium used for conducting the interviews was both English and siSwati, and the learners responded in both languages. To ensure that no data were lost through loss or theft of the recording device, I transcribed each interview when I came back from the field.

3.4.2 Data generation tools

Research that is done using different methods or tools is seen in the tools for data gathering which it has used (Creswell, 2003). This type of research used a variety of tools for gathering data. This study used questionnaires that consisted of open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. These three were used to complement one another so that information that would be found lacking after the questionnaires were analysed would be obtained from the use of the semi-structured interviews and just to make sure that information given by participants was adequate and could add more clarity, I also conducted the focus group discussions. The three tools were used for the purpose of triangulating the data and ensuring that it is trustworthy. According to Carter (2014) triangulation is the use of different tools of gathering data in qualitative research in order to come up with a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study. It can also be used as a strategy for ensuring trustworthiness in a study through bringing together information from data collected using different methods (Carter, 2014).

Stefan (2019) asserts that questionnaires are the cheapest way of generating a lot of data from a big number of participants in a short period. Moreover, they allow for

anonymity as participants can answer them in their own privacy without revealing their identity and opines that this could lead to results being more accurate as the participants know that they are anonymous as they complete the questionnaire. I opted for questionnaires as one of the tools for collecting data because I knew I would get a lot of data on the subject under study from a number of participants within a short period, which is what I needed.

The study was self-sponsored so this was the cheapest way of gathering a lot of information about learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a home language without wasting neither the little resources I had nor my time or the participants' time. Time was a very important resource for both as the participants were at school and I had a permanent job and was doing this study part time. One of the disadvantages of using questionnaires that Stefan (2019) mentions is the fact that they could come back with unanswered questions because the participants know that the researcher value their being anonymous, so they won't be held accountable for those questions that are left unanswered. In addition, he opines that with questionnaires, it is difficult for the researcher to see the feelings and emotions of the participants as they respond to the questions, which seemed very important for this particular study, as I wanted to find out about learners' experiences and attitudes in the learning of siSwati as a home language. However, I still used questionnaires because I knew that I was still going to interview the participants using semi-structured interview questions. Therefore, the face-to-face interactions I was still going to have with the participants were going to enable me to find the information that would be lacking because of the unanswered questions in the questionnaires. I would also use that opportunity to observe participants for feelings and emotions.

Newton (2010) contends that face-to-face interviews are good when the researcher wants to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. He asserts that semi-structured interviews become a threat to the trustworthiness of the study if the researcher uses leading questions to influence the participants to prove true his or her preconceived ideas. However, if the researcher uses open-ended questions to find more information pertaining to the phenomenon under study, that will ensure trustworthiness as he or she will be able to produce rich data.

Newton (2010) also discusses the importance of making sure that the researcher has good interpersonal skills, which will enable him or her to establish relationship and rapport with the participants. He asserts that this is the key to making participants disclose their private thoughts and feelings. In this study, I used semi-structured interviews because of their ability to enable the researcher to gain an understanding and insight into the phenomena being studied for I knew that they would assist me to get a better understanding of the participants' experiences of learning siSwati as a home language. This is because their experiences would be influenced by their feelings on how they experienced the learning of the language. If this data generation tool is key to allowing participants to disclose their feelings and thoughts about a given issue, then it would help me to get information on the learners' experiences of learning the language.

The semi-structured interviews, which allowed face-to-face encounters between the participants and I, gave me the opportunity to use open-ended questions based on the prepared interview questions and this allowed participants to respond at length about their experiences. This provided me with a lot of valuable information on the phenomenon under study. I was also able to gain a lot of understanding of the participants' experiences of learning siSwati as a home language through their facial expressions and gestures as we were having the discussion face-to-face.

In the questionnaires, participants left some of the questions unanswered and I felt that this was because of lack of understanding on what the questions were about or because the questions were ambiguous. However, in the interviews, I gathered a lot of information that was valuable for the study because participants were able to ask for clarity if the questions were ambiguous or difficult to understand. I also made things easy for the participants by allowing them to freely use both English and siSwati during the interviews so that they could express themselves without being limited by English language, which proved to be a problem for most of them to use.

3.5 The study population

Eldrege et al (2014) argue that it is important to give a vivid and detailed definition of the study population. They say this will determine whether the participants are eligible

or not to participate in the study. If the study population is clearly defined, it becomes the basis for transferability so that the research findings can be used in other relevant populations. They also assert that clearly defining the population assures the overall validity of the study findings.

Landreneau (2012) defines a study population as a group of individuals who have similar characteristics and according to me, this group has the information I am looking for. The target population for this study was a group of learners of siSwati as a home language in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. However, because it was impossible for me to include all learners of siSwati as a home language in the two senior secondary schools selected, I further selected twenty (20) learners, which were made up of ten (10) learners per school. Each school had about fifty (50) learners who were doing form five and it was from this population that the sample was taken. The study sought to find out the experiences of learners learning siSwati as a home language at senior secondary schools in Eswatini. Therefore, these learners were found to be legible to participate in the study for they would be able to give me the information I needed to build up the study.

3.6 The Study sample and sampling techniques

Purposive sampling was used for the selection of the schools and participants in this study. Purposive sampling was used for both the selection of the participants and the schools. Purposive sampling is described as a sampling method where the researcher picks participants based on her "personal judgement about which ones will be the most representative or informative," (Polit & Beck, 2004, p.729). It refers to a subset of the whole population, which has been selected to participate in the study. The nature of the study required me to select participants as a group on their particularity as it was interested in only learners of SiSwati language at senior secondary school level. Two (2) schools took part in the study. On average, each class in Eswatini normally consists of fifty (50) learners. However, since the study is qualitative in nature, I did not need to interview all one hundred (100) students; instead I wanted to get as deep as I could into the issues that would be discussed. This enabled me to get quality information, which would have been difficult to obtain if the whole

population of learners of siSwati as a home language was used. Therefore, as mentioned above only twenty (20) learners took part in the study. In each school, ten (10) learners doing the last level (Form V at senior secondary school level) took part in the study. Each learner was interviewed and in addition to that, they completed a questionnaire and took part in a focus group discussion.

3.7 Data analysis methods

Data analysis happens when the researcher brings order, structure and meaning to the disorganised data that has been generated. It is where the researcher looks for general statements within the mass of gathered data. At this stage, the researcher categorises, orders and presents the data generated for the purposes of responding to the research questions (Merrien, 2009). According to Merrien (2009) during data analysis, the researcher identifies themes that will be used to interpret the data. When analysing the data, the researcher goes through four steps, namely; read and re-read the data, describe, classify and interpret the data. It is significant to go through these four steps if researchers want to ensure that the data is effectively analysed. Reading and re-reading the data helps the researcher to be familiar with the information that make up the data and get a deeper understanding of it to ensure that emerging themes are identified.

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse all the generated data. Both the data generated from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews was analysed using content analysis. This was done because the gathered data was narrative by nature, as it was a collection of responses from the participants on their experiences on the benefits, their attitudes and experiences of learning siSwati at senior secondary school level in Eswatini. I identified important themes and looked at how regular they were from the data generated. As asserted by Mundia (2001), the six basic steps that I followed for data analysis were; analysing the information, categorizing the responses, developing category descriptors, coding themes, determining the themes and doing constant comparisons.

In this study, data from the questionnaires and interviews were read and re-read to ensure that I was familiar with it. This also helped me to understand my data. This resulted in me being able to identify emerging themes, which were used to explain the experiences of learners of siSwati as a home language in the two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. I was then able to analyse the data thematically using content analysis on the basis of Mundia (2001)'s assertion that content analysis is the appropriate procedure for analysing qualitative data, especially when the researcher has used interviews, observations, transcripts, essays and documentaries.

The study had data from the questionnaires, which came in the form of learners' responses to the open-ended questions and transcripts, which were produced from the interviews. I went through the learners' responses from the questionnaires and interviews many times to get a better understanding of the data. This was done based on Powell and Renner (2003)'s assertion that if the researcher gains a good understanding of the data, that would result in good analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data. Powell and Renner (2003) also contend that emerging themes or patterns from the data gathered should be ordered into coherent categories, which have summarised and given meaning to the study. They say this is the significance of data analysis.

Based on this assertion, I went through the research questions again to make sure that I remembered the questions to which the data analysis had to respond. I then analysed learners' individual responses to questionnaires and interviews, trying to identify differences and similarities in their responses. I used some of the questions that the participants were asked to form themes and these were used as sub-topics for the discussions. I put data meant to answer each question together after identifying emerging themes or patterns and organising them into coherent categories. Finally, I came up with an outline, which was used for presenting the results and writing the final report. The research findings were presented qualitatively using words. The presentation of the data also included participants' direct words and finally the data were interpreted.

3.8 Trustworthiness in the study

According to Shenton (2004) there are four components used to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research projects and these are; credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Korstjens and Moser (2018) define credibility as the confidence that can be put in the truth of the research findings. Credibility shows whether the research findings are a true record of the participants' responses from the original data. Credibility also establishes whether the data have been correctly interpreted to represent the participants' original opinions on the phenomena being studied or not. It ensures that the study measures or tests what is intended. Credibility can be achieved by spending a considerable amount of time in each place where the research is being conducted and making sure that the results from the participants are true, credible and believable (Forero, et al, 2018).

For credibility, I ensured that I had prolonged and varied engagement with the participants and the two settings, which were represented by the two schools. This was done after I had received permission from the principals of the schools, learners and consent from their parents. I also used three different tools for gathering data. Triangulation of data generation methods was used in the study as questionnaires; interviews and focus group discussion were used. I analysed responses to the questionnaires first, used the interviews to find information that was found lacking in the questionnaires and focus group discussions to make sure that I still got the same experiences and views that I got from the interviews.

Korstjen and Moser (2018) assert that transferability has to do with whether the research findings can be used in other contexts settings with other participants. Transferability has to do with the degree to which the research findings can be applied to other situations. If a case study has been used and a sample of the whole population that needed to be studied was used, transferability is concerned about whether the research findings can be applied to the whole population. Transferability has to do with making sure that the group selected for the study is representative of the different opinions of the whole population that is being studied (Forero, et al, 2018). The study was a case study, which means it only used a sample of the population

under study. However, because of transferability, the experiences of learners of siSwati as a home language gathered from learners of the two senior secondary schools who participated in the study can be applied to other learners of siSwati as a home language at other senior secondary schools since I used learners from both a rural and urban school to ensure that the data generated are representative of a variety of views of the learners of siSwati as a home language across settings in the country.

Conformability looks at whether the research findings are a result of data collected not the researcher's assumptions and biasness. The researcher has to make sure that the findings contain only the experiences and ideas of the participants, not the researcher's characteristics and preferences. I made sure that my conclusions on the research were made based on the views and experiences of learners of siSwati as a home language not on my assumptions or preconceived information I had pertaining to the topic. I ensured that the ideas and experiences presented were the participants' and not mine by allowing the participants to listen to the recorded tape after the interviews to confirm that what they were listening to was what they had said. Even though the participants were allowed to respond in siSwati during the interviews, I made sure that when transcribing, I wrote down the exact words used by the participants.

Lastly, dependability looks into the issue of reliability. If the study is dependable, it means if the same study could be done in the same setting, using the same methods, with the same participants, similar findings would be obtained. The issue of dependability is addressed if the researcher gives a detailed report of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For dependability, I made sure that the data sources were learners of siSwati as a home language at senior secondary school level. These learners were in a good position to give the required information as the study looked at experiences of learners doing siSwati as a home language at senior secondary school level. I also made sure that data generation tools corresponded with the research questions.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Arifin and Roshaidai (2018) discusses important ethical issues that have to be considered in a qualitative study. Firstly, there is informed consent and voluntary participation. Participants need to participate in the study voluntarily not by force or coercion. They should willingly participate in the study after ensuring that they understand exactly what the research is about and what is expected of them. The researcher has to thoroughly explain the research process before the participants agree to participate in the study. Arifin and Roshaidai (2018) further asserts that anonymity and confidentiality is important in ethical issues. It is important that the participants remain anonymous in that their names and identity in the data collection, analysis and reporting of the study findings are not revealed. The environment from which the study is done should also remain confidential to protect the institutions and the participants involved in the study. Interview sessions should also be held in a private and quiet place with individual participants and only the researcher should match the participants' identity and the voice recordings. In the same vein, data transcribing should be done in private using earphones when necessary to make sure that only the researcher listens to the recordings. The researcher should also use pseudonyms instead of participants' real names (Arifin & Roshaidai, 2018).

To earn the respect and trust of the participants, I explained in details what the study was about and what was expected of the participants before they were given consent letters to take to their parents. The consent letters explained how the research was going to be carried out. Participants were assured that their identities would be kept anonymous and that whatever they said during the interviews and in response to the questionnaires would be treated in the strictest confidentiality. They were also assured that taking part in the study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study anytime they wanted to.

I further protected the participants' rights by not using real names of the schools and the learners but pseudonyms to protect them from any victimization they might face because of the things they could have said. In addition to all this, I forwarded the research proposal to the institutional Research Office of the University of KwaZulu-

Natal for review and was ethically cleared before collecting data. I also asked for permission to conduct the study in schools from the Director of the Ministry of Education in Eswatini and permission was granted in the form of a letter from the director, which she took to the schools where data were generated.

Data were gathered from the schools using interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions, so I made sure that I respected both the participants and the environment by not disturbing the day-to-day running of the schools. I did this by using learners' free periods so that teaching and learning was not disturbed. The data generated from the learners will be kept for five (5) years and after that, it will be destroyed so that it only serves the purpose for which it was intended. When writing the dissertation I avoided language that could discriminate against other people or be offensive to them and the dissertation was made up of only the findings I got from the participants, not information I made up to fulfil my needs.

3.10 Challenges experienced when gathering data

The data gathering process went well except for a few challenges. Firstly, I have a full-time job so it was a challenge finding the right opportunity to visit the two schools that were participating in the study. The principal in my school wanted me to gather data during times when I was not supposed to be in class. This became a challenge for me because I would find that when I was free the participants were not free as I had promised the school authorities that I would use free periods to avoid utilising their school time. I had to arrange with my colleagues and exchange teaching periods so that I could be free when the participants were also free and so that the principal in my school could not complain about my classes not being attended to.

The second challenge had to do with issues of confidentiality (Rimando et al, 2015). The participants were learners and they knew I was a teacher in one of the schools in the region. Therefore, when it came to responses they had to give about their teachers, they were sceptical. They were scared that their teachers would have access to the things they said about them and how they taught the language, resulting in their teachers becoming angry and victimising them in their schools. However, participants felt at ease as I reminded them now and again that whatever they said

would remain confidential and that no one, not even their teachers would have access to it. I also used pseudonyms, not their real names to refer to them. I did not call them by their real names but used numbers to make sure that they understood the fact that everything they said would be treated with the strictest confidentiality possible.

I also found myself spending more time than I expected on the interviews. They took longer than the anticipated time because participants were giving short responses, which were not even accurately answering the questions asked at times. I had to spend more time with each participant rephrasing the questions and making clarifications so that I could get straight answers to the questions. However, this did not negatively affect the quality of the data, instead probing, rephrasing the questions and making clarifications helped me to get a lot of information than what I would have gathered if this did not happen. The participants opened up more and had a lot to say on the issues discussed.

I also encountered a challenge with questions that participants skipped and did not respond to in the questionnaires. However, again, this did not have a negative effect on the data because I was able to ask participants the same questions they did not answer in the questionnaires during the interviews and I got the information I needed.

3.11 The pilot study

A pilot study was also used to determine whether all the data gathering instruments and other aspects of the study were appropriate before the actual study was undertaken. To ensure validity and reliability of the proposed instruments I piloted the questionnaires and interviews with learners who were completing school; that is those who were doing Form 5, in a school that would not take part in the study. This ensured usefulness and reliability of the instruments before they were administered to the real participants. According to Cresswell (2003) this is done to make sure that the participants easily understand the questions and so that the researcher could identify problematic areas before the research tools can be used with the actual participants.

3.12 Summary of the chapter

The chapter outlined the methods, techniques and procedures that were used in order to design and build up the research. It presented the qualitative approach, paradigm, research design, research tools, sample and sampling procedures, data generation procedure, issues of trustworthiness and ethical issues that were considered in the study. The next chapter will be on the theoretical as well as the conceptual frameworks in which the study is underpinned.

CHAPTER 4

THE THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical as well as the conceptual frameworks in which the study is underpinned. The chapter begins with the definition of a theoretical framework and its significance in research. The study is framed within Kolb (1984)'s theory of experiential learning. This theory will be discussed in the chapter as well as its relevance to the study. The chapter will start by discussing the theoretical framework before discussing concepts that form the conceptual framework that was used in the study. The chapter will then end with a conclusion.

4.1 Theoretical framework

According to Adom (2018) the theoretical framework gives a detailed description of the path a given research is expected to follow and it also grounds the research firmly in the theoretical constructs. The main role of the theoretical framework is to make the findings of a research to be meaningful and acceptable when it comes to the theoretical constructs in that particular research field. The theoretical framework gives purpose and direction of the study so that readers can easily understand it. In this study, the perspective of Kolb's theory of experiential learning was used. The theory gave insight on the way learners experience learning siSwati as a subject at senior secondary school level in the Lubombo region of Eswatini.

4.1.1 Kolb's theory of experiential learning

According to Kolb and Kolb (2005) the experiential learning theory is drawn from the foundation of theories of John Dewey and Kurt Lewin, who opined that it was significant to form a theory of experience for education to be intelligently conducted based on learners' experiences. They also assert that experiential learning is drawn from the works of famous 20th century scholars, who made experience a major aspect of how humans learn and develop. These scholars include; John Dewey, Kurt Lewin,

Jean Piaget, William James, Carl Jung, Paulo Freire and Carl Rogers. The theorists mention six propositions on which Kolb's theory of experiential learning is built, which the above scholars shared.

The first proposition according to Kolb and Kolb (2005) proclaims that learning should be best understood as a process without looking at the outcomes. To improve learning, focus should be on helping learners go through a process that would best enhance their learning. For learning to yield good outcomes, the process that learners go through should include feedback on whether the learning is effective or not. The second proposition emphasizes the fact that all learning is important. It opines that for learning to be effective, the process must take note of learners' beliefs and ideas about whatever topic that is being learnt. These ideas and beliefs should be examined, tested and integrated with the new ideas and beliefs that are being learnt (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Thirdly, resolution and conflicts according to Kolb and Kolb (2005) are said to be an important part of the learning process. According to the third proposition, conflict, differences and disagreements lead to effective learning. It helps give learners the opportunity to reflect and think about new things they are learning. Fourthly, Kolb and Kolb (2005) assert that a learning experience should be holistic and enable the learner to adapt to different situations encountered in the world. A learning process should improve one's thinking abilities, the way he or she feels and behaves. Fifthly, learning is said to involve the learner, new concepts that are being learnt and the environment. New experiences should be integrated into existing ones for learning to be effective (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

The sixth proposition opines that the learner is not an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge as the learner comes to class with prior knowledge and experiences, which are a result of their social and cultural environment. Learners, then construct knowledge out of their prior experiences. This is in line with the constructivist theory which asserts that, "social knowledge is created and recreated in the personal knowledge of the learner" (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p.194).

Kolb (1984)'s theory of experiential learning is based on a model of learning that is recurring in cycles, which have four stages as shown below:

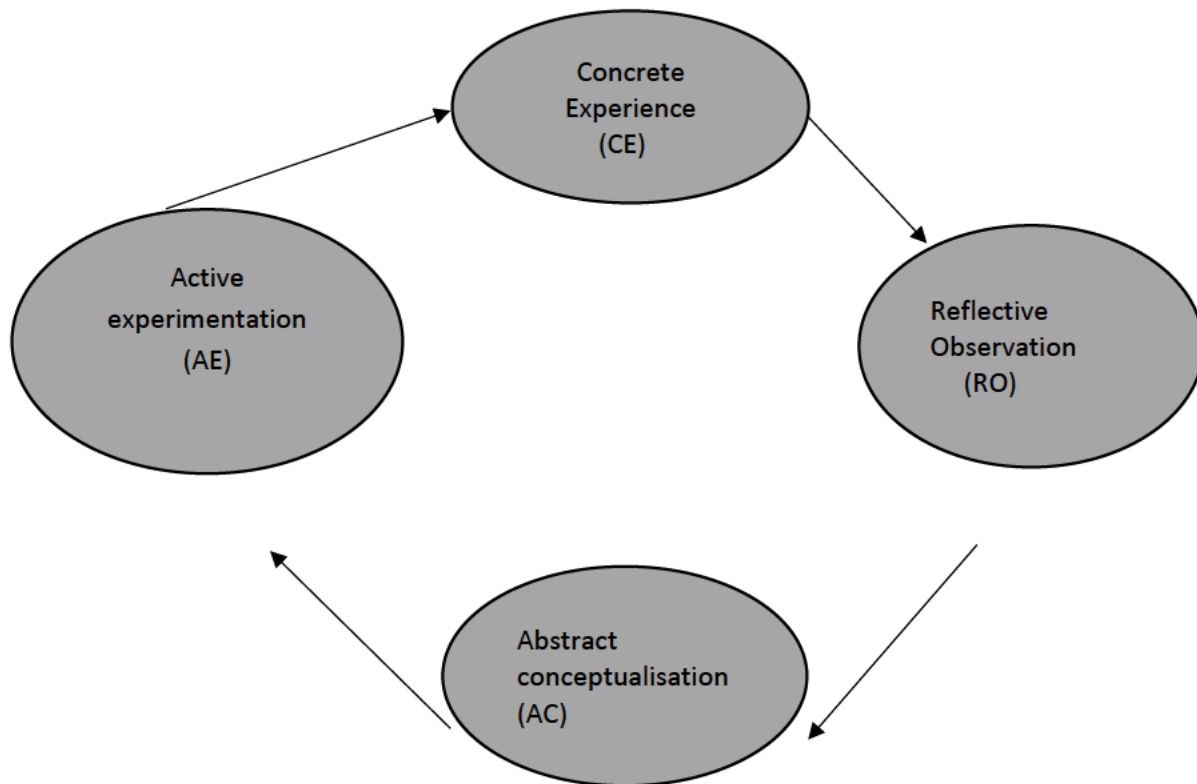


Figure 2: The 4 stage Learning cycle by Kolb (1984)

The above learning cycle proposes that learning should be holistic and should combine experience, perception, cognition, and behaviour. Learning is defined as the process of creating knowledge through the change in experience (Kolb, 1984). The four stages are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Concrete experience is the stage where the learner experiences an activity in an active manner. It is where the learner participates actively in a given learning experience which could be new or re interpreting an already existing

experience. In the Reflective observation stage, the learner understands what he or she is learning by looking back into that experience in which he or she actively participated. The learner focuses on disparities that may be there between experience and understanding. In Abstract conceptualization or the "think" stage the learner tries to form an idea of a theory of what was observed from what the learner learned from a given experience. The fourth stage is Active participation and it is where the learner makes plans on how to practically use a model or theory on a forthcoming experience. The learners make a practical application of their ideas to the world around them (Kolb, 1984).

Kolb and Kolb (2005) also highlight four learning styles, which go together with the above stages. They assert that there are assimilating learners who learn effectively when given sound logical theories to consider. These are more interested in abstract ideas than in people but are not particularly concerned with the practical applications of these theories. Assimilating learners correspond to forming Abstract conceptualisation and Reflective observation stages. The second learning style is converging and these learners like to understand how things work in practice. They learn effectively when presented with practical applications of concepts and theories. They prefer working by themselves and having time to think carefully about things. This learning style corresponds to Abstract conceptualisation and Active experimentation stages. Thirdly, there are accommodating learners who are doers as they enjoy experiments and the practical side of the learning process. They think on their feet and change their plans as soon as they get new information on whatever they are learning. This learning style corresponds to the concrete experience and Active participation stages. The last learning style is diverging and, in this style, learners learn effectively if given the opportunity to observe and get a wide range of information. They are good at collecting bits of information and bringing them together to form a meaningful whole. They are creative and enjoy brainstorming and coming up with new ideas (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

4.1.2 Relevance of Kolb's experiential theory to the study

Kolb's experiential theory makes us appreciate the learning styles, which are the conditions under which learners learn a given subject better. The siSwati language syllabus requires that learners learn about cultural activities such as how to conduct a marriage or funeral in the siSwati culture. The researcher expected learners to become converging, which correspond to the abstract conceptualization and active experimentation stage. Here, learners are supposed to be given opportunities to do a demonstration of these cultural activities they learn in class. In this way, learners will be able to understand how things are done in practice. They will be able to learn effectively as they will be presented with practical applications of the concepts they learn in class in the form of demonstrations of these cultural activities (Kolb, 1984).

In line with Kolb and Kolb (2005)'s theory, learners of siSwati are also not expected to be empty vessels that need to be filled with knowledge by teachers. As first language speakers of the language, they should come to school with prior knowledge and experiences about concepts learnt at school. These are a result of their social and cultural environment. For example, they come from an environment where some of these concepts are practiced. The teachers can even use some of the learners as resource persons in effectively teaching about these cultural activities, which are practiced in their communities.

Learners of siSwati could also be diverging, which corresponds to concrete experiences and reflective observations. They could learn siSwati effectively if they are given the chance to observe and get a wide range of information on concepts learnt in class. They could get such opportunities from educational trips they could be allowed to take to places like; Emsamo; siSwati museum or Mantenga, which is a siSwati cultural village. This is where learners could be taught about the history of the Emaswati nation and the language, traditional dances and other activities, traditional wear, the different types of traditional food and how they are made. In these places, they should get the opportunity to observe people doing the traditional dance, wearing the traditional

regalia, preparing traditional food and even tasting it. Learners should be able to construct knowledge out of their prior experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Therefore, the experiential learning theory is in line with how learners of siSwati should experience their learning of siSwati language in the two senior secondary schools used in the study. The responses given by learners in terms of their experiences when learning siSwati were aligned to the different styles of learning expressed in this theory.

4.2 Conceptual Framework

Adom, et al (2018) define a conceptual framework as a structure that a researcher believes can be used to clarify the phenomenon that is being studied. It is the connection made between the theories used to explain the phenomenon under study. It also vividly explains how concepts and ideas are related to one another in a given study. These theorists opine that a conceptual framework is important as it helps the researcher identify and build up his or her understanding of the phenomenon under research. The researcher can also use the conceptual framework to easily present answers to the problem statement presented by the research topic (Adom et al, 2018).

4.2. 1 Social constructivism as a conceptual framework

Kalpana (2014) asserts that constructivism focuses mainly on the active role of learners in creating insight and making information meaningful. The constructivist learning and teaching process is learner centred and learners are actively engaged in building up knowledge instead of remaining passive learners. This study relates well to one of the forms in which constructivists' views are organised and that is the social form. In the view of constructivists like Vygotsky, teachers should provide learning opportunities to learners through social interaction. Social constructivism, which is an approach influenced by the work of Vygotsky, puts emphasis on learning through social contexts. Constructivists believe that in the process of interacting with others, learners get to share their understanding of a given concept with others thus building and constructing knowledge together with those they interact with.

The social constructivist view is different from Piaget's psychological view in that instead of focusing on learning done at an individual level, the social view promotes interaction and socio-cultural activity, emphasising the importance of culture which goes together with language and beliefs that have a certain significance when it comes to that culture. Social constructivists opine that thinking is situated in social and physical contexts not inside individuals' minds. This implies that for learners to create knowledge and meaning about given concepts, they need the contexts from which the concepts can be learned. For example, if learners are learning a language, a society of native speakers of that target language can provide real life situations for learners to learn that particular language. Social constructivists propose that learners need what they call the Zone of Proximal Development which refers to different activities that may be difficult for learners to do successfully on their own but can be accomplished if they are given help and guidance by adults or more able peers (Kalpana, 2014). Under this conceptual framework, six concepts which are important in home language learning are discussed.

4.2.2 Active Learning

According to McLeod (2019) the idea behind active learning is that learners construct or build their own understanding of concepts learnt. It is an approach to learning that asserts that learners actively build up their own knowledge and understanding of given concepts and ideas based on their experiences. Advocates of this idea believe that learners construct knowledge based upon what they have learnt previously. Previous knowledge or experiences determine new knowledge that learners construct from their experiences.

This approach also views learning as an active process rather than a passive one. It is against the idea of learners being regarded as empty vessels that teachers need to fill with knowledge. Learners are expected to actively engage themselves in the learning process and make meaningful links between previous knowledge and new knowledge. Constructivism also advocates for the idea that all knowledge is socially constructed and that learning is a social activity thus learners are not expected to

learn in isolation but to interact with others. The society is believed to be playing a major role in making meaning and influencing how learners think and the things they think about (McLeod, 2019).

McLeod (2019) asserts that learning is a personal experience for each individual and can result in different interpretations for different learners. Learning is a continuous process as learners construct new knowledge with each new experience they come across. For active learning to effectively take place, teachers should provide conducive learning environments, opportunities, interactions, activities and instructions that will assist learners to reach deeper levels of understanding. Instead of spoon feeding learners with information, teachers should provide guidance so that learners can form their own understanding of things. They should give learners feedback on their strengths and weaknesses, helping them to improve in their learning of different concepts.

Active learning is a life skill and if it is done well, learners become more involved and they gain control over their learning such that they can learn things on their own even after leaving school and at tertiary institutions. In active learning, learners are encouraged to understand knowledge rather than recall it. It helps learners to improve their problem-solving skills and be able to apply prior knowledge on new experiences. Teachers help learners to be engaged in active learning by using open ended questions to provoke their thinking abilities and give them learning aims or objectives so that they are focused and know what they should be discussing if they have been given a discussion task (McLeod, 2019).

McLeod (2019) also opines that to make active learning effective, teachers can also provide learners with effective resource materials to help them find the information they need on their own. This will enable learners to lead the learning process while teachers guide and help them through the whole process. Active learning becomes more interesting for both the teacher and the learners when learners engage the teacher in the discussions, discussing the teacher's interpretations and ideas. Active learning means the learners are free to express their ideas and at times they might

not agree with their teacher's ideas resulting to a healthy discussion as they engage with the teacher as a partner in the learning process. Therefore, for effective active learning to take place, the teacher should create a positive learning environment where learners will be confident in voicing out new ideas knowing that they will not be mocked by other learners but will be given the respect they need while taking that intellectual risk.

Furthermore, in order to make sure that all learners learn something from a given task, the teacher should create an assessment task and if it is effective it will even give the teacher an idea of what to focus on in the next lesson. When planning for an activity for active learning, good teachers always put learners and the learning process at the centre of their planning (McLeod, 2019). Active learning can be very effective for learners learning a home language like the learners of siSwati in this study because their situation has all the elements needed for effective active learning. These learners live among a society that speaks the language and practice the culture that they learn about as they learn the language as a subject. They are exposed to meaningful interactions with native speakers of the language which provides them with prior knowledge that they can use as the basis of learning new information at school. During pair work or class discussions they are free and confident to express their ideas on aspects of the language they are learning not just because the teacher has created a positive classroom environment but also because they are learning a home language which they can speak well so there is no language barrier.

4.2.3 Co-operative Learning

Palmer et al (2017) assert that co-operative learning refers to learners working together in small well-structured groups to achieve common goals which they couldn't have achieved if they were working individually. These learners are motivated by the fact that they are not entirely dependent on the teacher but on one another to achieve that particular goal. When learners learn co-operatively, they learn to be active learners as they have to listen to one another, reconcile their differences and solve problems in a democratic way. However, the teacher also plays a vital role for co-operative learning to be effective. The teacher has to structure the groups focusing

on the size, the members' capabilities, the type of task learners are expected to do and he or she has to be there to make sure that the groups do what they are expected to do to achieve the outcomes of learning co-operatively.

Learners are expected to discover knowledge by themselves and transform it into concepts to which learners relate. They have discussions about these concepts in a social setting. Co-operative learning uses ideas of Vygotsky, Piaget and Kohlberg for in this type of learning individual members of the group actively learn from others in a social setting as learners work as a team. The small groups should comprise of individuals with different talents, capabilities and backgrounds for effective co-operative learning to take place. In this kind of learning, learners know that to achieve the goal set before them, as a group they have to work together so they are likely to motivate one another to do whatever they can to help the group succeed. They acquire critical thinking skills for co-operative learning puts them in a situation where learners of different views have to explain, discuss and debate on different aspects as they discover information on the given task. The focus here is on learning how to co-operate in order to find the best possible solution to a given task and according to the constructivist approach when learners come up with their own solutions, they are truly thinking critically and effective learning is taking place (Palmer et al, 2017).

The ideas in co-operative learning relate well with constructivism as they emphasize on the idea that effective learning occurs when learners are actively engaged in the learning process and working co-operatively to achieve a shared goal. Constructivism might focus on personal experiences as the basis for learners who are learning new things and co-operative learning focuses not only on individual experiences but on bringing together learners' individual experiences to solidify knowledge. Both put emphasis on the importance of social interaction to improve the learning process. Co-operative learning promotes social interactions in that learners learn from one another. They discover and construct knowledge as a group and they learn to come up with solutions on their own instead of always getting information from the teacher. Learners are taught important skills like leadership, decision making, trust building, communication and conflict management. Learners play an important role in their own

learning thus their satisfaction with the learning experience is enhanced and their self-esteem and confidence are improved. Co-operative learning also provides quick feedback. As the teacher moves around the room and observes each group of learners interacting and explaining given concepts, he or she is able to identify misconceptions early enough to correct them so that individual groups are given proper guidance as they find solutions to problems in their given tasks (Palmer et al, 2017).

Co-operative learning will work very well in a home language classroom as learners are coming with their own experiences of the language and they will be able to discuss, explain and debate on given concepts thus creating new knowledge and understanding of those concepts as they bring their different experiences together. The fact that they are learning a home language would also be an advantage in this kind of learning because there would be easy interactions among them as they will be discussing things in a language that they know very well so it will be easy for all learners to participate and apart from books, they can find information from the society they come from as most of the time it will be a society that speaks the language and practices the culture that learners are expected to learn.

4.2.4 Out of class learning strategies

Choi and Nunan (2018) refer to out of class learning as activation where learners are improving communicative skills and learning language skills that are not readily acquired inside the classroom. Learners are helped to use their language resources in a different environment. This is said to be done quite naturally when using a language the learner is fluent in. There is also substantial evidence to the fact that if learners want to reach high levels of proficiency in the language, the classroom environment only is not adequate.

Negar et al (2016) assert that out of class learning has to do with different kinds of activities that can result in language learning in the contexts outside the classroom. Out of class learning means that learners are intentionally and independently interacting with the language so that their learning is self-directed. These activities include extensive reading, widening the vocabulary and extensive listening. Extensive

reading is considered as the most important activity in learning a language because learners who read extensively become fluent in reading. If their reading comprehension skills are improved, their listening, use of appropriate vocabulary in the language, speaking and writing skills are improved as well.

Extensive reading becomes helpful in learners learning a home language as a target language in an out of class environment if the reading material is easy, comes in different types and on a wide range of topics. Learners should be given the opportunity to choose what they want to read and read as much as they can and at a faster speed than they would do if the target language was foreign to them. In this way, learners become motivated and develop a positive attitude towards reading (Negar et al, 2016).

Negar et al (2016) also argue that apart from reading, learners can also keep dialogue journals. This involves learners recording their thoughts, experiences and developing understanding of concepts related to ideas on a given topic. These journals contain written exchanges between the teacher and the learner on a given idea with private feedback from the teacher. They suggest that interacting with native speakers is another out of class learning strategy which is based on being in contact with native speakers of the target language. Language learning is said to be a social event that incorporates the culture of the target language. It helps develop communicative skills in out of class learning. It is believed that learners improve their competence and proficiency in the target language if they live in the target language community. Interaction between native speakers of the language and learners can improve not only their speaking skills but also their listening comprehension skills, helping them to understand and retain information.

4.2.5 Learning styles

Vaseghi et al (2012) define learning styles as learners' use of one or more senses to understand, organise and keep experiences in their minds. In their article entitled, "Language learning style preferences: A theoretical and empirical study", they discuss four main perceptual learning styles namely; auditory learning which means listening to a person, visual learning which has to do with studying diagrams and pictures,

tactile learning which is also described as hands-on learning and kinesthetic learning which refers to experiential learning or physically participating in a learning situation.

Visual learners are interested in reading and seeing words in the learning process. They also learn well by looking at pictures or exposed to information presented in a visual format. This could be chalk board work or work presented in hand outs. Auditory learners learn well by listening and for these learners, learning become effective if they are engaged in conversations and interactions with others. They also learn well when they are given oral directions and instructions. Tactile learners learn better in an environment where they are exposed to touching and being hands-on in a learning process and they enjoy activities like role play. Kinesthetic learners are not happy if they are static in one place as they enjoy moving around and taking frequent breaks during the learning process.

Vaseghi et al (2012) also talk about two more types of learners and these are; analytic or field independent learners and global or field dependent learners. Analytic or field independent learners enjoy focusing on the details of language such as grammar rules of the target language and sentence structures. They use the correct grammar because they take time to come up with what they want to say. Global or field dependant learners concentrate on the bigger picture and are not that much worried about the finer details. Conveying an idea will be more important to them than looking at whether it is grammatically correct or not and they focus more on speaking fluently than accurately, making a lot of grammatical mistakes in process.

The above learning styles can be used by learners of siSwati as a home language. For example they can become auditory learners by listening as the teacher teaches or gives instructions on activities that need to be done or be engaged in conversations with their peers in class or native speakers of the language in the society. Tactile learners are said to enjoy role play, so learners of siSwati can also use this style as there is a lot that can be role played including cultural activities that they learn about in the subject and the literature texts they do in siSwati literature. Learners of siSwati as a home language can also become analytic or global learners when it comes to

learning the grammar and using the language. There will be the analytic learners who will focus on the finer details of the language, making sure that they use the correct grammar while the global learners will focus only on conveying an idea without necessarily being particular about the grammatical rules of the language and sentence structures thus not speaking it as accurately as the analytic learners would do.

4.2.6 Learning support

Learning support from peers happens when there is an interaction among learners with minimal or no participation from the teachers. Two or more learners can work together in a given activity or activities meant to improve their proficiency in the target language. Vander (2016) asserts that there are two forms of collaborative learning among peers and these are peer tutoring and peer interaction. Peer tutoring is when one learner who is more proficient in the target language helps another learner with a lower proficiency. Peer interaction in the classroom can come in the form of discussions done in groups or in pairs where learners share their understanding of certain concepts in the language learning process. This will result in better comprehension and improved proficiency in the language.

Speaking on learning support, Cherry (2019) in the article, "Sociocultural theory of cognitive development", argues that social theories assist researchers in understanding how learners learn from social contexts and it also shows teachers how to promote active learning in learners. Social theories assert that learners learn effectively when they are given opportunities to interact with others. The society is said to have a great impact in promoting an effective learning process. Social theorists like Vygotsky (1962) suggest that for effective learning to take place, learners should be exposed to interactions with their peers, care givers, parents, the society, teachers and other experts regarding the target subject. Social theorists put emphasis on culture which is said to have a significant role in constructing knowledge for learners. For instruction to support social learning, teachers should provide tasks that allow learners to work together on a task either in pairs or groups or ask them to find information from their families or society. These theories not only focus on how the

family, peers or society influence individual learning but they believe that cultural beliefs and attitudes also have a great impact on effective learning.

Again, learners of siSwati as a home language have a lot of opportunities to get support in their learning of the language. They have a lot of opportunities for peer learning both in class and outside. They can be engaged in group and peer discussions sharing information pertaining to the target language. Learners can also be given tasks to do research on the target language, giving them the opportunity to interact with native speakers of the language and other experts to get information on the target language.

4.2.7 Learning materials

For effective learning and teaching in a language lesson, learning materials play a significant role. According to Damayanti et al. (2018) learning materials are at the centre of effective learning and teaching of language and if selected properly they aid in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Learning materials should be prioritised since they are important in the learning and teaching process. Nowadays, these learning materials do not just come in the form of hard copies but learners and teachers of language also use soft copies with the constantly changing needs and improving technology. Learning materials are defined as anything that teachers and learners use to aid the learning and teaching process and in a language classroom they become the source of classroom activities that learners do to improve in the language. These learning materials also help the teacher to be more effective in his or her teaching. They are useful resources that learners need in their learning process and teachers use them to improve their effectiveness in teaching.

Learning materials are important in the learning process as they provide the learner with a rich experience of diverse genres and text types. They make learning interesting and informative for learners through the use of attractive illustrations and designs. Learning materials also help to make learning learner centred instead of teacher centred as the learners become independent, finding information on their own instead of always getting information from the teacher. However, for learning materials to be

effective, teachers should be able to carefully and properly select materials which will be relevant and useful to develop learners' understanding of important concepts in the target language. Such learning materials should be created to meet learners' needs, focusing on particular teaching and learning objectives (Damayanti et al, 2018).

Damayanti et al (2018) opine that learning materials for language teaching and learning include books, audio and video materials. Books usually play an important role in language teaching compared to audio and video materials. If selected properly, they should give the teacher or learner an idea of what is contained in the syllabus of the linguistic lessons. In that way books become the centre of learning and teaching in language lessons. For most languages that are taught in schools, there will be a wide range of books from which teachers have to choose and it becomes a difficult task for them to choose the right books to be used as prescribed books or supporting materials. This requires teachers to make informed and appropriate decisions to make sure that the chosen materials are compatible with the syllabus, the context in which they are going to be used and the needs of both the teachers and learners.

Having prescribed textbooks and supporting materials is advantageous in the teaching and learning process in that the instruction given to learners in different schools and places is standardized. Textbooks make it possible for these learners to learn the same content, allowing them to be tested in the same way. These books are supposed to maintain quality if they are well developed, making sure that learners receive content that has been tried and tested. They help teachers to use more of their time in helping learners improve in the language being taught rather than spending time on producing materials to be taught in class. They also help in the training of new teachers who have limited experience in the teaching and learning process, helping them to become better, confident and efficient in their teaching. This gives them a sense of security, knowing that they are doing the right thing (Damayanti, 2018).

Teaching materials are important in the learning of siSwati as a home language. They are the centre of effective learning and teaching in the language. Eswatini is supposed to have a siSwati subject panel which should consist of members who are experts in

the language. These members are responsible for analysing given texts written in the language and choose appropriate texts to be used as prescribed texts using the syllabus to make sure that the texts maintain quality, making sure that learners who are learning the language as a home language receive content that has been tried and tested. These prescribed texts are supposed to be chosen in such a way that they help new teachers to become better, confident and efficient in their teaching.

4.2.8. Learning environment

In the article, 'Characteristics of an awesome language classroom', Gupta (2017) suggests that the language classroom environment is the most important aspect which determines whether learners effectively learn a language or not. Language teachers should make sure that a language classroom is stress free with a relaxed environment. This is because even though learning a language is fun, it requires learners to work hard so teachers have to make sure that learners feel relaxed so that effective learning can take place. Learners should be given opportunities to work in pairs or in groups so that there is more speaking and communicating in the target language. Teachers should be well prepared and organised to avoid tension in the classroom and so that they show some enthusiasm towards the learning process.

Gupta (2017) outlines five core features of a good language learning environment. Firstly, a language learning environment should be collaborative in nature. Learners should work together and cooperate with one another developing their vocabulary and eloquence in the target language. Secondly there should be a lot of communication among teachers and learners and she believes this works well if the teachers are first language speakers of the target language so that they do not just teach the learners the language but also help them learn about the culture, background and importance of the language. This is said to help learners get a better understanding of the language as it is always said that language is directly related to culture so it is important to understand both for one to do well in that particular language. Thirdly the classroom teacher should make sure that engaging activities are part of the language learning process. As fun as it is to learn a language, even if it is as a home language, some components become difficult and frustrating for learners. The teacher

then has to make sure that learners are engaged in interesting activities which will help them learn the language better.

The fourth feature is putting value on diversity in the classroom. Diversity among learners should be viewed as a positive influence and also a resource from which learners can better learn the target language. Learners who come from different families come with different linguistic and cultural history together with different experiences that they can share. Learners will learn a lot from one another and seeing their culture and language being studied in the classroom will build up their self-esteem and help them to develop a positive attitude towards learning their language resulting in a lot of success as far as learning the target language is concerned. The last feature is using scaffolds to help learners learn new information. Teaching of the target language will involve linking new information to what learners already know. Learners come to class with pre knowledge and the teacher would do well to build onto the existing knowledge as he or she teaches them new knowledge. New knowledge should be linked to learners' existing personal and cultural experiences to make learning meaningful to them.

In the article, 'A constructivist perspective on teaching and learning: A conceptual framework', Kalpana (2014) looks at constructivism in the present-day classroom. According to Kalpana (2014) constructivists assert that there are a lot of differences in learners found in the present-day classroom. These learners have different strengths regarding the target subject and it is the responsibility of the teacher to use those strengths to the advantage of the whole class so that maximum learning is achieved. Knowledge developed in the classroom depends on what each individual learner brings to the class as prior experience. Constructivists advocate for curriculum negotiation and the teacher should prepare and plan in advance to provide learners with the opportunity to contribute and share knowledge with others. The teacher's role is to create an environment where learners feel free to be active thinkers, working together to construct knowledge with others instead of being passive learners. The teacher should facilitate, guide and stimulate learners to be active learners while providing constructive feedback.

Vygotsky's socio-cultural constructivist theory of learning asserts that social experience has an important role to play on developing this active learner's knowledge of the language he or she is learning. Vygotsky emphasizes the close relationship between the learning context and the social and cultural context of the learner. Learners do not come to school as empty vessels but with some knowledge from their social and cultural contexts, which then become the basis of what they will learn at school-the learning context. The interaction between the teacher, learner and peers at school forms part of the learner's language development based on the learner's social and cultural activities (Xiaofei, 2018).

It is also important for the classroom environment to be conducive for the effective learning of the language to take place. In the learning of siSwati as a home language, it is possible for teachers to provide an environment where learners would be free to interact and express themselves because most of the teachers will be native speakers of the language. This is advantageous to the learners because there is no language barrier and the learners are not just learning the language but also the culture of the target language from their teachers. Learners of siSwati as a home language will also come with pre-knowledge in that they are first language speakers of the language and they live amongst native speakers of the language thus bringing diversity into the learning environment which the teacher can use to help learners better learn the target language.

4.3 Summary and conclusion of the chapter

The chapter discussed the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the study. It discussed Kolb's experiential learning as a theoretical framework which focuses on how learners go through a learning process that would best enhance their learning. It also discussed the conceptual framework of the study. The next chapter will present the data that were collected from the learners.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses data that were gathered to find out learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. The analysis of data in this chapter was meant to respond to the three research questions:

- What are the learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini?
- How are the learners affected by their experiences in learning siSwati as a subject in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini?
- Why do learners experience learning of siSwati as a subject in the way they do at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini?

The data were gathered from learners who were doing form 5; the final level at senior secondary school level using questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. All the gathered data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The research was focused on two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini with ten (10) learners from each school taking part. The total number of learners who participated in the study was twenty (20); eleven (11) girls and nine (9) boys. All the participants were interviewed individually after they had completed questionnaires. The researcher also conducted focus group discussions for the purpose of triangulating data and making sure that it is trustworthy. The analysis of all the data gathered from participants was done using thematic content analysis (Neundorf, 2019; & Anderson, 2007). The following section presents and analyses data that were gathered to find out learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini.

5.1 Learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a language

The following are the themes to be discussed under the first research question:

- Reasons for choosing to learn siSwati as a subject
- Learners' feelings before and after learning siSwati
- Learners' academic achievement in learning siSwati
- Learners' best practices when learning siSwati
- Learners' journey in learning siSwati.

The following is the discussion of the first theme, "Reasons for choosing to learn siSwati as a subject."

5.1.1 Reasons for choosing to learn siSwati as a subject

The first question that the learners were asked was aimed at finding out if learners could have chosen siSwati as a subject had they been given the opportunity to choose subjects. It was important that learners be asked this question as their responses could from the onset indicate the kind of attitude that they have on the subject so that these could be aligned to their experiences of learning the subject. The learners' responses indicated that most of them would have chosen siSwati if they had been given the opportunity to choose subjects. Out of a total of twenty (20) learners that participated in the study, nineteen (19) learners said they would choose siSwati, while one said he would not have chosen the subject. What this means therefore is that a majority of the siSwati learners that are doing form five in the schools that took part in the study do siSwati as a subject, not because they are forced but because they like the subject. Responding to the question one of the participants said:

Yes, I would have chosen siSwati because it is easy to study it and it teaches us about Emaswati traditions and customs. We learn where we come from as Emaswati and about our ancestors (Learner 1).

Similarly, another participant responded by saying siSwati is important because it is their first language and the language that is used for communication in the country.

After the learners had responded to the first question, I wanted to find out the reasons why the learners had said they would, or would not have chosen siSwati. In response, the learners gave varied reasons. Those that had said they would choose siSwati stated that siSwati teaches them about their traditions and customs. For some of the learners siSwati was the easiest subject compared to other subjects that they learn at school because they speak it as their first language. Another reason was that all the subjects that are learnt at school are taught in English and it was only during siSwati lessons where they got the opportunity to communicate in siSwati, making it easy for them to participate in classroom activities. Responding to this question one of the participants said:

I would have chosen siSwati because it is our mother tongue so it is important to know it first before knowing other languages. SiSwati teaches us about Emaswati traditions, customs and traditional food-some homes are modern and children are no longer taught about these things (Learner 7).

The reason given by the learner who had said he wouldn't have chosen to learn siSwati was that according to him, most of the time siSwati is not considered as important as English, so he felt English was more important because it could be used as a language of communication globally, unlike siSwati which is spoken and known by Emaswati and a few people in the world. This participant responded to the same question by saying:

No, I wouldn't have chosen siSwati because most of the time it is not considered an important language like English. It only helps us to know our customs and traditions but it is not as important as English which we use to communicate with people from other countries (Learner 15).

Bamgbose (2011) concurs with these learners of siSwati when arguing that most African countries have accepted their indigenous languages as the main instrument

that informs people of their culture. This is based on the belief that if people are not exposed to their mother tongue, they will also lack knowledge about their culture.

Speaking about what encouraged Maori learners to learn Te reo Maori, Te Huia (2015) concluded that through language, people learn a lot about their culture and for this particular group if they see even the slightest chance of learning about their culture using language, then they will be motivated to learn it. Another important aspect of language revealed in this study is that of promoting social identity. Te Huia (2015) asserts that social identity makes people feel they belong and that they are valuable members of a group that uses that language and this is what motivated this group of learners to learn their indigenous language. Speaking on one of the reasons given by the learners who said they would have chosen to learn siSwati, Bagmbose (2011) asserts that acknowledging and accepting that a language is the main tool that promotes people's culture and that if it is not used it might become extinct and thus deprive its speakers of their culture has resulted in the renewed emphasis on preserving African languages. Learners of siSwati in this study felt that learning the language would contribute in promoting it and making sure that it does not become extinct.

The reason given by the learner who said he would not have chosen to learn siSwati is supported by Bagmbose (2011) who defines globalization as the increased contact between countries and regions of the world in terms of communication, trade, technology, information, travel and culture. This is said to have resulted in imported languages becoming dominant languages over African indigenous languages. It was easy to use an already widely spoken language as a means of communication between countries and regions of the world than using an indigenous language which was spoken by a minority of the world's population. English is one of the imported languages which became a global language as it was an already widely spoken language and being an ex-colonial language in Eswatini, meant Emaswati used it as a means of communication with people from other countries and other regions. Thus, it became a global language for them.

Batibo (2005) concurs with Bagmbose (2011) when asserting that language can be a very powerful tool for the society which speaks that language, especially if it is utilized to its full potential and that it can contribute a lot towards developing that particular society. Languages can be used as vehicles to develop the nations which speak those languages especially if they are promoted to a status where they will be respected globally. Unfortunately, that has not been the case with most African indigenous languages because even after many years African countries gained independence from colonial powers, ex-colonial languages were still made official languages and these ex-colonial languages have used their position as official languages to continue developing and strengthening themselves while African indigenous languages were pushed to inferior positions. This can be applied in the context of Eswatini because after many years of independence from Britain, English, the ex-colonial language has remained the official language and for a long time Eswatini have considered it as an important language as it helped them to communicate globally. So, it is not surprising to have a learner of siSwati feeling that he does not need to learn siSwati because he thinks English is more important than siSwati which is spoken by a minority group in the world. The following is the discussion of the second theme, "Learners' feelings before and after learning siSwati."

5.1.2 Learners' feelings before and after learning siSwati

Firstly, learners were asked how they felt before the actual learning took place. Learners were asked how they felt about learning siSwati before the actual learning began. In response to this question, fifteen (15) learners said they were happy, excited and looked forward to learning siSwati for different reasons. Some said they were looking forward to learning siSwati because it is their mother tongue and they thought it was going to be an easy subject to do. In line with this feeling one of the learners said:

I thought I would pass it with flying colours because it is the language we use for communication at home (Learner 5).

Similarly, another learner said she was happy that she was going to learn siSwati before the actual learning took place because siSwati is her mother tongue and she thought it was going to be easy to pass it.

Other learners said they were happy because siSwati was the only subject where they would be allowed to use their mother tongue as a medium of communication with other learners and the teacher. For example, one of them said:

I felt excited because it is the only subject where I am allowed to communicate in my mother tongue with other learners and the teacher (Learner 8).

The view that learning siSwati would be easy is in contrast with Hermes (2007) who argues that merely speaking the language is not enough for one to think that learning it will be easy as there are grammatical concepts in the language and other concepts that they will have to learn to improve their fluency and competency in the language. This was proved to be true when learners were asked how they felt after they had gone through the experience of learning siSwati. In response to this question, the learners expressed that they had realised that there was more to learning the language compared to just speaking it as a mother tongue. These learners said they now feel differently compared to how they felt before they started learning the language. The experience of learning the language has taught them that it is difficult to learn it as a subject and they have seen some people failing it. Responding to the question, one of the participants said:

Things are different. I have realised that it is difficult to learn siSwati as a subject and it is not as easy as I thought it would be-people are failing it (Learner 2).

Others said now that they have gone through a formal learning process on the language, they felt more knowledgeable, proud and empowered as learning it includes a lot like oral literature, modern literature and a lot of other things about their culture which they did not know of. One of these participants said:

I feel more knowledgeable because there is so much that we learn, including oral literature, modern literature and our culture (Learner 5).

Another learner said even though she is glad that she was made to learn the language, it has proved to be difficult for her as she still does not get good grades even though she is at her last level at school. This really shows that merely speaking a language well does not necessarily mean doing well in it when learning it as a subject (Hermes 2007). This could also be the reason why three of the learners who were involved in the study felt sceptical and scared of learning siSwati before the actual learning of the subject began. They said they were told by their older siblings that siSwati as a subject was difficult to learn and it did not matter that they were already speaking it as their first language. When asked how they felt before the actual learning of siSwati took place, one of these participants said:

I was a little bit scared because I had heard from my siblings that it was difficult (Learner 3).

The reason given by the fourth learner who said he was scared and sceptical when he first heard that he would be learning siSwati for the first time at high school could explain why the Eswatini sector policy (2011) made it compulsory for all learners who go through the school system in Eswatini to learn siSwati. He was scared of learning his mother tongue at school because at primary he had been given a choice between learning siSwati or French and he had chosen to learn French. Responding to this question, he said:

I was scared at first because at primary school I had never done siSwati as I was made to choose between learning siSwati or French and I chose French. I started learning siSwati at high school and I was failing it a lot (Learner 9).

Making siSwati a core subject in schools in Eswatini is in line with what Spencer and Mlwela (2013) suggest as they opine that present-day language policies need to be looked into and that teachers should make use of multilingualism to help learners

understand their different subjects in schools. They assert that it is a matter of urgency that changes are made to promote indigenous languages in language in education policies to stop English and other colonial languages from dominating in these policies in Post-independence Africa. This particular learner who was scared of learning siSwati at senior secondary school might not have been so scared if he had been allowed to do both languages at primary level.

The learner who had responded by saying that he thought learning siSwati was a waste of time and he did not understand why they were made to learn it said that he had been speaking the language since he began speaking as a child and he thought the time used for learning siSwati was supposed to be used to learn important subjects like Mathematics. This participant said:

I was not happy when I was told I would be learning siSwati because I thought learning siSwati was a waste of time as it is my mother tongue and I already knew it. I have been speaking the language since I began speaking as a child and I think the time used for learning siSwati is supposed to be used to learn important subjects like Mathematics (Learner 15).

The views of this learner are the same as those of a student Hermes (2007) talks about who was worried about why they were taught about their culture as they were learning their indigenous language because he felt that he did not need anyone to teach him how to be Indian because that is what he already was. Hermes (2007) noted that most learners of indigenous languages felt that way; that it is a waste of time to learn their indigenous languages and culture because they think they already know about it. They feel that learning their indigenous languages will not benefit them in any way. Hermes (2007) opines that research in reading has revealed that learners need to read and write in their first language before they can be able to gain proficiency in the second language. This suggests that learning an indigenous language helps learners to easily learn other languages and this might be true for this particular learner and other learners of siSwati because in Eswatini they were never given a choice but it was compulsory for them to learn siSwati which might have

helped them to easily learn English which is the other compulsory language to learn in their education system.

Some of the learners thought it would be easy to learn siSwati because they could always ask their grandparents for help when they faced any difficulties. Explaining this, one of the learners said he was happy that he would be learning siSwati because he knew that he could always ask his grandparents for help when he faced difficulties.

In the study conducted with reo Maori learners, Jeurissen (2014) confirms the importance of interaction between learners and other speakers of Reo Maori, the target language, in learning a language when discussing the positive and negative impacts of learning an indigenous language in distance education. In this study, learners said they did not like learning in isolation as they missed interactions with other learners learning the same language. They also felt that they would have gained more mastery of Reo Maori if they were in a classroom situation with the teacher. Another difficulty that these learners faced is that they did not have family members or immediate community members who spoke the language. Some admitted to have been exposed to people who spoke the language on a few family gatherings but they felt that it was not enough to help them succeed in learning the language. If some learners of siSwati found it difficult to master some concepts in the language when they had all the advantages that make up for a conducive environment in indigenous language learning then one can imagine the difficulties faced by the reo Maori learners described in this study. The following is the discussion of the third theme, "Learners' academic achievement in learning siSwati."

5.1.3 Learners' academic achievement in learning siSwati

Another theme that emerged had to do with learners' academic achievement in siSwati language. This theme sought to explore learners' academic achievement in siSwati language and learners were asked to describe it. In response to this question all the learners talked about marks that they got in the language and how these have

improved over the years since they started learning siSwati at primary school. Responding to the question one of the learners said:

My marks have been steadily improving since I started learning siSwati at primary school. In the grade 7 external exam, I got a C, in form 3 I got a B. I was position 2 in class in the previous monthly test and I'm hoping for an A in form 5 (Learner 1).

These learners talked about how their grades have improved in both external and internal examinations, getting prizes during speech and prize giving days and the fact that they can now write and speak the language fluently. One of these learners said:

I am doing well in the language and I got a prize in a speech and prize giving day when I was in form 4 for getting the highest mark in siSwati in my class (Learner 7).

Explaining how she has improved in the language, one of the learners said her region once held a siSwati essay writing competition and she got the first position, beating all learners from the schools around the region. Another one talked about always being at the top of his class in debates and presentations. Only one learner talked about how siSwati has proved to be difficult for her as she has not got good grades even after she had reached her last level of senior secondary school. In response to the question this participant said:

I like the language and I like my teachers and the way they teach it but I do not pass it very well. I speak the language very well but I always have a problem when the writing part comes. I got a pass in form 3 and since form 4 I do not get above 55% in tests (Learner 18).

Most of these learners of siSwati seemed to have progressed and done well in the language year after year since they started learning it at primary level. This is in contrast with what happened to learners of Reo Maori in a study conducted by Jeurissen (2014). The learners are said to have been highly motivated and devoted a lot of their effort to learning their indigenous language which they were doing via

Online Distance Education. In addition to the fact that they were learning online the learners of Reo Maori faced another difficulty in that they did not have family members or immediate community members who spoke the language. At the end of the learning process, the learners were disappointed that they had learnt a few concepts than they expected in the language and needless to say that they were not happy with the little they had learnt after putting so much effort in learning the language. Those who are said to have achieved in learning the language were said to have received what they called the minimum passing grade. The learners' failure to achieve the maximum passing grades might be attributed to lack of interaction with teachers, peers and the society that speaks the language. In this study most of the learners talked about getting good grades in siSwati because unlike the Reo Maori learners, they had face to face interactions with teachers, other learners, parents, and the society which speaks the language. The following is the discussion of the fourth theme, "Learners' best practices when learning siSwati."

5.1.4 Learners' best practices when learning siSwati

The next theme under learners' experiences of learning siSwati was on what works best for a person learning siSwati. Learners were asked to talk about what worked best for them when learning siSwati. The question was meant to explore what learners' thought were the best learning habits if one wanted to do well in siSwati language. In response, learners discussed different learning habits and teaching methods which they said helped them to learn siSwati better. Some of the learners indicated that what worked best for them were discussions that they held in and outside the classroom with the teacher and their classmates on different concepts learnt in the language. Responding to this question one of the learners said:

Holding discussions on things we learn in class has worked for me than just reading about them in books (Learner 2).

Another learner said class discussions on concepts they learn at school helps a lot and that she has benefitted from asking for clarifications on concepts she considers difficult from others who understand them.

According to these learners, learning their mother tongue enabled them to engage in discussions freely without being worried about language barrier as it is the case with English lessons. As first language speakers of the language, learners had no problem using the language which made it easy for them to participate in those class discussions and also ask for clarifications from teachers on things they did not understand. Explaining this further, one of the learners said:

The fact that this is our mother tongue also helps a lot because we are free to engage in discussions on concepts that we learn about in class. It is a Language that we are all familiar with so it is not difficult to ask teachers for clarifications on things we do not understand (Learner 19).

The learners' claims are congruent with what is said by Palmer et al (2017) when discussing co-operative learning. They opine that co-operative learning refers to learners working together in small well-structured groups to achieve common goals which they couldn't have achieved if they were working individually. When learners are working in groups, they learn to be active learners and they are expected to discover knowledge by themselves and transform it into concepts to which they relate to with the teacher's guidance. Palmer et al (2017) also concur with the learners of siSwati who took part in this study that working in groups works well for learners who are learning a home language because these learners come with their own experiences of the language and they will be able to discuss, explain and debate on given concepts as they bring their experiences together. Doing this becomes particularly easy for these learners as they will be discussing things in a language that they know very well which will make it easy for all learners to participate.

For other learners what worked best for them was reading ahead before the lessons. These learners mentioned that reading ahead enabled them to actively participate in class and to also ask questions on what they did not understand while preparing for the lesson. They said reading ahead enhanced their understanding of the language. This learning habit is also said to have benefited them when it came to the literature

component as there is a lot of reading there and cultivating a good reading culture worked to their advantage. One of these learners said:

Reading ahead before a lesson has helped me to actively participate in class and to also ask questions where I face difficulties. This has enhanced my understanding of the subject (Learner 12).

In line with this response, Negar et al (2016) argue that one of the effective activities of out of class learning when learning a language is extensive reading which is in line with what these learners of siSwati said was of benefit to them when learning siSwati as a language. Negar et al (2016) define out of class learning as different kinds of activities that can result in language learning in the contexts outside the classroom where learners are intentionally and independently interacting with the language so that their learning is self-directed. Extensive reading is considered as the most important activity in learning a language because learners who read extensively become fluent in reading and if their reading comprehension skills are improved, their listening, and use of appropriate vocabulary in the language, speaking and writing skills are improved as well (Negar et al 2016).

Some learners emphasized that in addition to extensive reading before class, it is also important to attend all lessons, as well as interact with other learners and the teacher. According to these learners, this has worked like magic for them and made sure that they participated in class for their benefit and also that of other learners. One of these learners had this to say:

Attending all lessons and actively participating in class works like magic (Learner 7).

When talking about a good learning environment Xiaofei (2018) asserts that learners do not come to class as empty vessels but they come with some knowledge from their social and cultural contexts which then become the basis of what they learn in class. The interaction between the learner, teacher and peers forms part of the learner's

language development. Therefore, if learners make it a habit to attend language classes, they put themselves at a better position to learn the language effectively from both the teacher and other learners.

Other learners said what worked for them was role-playing stories from novels and plays they did in class. Doing role plays included demonstrating what happens during the celebration of cultural activities like traditional weddings and other cultural activities that are there in the siSwati syllabus. Responding to this question one of the learners said:

Role-playing novels, plays and the cultural activities we learn about in class has helped me a lot to do well in the language (Learner 9).

This response is in line with one of Kolb and Kolb (2005) learning styles which is called converging learning. This learning style corresponds to the abstract conceptualization and active experimentation stage from the 4-stage learning cycle of Kolb (1984). These learners learn well when they are given opportunities to do a demonstration of what they learn in class. In this way learners of siSwati found it easy to understand how things are done in practice and they learnt effectively as they were presented with practical applications of the concepts they learn in class in the form of demonstrations of cultural activities and stories from novels and plays. The following is the discussion of the fifth theme, "Learners' journey on learning siSwati."

5.1.5 Learners' journey on learning siSwati

The last theme under this question is a description of the learners' journey on learning siSwati. This theme required learners to describe their journey on learning siSwati at school. A majority of the learners described their journey on learning siSwati at school as being fun, interesting and amazing. When asked to explain why they felt that way, one of them said for her it was fun and 'pretty cool' to discover things about her language which she did not know. For example, she discovered that siSwati grammar

can be analysed like other languages. When asked to describe their journey on learning siSwati, this is what one of the learners said:

It has been fun learning in my mother tongue and it has been pretty cool discovering things about my language. It was interesting to also discover that siSwati grammar can also be analysed like other languages (Learner 1).

This confirms the truth in Hermes (2007)'s assertion that merely knowing how to speak a language does not mean you know all aspects of the language. Learners still need teachers to teach them grammatical concepts in the language to improve their fluency and competency. What this learner says shows that learners of a home language still need to learn it like they would learn any other language to be competent in it.

Other learners thought it was interesting to learn siSwati because they have always been curious about the culture and background of the Emaswati people, which is what they learn about at school. They mentioned that this included taking trips to Eswatini museums and traditional villages in the country where they got to be taught about the same things they learn in class. They said that the fun part came when they came back from these trips and discussed all that they had learnt with the teacher and they enjoyed the fact that teachers were not treating them like empty vessels. Instead, they were given the opportunity to give their opinions on certain issues and at times teachers used some of them as resource persons to explain certain concepts to other learners. The learners said this was fun as it was not always the teacher standing in front of them which was what bored them at primary level. Explaining this one of these learners said:

Learning siSwati has been an amazing experience for me especially when we take trips to Eswatini museums and traditional villages in the country where we get to be taught about the same things we learn in class by other people other than our teachers. When we come back to school it becomes easy and interesting to share the information and discuss what we have learnt with our teachers (Learner 20).

Speaking about why he or she thought learning siSwati was interesting, another participant said:

I started enjoying learning siSwati at high school because it was not always the teacher standing in front of the class and teaching. We were given the opportunity to give our opinions about certain concepts (Learner5).

The way the learners described their journey in learning siSwati is in agreement with what Mcleod (2019) said when discussing active learning. The idea behind active learning is that learners construct their own understanding of concepts that are learnt based on what they learnt previously or from their previous experiences. It views learning as an active process rather than a passive one and it is against the idea that learners are empty vessels which teachers need to fill up with knowledge. Learners are expected to actively engage themselves in the learning process and make meaningful links between previous and new knowledge.

Other learners described their journey of learning siSwati as an amazing experience for them because they enjoyed literature and culture lessons where whole lessons were devoted to role-playing the literature books they were doing and the cultural activities. Explaining this one of the participants said:

At primary school, I enjoyed literature lessons because the teachers would even allow us to dramatize the plays and novels we were studying. However learning siSwati at high school was more fun as we got the opportunity to also demonstrate the cultural activities we learnt about. We would go outside the classroom and role play traditional weddings and other cultural activities (Learner 4).

Learners said learning siSwati was enjoyable and more fun compared to the other subjects as they were allowed to be themselves in a language that they were all familiar with. They said this made siSwati lessons to be less formal as there was a lot

of interaction between teachers and learners. Learners also said they participated more because there was no language barrier. One of these learners had this to say:

From primary to high school, learning siSwati has always been more fun compared to learning the other subjects. We were allowed to be ourselves as we were able to express ourselves in a language that we were familiar with-our mother tongue. This made siSwati lessons to be less formal and there was a lot of interaction between teachers and learners. We also participated more because there was no language barrier (Learner 6).

Mcleod (2019) concurs with these learners when asserting that for active learning to effectively take place, teachers should provide conducive learning environments, opportunities, interactions, activities and guidelines that will assist learners to reach deep levels of understanding. During class discussions, learners are free and confident to express their ideas because they are learning a home language which they can speak well and there is no language barrier. The activities that the teacher could give to learners could come in the form of the role-plays on literature texts or cultural activities that these learners said they enjoyed.

The learners who took part in this study also mentioned that the highlight of their journey on learning siSwati was when the Ministry of Education announced that learners would no longer be punished for communicating in siSwati in schools. This was revealed in the following response:

Learning siSwati has been fun, especially at high school where you would find whole lessons devoted to role playing cultural activities. The highlight of my journey on learning siSwati was when the Ministry of Education announced that we would no longer be punished for communicating in siSwati in schools (Learner 11).

According to Bamgbose (2011) allowing learners to communicate in indigenous languages in schools when previously they were punished when doing so could be another way of acknowledging and accepting that language is the main tool that

promotes people's culture and that if language is not used by its speakers, it might become extinct and thus deprive its speakers of their culture. Bamgbose (2011) argues that this has resulted in the renewed emphasis globally on preserving African indigenous languages. With this initiative, Eswatini was trying to promote siSwati language after it had been side-lined for years in favour of English.

Contrary to what most of the learners said, one of the learners still thought learning siSwati was boring and that he preferred doing more challenging subjects like English and Science which are more fun to do for him. This learner said he was thinking about the future and he did not have time to waste on a subject that is not going to help him pursue his career in Engineering. Explaining how he felt, this participant said:

I would like to pursue a career in engineering in the future, so learning siSwati has always been boring for me because I already knew most of the things we learnt of in siSwati lessons. I like challenges and siSwati has always been easy for me and I consider it a waste of time. We should be using the time we use for learning siSwati to learn the more difficult and challenging subjects (Learner15).

This idea is supported by Kamwendo (2009) who compares languages to currencies and opines that people will always go for languages that have high economic value as opposed to those which are considered to be weak economically. The same thing can be said about subjects even if they are not languages. This particular learner felt siSwati as a subject has no value when it comes to the career that he would like to pursue. He would rather focus on subjects like Mathematics, Science and English because he thinks they are in line with engineering, which is a career that he would like to pursue after finishing school. The following section presents and analyses data that were gathered to find out how learners were affected by their experiences in learning siSwati in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini.

5.2 Ways in which learners are affected by their experiences on learning siSwati as a subject

The following are the themes to be discussed under the second research question:

- Benefits of learning siSwati as a subject at school
- Benefits of learning siSwati when learning other subjects
- Support given by schools with regard to learning siSwati.

The following is a discussion of the first theme in response to research question two, “Benefits of learning siSwati as a subject at school.”

5.2.1 Benefits of learning siSwati as a subject at school

This theme came forth as a result of learners being asked to talk about what they think they benefitted from learning siSwati as a language at school. This theme was general and focused on benefits that learners say they enjoy because they have learnt siSwati at school. Learners were asked to talk about what they think they benefitted from learning siSwati as a language at school. In response to this question a majority of learners said apart from the Emaswati customs, culture, and tradition there was not much that they benefitted from learning siSwati because it is not as marketable as other subjects like English, Mathematics and Science in the job market. Explaining this response one of the learners said:

There isn't much that one can benefit from learning siSwati at school except maybe becoming a teacher. Learning siSwati doesn't help much when it comes to careers that are seen as important like those that require English, Mathematics and Science. I wish our government could establish jobs that people can pursue after passing siSwati so that learners in schools could benefit from passing it (Learner2).

A related response pertaining to this issue was:

It is not marketable as a subject compared to other subjects like English, Mathematics and Science but a few people who have done well in siSwati get jobs in museums and can become siSwati teachers (Learner13).

In line with these responses Kamwangamalu (2004) discusses the reasons why speakers of an indigenous language would feel this way about their language. He argues that for the promotion of African indigenous languages to be successful, these languages should be treated as commodities in the linguistic market and means should be made to market them and make them attractive to their users. He opines that language as a product will only be attractive to its users if it enables them to benefit economically, socially and politically. Languages should be considered as linguistic products on which certain value is attached and he opines that at the moment, in most African countries, the only language that is attractive to people is English language because it is highly valued in the linguistic market as it is used globally.

It looks like African indigenous languages have not been given a fair chance in the linguistic market because they have no economic cachet either locally or internationally (Kamwangamalu, 2004). Kamwangamalu (2004) further asserts that for African indigenous languages to appeal to their speakers, they must be given the same economic value attached to English and other imported languages. They must be associated with the same benefits, prominence, power and material gains that are associated with the imported languages. Wright (2002) concur with Kamwangamalu (2004) when they argue that if Africans want their languages to be used by the linguistic clients, they must attach certain values to them and view them as goods in the linguistic market. This confirms that people will always go after languages that are highly valued in a given society other than those that are considered worthless. Even though these learners of siSwati continued to learn siSwati and have also mentioned that even if they were not forced to do siSwati, they would have chosen to do it anyway, the fact remains that they can tell that there is not much that they are going to benefit by doing siSwati as a subject. Kamwangamalu (2004) concludes by stating this important point that, for language consumers, what is important is whether the

language they are made to learn will benefit them or not and this is what is going to determine whether people are attracted to it or not.

However, the same learners mentioned that a few can go to tertiary institutions and get degrees specializing on the language to become teachers, work in the country's museums, become radio presenters, court interpreters, authors and poets. According to these learners, some people do not even need to go to tertiary institutions but because they know the language well, they can be hired as the King's poets or King's praise singers. Most of these learners were quick to mention that it is only a small percentage of people who have done well in the language who benefit by getting into the above-mentioned careers which means people do not benefit that much after doing siSwati as a language at school. This was revealed from the following response:

A few people who have done well in siSwati can do languages at institutions of higher learning and from there they can get jobs like being teachers or work in Eswatini museums telling other people about Eswatini traditions and customs and they can earn a living from doing those jobs (Learner 1).

A related response pertaining to this issue was that learning siSwati can give a few people opportunities like becoming poets, King's praise singers and siSwati teachers who train to become teachers after doing well in the language at school.

These responses are in agreement with Kamwendo (2009) when talking about languages as commodities. He asserts that the SADC protocol on culture, information and sport mentions that SADC states should make up policies which are aimed at promoting African indigenous languages for socio-economic development and for these indigenous languages to gain the status enjoyed by imported languages, they should have some economic value resulting in the creation of a vibrant language industry. He mentions some of the careers mentioned by the siSwati learners in this study which people who have done well in indigenous languages can follow and these are; teachers of African languages, translators, interpreters, editors, journalists, lexicographers, researchers and other categories of language professionals.

However, Eswatini, just like other African countries out there has not reached the stage where it could be said she has created this vibrant industry because even though these jobs are there, what these learners of siSwati have observed is true; it is only a small percentage of Emaswati who benefit from them even after they have done very well in the subject.

Some learners responded to the same question by saying that there were no monetary benefits of doing siSwati at school but as Emaswati they benefitted from learning the language in that it helps them to promote it as a language so that they do not find themselves promoting other languages and other cultures but forget about their language. They mentioned that even though siSwati will not help them get good paying jobs, it helps them to know more about their culture and their background as a nation which is very important for them because they believe that for people to appreciate and respect other people's cultures, they have to know, respect and appreciate their own culture first. Below is what one of the learners said:

We get to know more about our language, literature and culture (Learner 5).

A related response was given by another learner who said:

Learning the language helps us to know more about our background as a nation and about our culture which is very important because for us to appreciate and respect other people's cultures we have to know our culture first (Learner 6).

The following is a discussion of the second theme in response to research question two, "Benefits of learning siSwati when learning other subjects."

5.2.2 Benefits of learning siSwati when learning other subjects

The second theme which emerged was specific to benefits of learning siSwati in relation to the learning of other subjects. Learners were asked if there were things

that they learnt in siSwati which helped them to gain a better understanding of certain concepts in other subjects. In response to this question all the learners explained how they were able to understand certain concepts in other subjects better because of what they learnt in siSwati. For example, the learners said there were a lot of similarities between concepts that they learn in siSwati and those that they learn in English in both literature and grammar. Therefore, after learning those concepts in siSwati, it becomes easy to understand them in English. They talked about techniques that they use to analyse literature texts, saying if they understood them well in siSwati lessons, it becomes easy for them to understand and use them in English. The learners also mentioned that there were grammatical concepts like nouns, pronouns and adverbs which they learn in siSwati and this makes it easy for them to understand the same concepts in English. Responding to this question, one of the learners said:

The siSwati grammar consists of grammatical concepts that we also learn in English language like nouns, pronouns and adverbs and after understanding them better in siSwati it becomes easy to understand them in English (Learner 17).

Other learners made examples of composition writing, and said that writing compositions and letters in siSwati lessons helped them to do well when it came to doing the same tasks in English language. One of these learners had this to say:

Composition writing in siSwati is almost similar with skills taught in English composition writing so it is easy to borrow from siSwati and use in English language (Learner 6).

A related response was also given by another learner who said writing compositions and letters in siSwati helps learners to do well when doing the same in English language.

Other learners said what they learnt in siSwati benefitted them a lot when they were learning history, religious education, agriculture and science. They said learning about the history and background of Emaswati made it easy for them to understand the

same concepts in history. Learning about the Emaswati culture in siSwati lessons is said to have benefitted them when it comes to understanding Eswatini traditional education and the concept of intermarriages in religious education. Those who are doing agriculture said there were English words which were difficult to understand in the subject but when brought back to the siSwati language, they were easy to understand. Responding to this question one of the learners said:

There are English words which are very difficult to understand but when you bring them back to siSwati they are easy to understand, especially in the agriculture subject I am doing (Learner 3).

Similarly, other learners said when dealing with difficult concepts in other subjects like agriculture, history and religious education, what they learn in siSwati helps them to get a better understanding of those concepts.

One of the learners went as far as saying what they learnt in siSwati helped them to understand certain concepts in science. He cited the example of brewing traditional beer in siSwati which he said helped them to understand certain experiments they do in science. Explaining his or her response this learner said:

Brewing traditional beer in siSwati has helped me to understand certain experiments we do in Biology (Learner13).

Hermes (2007) concurs with these learners of siSwati when asserting that research in reading has revealed that learners need to read and write in their first language before they can be able to gain proficiency in a second language. This implies that it becomes easy for learners who have learnt their indigenous languages in a formal setting to understand concepts in other languages they will learn later. Ball (2011) also argues that existing research has revealed that learning a mother tongue improves learners' language skills, helps them to do better academically and improves their self-confidence. It gives learners the opportunity to start their education in a

language they know better before they can start learning foreign languages and this helps them to do better even in the second language.

The Intercultural Development Research Association, in their newsletter (2000) support this idea when they assert that it is important to learn an indigenous language because it helps learners to easily speak and write the imported language, which in their case study was English. This newsletter further argued that if the indigenous language is not maintained, the child will not only lose his or her mother tongue but also the advantages that come with bilingualism. The newsletter also asserts that learning both the indigenous language and the imported language at the same time leads to higher academic achievement as opposed to choosing to do the imported language at the expense of the indigenous language. This means it is beneficial to learn the first language together with the imported languages as it has been revealed in this study from responses of learners of siSwati language. The following is a discussion of the third theme under research question two: "Support given by schools with regard to learning siSwati."

5.2.3 Support given by schools with regard to learning siSwati

This theme emerged as a result of learners being asked to explain if they thought their schools supported their learning of siSwati. In response, the learners said they thought their schools supported the learning of siSwati for various reasons. For example, some of the learners said their schools supported the learning of siSwati because they allowed them to participate in cultural activities where they enter competitions with other schools and learn a lot about their culture which is part of what is taught in the siSwati syllabus. They think that the fact that the schools support cultural activities means they are given more opportunities to learn more about one of the siSwati components they are examined on. One of these learners said:

I think my school does support the learning of siSwati because it supports cultural activities which help us to learn more about one of the components we are examined on which is culture (Learner 3).

Responding to the same question another learner said:

The school supports our learning of siSwati because it allows us to participate in cultural activities where we enter competitions and compete with other schools and learn a lot about our culture which is part of what we are taught in the subject (Learner 9).

According to the learners who participated in this study, the schools were also said to be supporting the learning of siSwati because they sometimes invited specialists in the language to come and speak to learners about cultural concepts they did not understand and schools also organised trips for learners to visit Eswatini museums and Eswatini villages where learners get first-hand information on concepts they learnt at school. Giving his response, one of the learners said:

The school supports our learning of siSwati because at times they invite specialists in the language to come and speak to us especially about cultural concepts that we find difficult to understand (Learner 10).

A related response was also given by another learner who said the school supports their learning of siSwati because it organises trips for them to visit siSwati museums and siSwati villages where they get first-hand information on concepts they learn at school.

Another reason given by the learners for saying that their schools supported their learning of siSwati was that their schools provided permanent and qualified teachers of siSwati compared to other subjects where some of the teachers did not even specialize on the subjects they teach. In this regard one of the learners said:

The school supports our learning of siSwati because we are provided with permanent and qualified teachers compared to other subjects where they hire contract teachers, some of whom did not even specialize on the subjects they teach (Learner 6).

The learners further said the learning of siSwati is supported in their schools through the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials to cover the syllabus. According to the learners their schools even run book rental systems which enable all learners, even those who cannot afford to buy all the books to have them. According to one of the learners:

The school supports our learning of siSwati because we are provided with enough teaching and learning materials to cover the syllabus and like other subjects, we are given enough teaching/learning periods to cover the work we supposed to cover (Learner 20).

Similarly another learner said his school runs a book rental system which enables all learners, even those who cannot afford to buy all the books to have them.

What these learners of siSwati said, is related to what Damayanti (2018) asserted when suggesting that learning materials are at the centre of effective learning and teaching of language and if selected properly, they aid in improving the quality of teaching and learning the target language. Learning materials are important in the learning process as they provide the learner with a rich experience of diverse genres and text types, and these make learning interesting and informative for learners. They also help to make learning learner centred as the learners become independent, finding information on their own instead of always getting it from the teacher (Damayanti, 2018).

From what the learners of siSwati said, it seems as if their schools were doing all they could to make sure that they had all that they needed to do well in the language. This is in contrast with what happened to learners who were learning Reo Maori in a study done by Jeurissen (2014). Jeurissen (2014) felt that the school was just using them and the programme as a token so that people would think that they valued the language when they did not because they were not provided with things that they needed to learn the language. The researcher in this study had to volunteer to buy

workbooks for them. The school only started to supply them with what they were lacking after they expressed their grievances to the dean of the school.

Kinshuk and Suhonen (2018) also discuss another problem that most learners of indigenous languages face. They assert that most learners of indigenous languages have few opportunities to learn their indigenous languages in formal settings and that one of the reasons for this is failure to include indigenous knowledge in educational curriculums. They opine that indigenous learners lack relevant opportunities because indigenous learning depends on places where these indigenous languages are spoken for proper learning of that particular language to take place. Unlike the situation that is described by Kinshuk and Suhonen (2018) learners of siSwati in Eswatini do not face this problem. According to Mkhonza (1987) Eswatini is a linguistically homogenous country which means siSwati is used by about 85 percent or more of the natives of the country (Fishman, 1967). This has made it easy for Eswatini to provide learners with opportunities to learn the language in a formal setting because speakers of the language are found everywhere in the country.

Wangechi (2011) identified yet another problem faced by learners of Kiswahili which is in contrast with what learners of siSwati experienced. She asserts that teachers' qualifications were significant for proper learning of Kiswahili. In her study, she observed that most teachers who were teaching Kiswahili had not received proper training at tertiary level which made most of them to be uncomfortable with teaching the language. She opines that this did not result in effective teaching and learning taking place in class. It was discovered that the teachers did not use Kiswahili throughout their lessons but at times used English. Moreover the researcher attributed the learners' difficulty in learning the language to lack of teaching and learning resources. There were not enough textbooks or Kiswahili story books which meant that learners were not fully exposed to the learning of the language even in class. This has also not been found to be a problem in the current study as siSwati learners said that they were taught by qualified teachers who are also native speakers of the language.

On a different note, there were some learners who responded to the same question by saying that they did not think their schools fully supported the learning of siSwati and most of them thought so because they said even after it had been announced that siSwati should be given the same status as English and that they should be allowed to communicate in siSwati around school, schools still have what they call a school policy as opposed to the country's education policy which allowed teachers to punish them if they were caught communicating in siSwati around school. These learners felt their schools still considered English as more important than siSwati. One of these learners said:

No because we are not allowed to communicate in siSwati around the school compound and we are always encouraged to improve our use of English (Learner 2).

Similarly, another learner said:

The school does not fully support our learning of siSwati because even after it had been announced that siSwati should be given the same status as English and that learners should be allowed to communicate in siSwati around school, teachers still punish them for using siSwati as a medium of communication (Learner 13).

To validate their claim, the learners further said that announcements and most important events in their schools were held in English and the learners were always reminded of the benefits of doing well in English even after siSwati has been declared as an official language, together with English. Explaining the situation in her school one of the learners had this to say:

The school does not fully support our learning of siSwati because in all the functions that we usually have at school, learners and teachers are expected to communicate in English and instead of being encouraged to improve and use siSwati, we are always taught of the benefits of doing well in English (Learner 16).

Another learner said that compared to English, her school supports siSwati less because their library is full of English books and teachers still frown upon those who are found reading siSwati novels. Explaining this response, one of the learners said:

Compared to English, the school supports siSwati less because our library is full of English books and teachers frown upon those who are found reading siSwati novels and are happy with those who are always found reading English novels (Learner 17).

Another learner also talked about the fact that a lot of activities that are organised in her school where the school competes with other schools were meant to improve English not siSwati. For example, her school organises public speaking, spelling Bee and debates in English. They even have an English club and they have never had the same for siSwati. This learner said:

The school does not support our learning of siSwati that much, especially when compared to English because a lot of activities that are organised where the school competes with other schools are for the improvement of English. For example, the school organises English competitions for public speaking, spelling Bee and debates and we have never had the same for siSwati (Learner 18).

Even if it is just a minority of the learners who were involved in the study who felt this way about their schools, it is worth looking into because it is not just in this study that teachers have also been found to be having a negative attitude towards the learning of indigenous languages. In a study conducted by Kobia and Ndiga (2013) on attitudes of both teachers and learners on using Kiswahili as a language of instruction in Igembe District, Meru county in Kenya, it was discovered that both teachers and learners had a negative attitude towards learning the language. Both were in favour of English remaining the language of instruction. The authors opine that another contributing factor to the negative attitudes that learners had towards learning Kiswahili as a subject were the teachers who taught it, who also had a negative attitude towards Kiswahili.

In the case of Eswatini, it is possible that the teachers the learners are speaking about are teachers who teach other subjects or even those who teach siSwati because most of them specialize in languages, which means they also teach English language as a

subject. It becomes a conflict of interest for such teachers because on one hand they have to encourage learners to do well in their indigenous language and on the other hand they have to encourage them to pass English as well.

The following section presents and analyses data that were gathered to find out why learners experienced the learning of siSwati the way they do in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini.

5.3 Reasons behind learners' experiences of learning siSwati

The following are the themes to be discussed under the third research question:

- What learners like regarding learning siSwati
- What learners dislike regarding learning siSwati
- Learners' views about siSwati teachers
- Learners' views regarding teaching and learning materials
- The importance of siSwati in Eswatini
- Learners' views regarding classroom activities

The following is a discussion of the first theme, "What learners like regarding learning siSwati."

5.3.1 What learners like regarding learning siSwati

This theme emerged as a result of learners being asked about what they liked or disliked regarding learning siSwati. Learners were asked to talk about reasons why they liked learning siSwati as one of their school subjects. Instead of responding directly to the question, learners talked about particular aspects of the subject; how it is taught, the fact that it is their mother tongue and that it is not a failing or passing subject. For example, learners said they liked it when they were doing culture or literature. Those that said they liked it when they were doing culture talked about acquiring more information about their culture and getting to appreciate the importance of national celebrations. They also talked about being happy when doing culture and literature lessons because the texts they analysed and the culture lessons

dealt with issues that they were familiar with which made it easy for them to actively participate in class. Responding to this question, one of the participants said:

I like the fact that as a learner, I also know something about the issues discussed especially when we are doing literature or culture lessons. I am also able to contribute something during the discussions (Learner 7).

A related response was given by another participant who said:

I enjoy culture lessons a lot because I come from a traditional family and I have a lot of knowledge when it comes to cultural activities as we also practice them at home. I like it when the teacher gives me the opportunity to explain some of the things I know about our culture to my colleagues. This also boosts my confidence (Learner 13).

The learners' responses indicated that the Language in Education Policy (2011) which stipulates that siSwati is now a core subject has taught learners to appreciate their indigenous language and culture. Making siSwati a compulsory subject in all public schools in Eswatini was a step to the right direction in trying to promote the language among its speakers and also changing their perception on siSwati. This is in line with Batibo (2005) who contends that it is important to help speakers of different indigenous languages to change their negative attitudes towards their languages. If speakers of these indigenous languages abandon them for imported languages, then these indigenous languages might become extinct together with all the values and the cultural wealth they provide to their speakers. This is because indigenous languages have unique features linguistically compared to the imported languages and they are culturally rich, as they have been accumulating their speakers' experiences for many years.

What Batibo (2005) says is true about learners of siSwati as they seem to have seen the importance of learning their language and getting to know more about their culture. This is going to help promote siSwati as one of the African indigenous languages in the world which was endangered by its speakers who thought English

was a better language. The learners also talked about being happy when doing culture and literature lessons because the concepts covered there talk to issues that they are familiar with, which made it easy for them to participate in class. Kolb and Kolb (2005) support this idea when they assert that learners come to class with prior knowledge and experiences which are a result of their social and cultural environment. Learners then construct knowledge out of these prior experiences. This is also in line with the constructivist theory which asserts that, "social knowledge is created in the personal knowledge of the learner" (Kolb & Kolb 2005, p.194).

The learners also talked about liking siSwati lessons because of the teaching methods that teachers used in culture and literature lessons. For example, the learners said they were happy when teachers allowed them to role play the stories in the texts they were studying, having lessons outside where they demonstrated how some of the cultural activities they were learning about were done and even singing traditional songs which are part of the siSwati syllabus. One of these learners had this to say:

I like it when we role play certain cultural activities where we sing traditional songs which are sung during these cultural activities (Learner 3).

Similarly another learner said she likes literature and culture lessons and enjoys it a lot when they do role-plays of the siSwati literature books they study in class and also when they do demonstrations of the cultural activities they learn in class.

Researchers, Vaseghi et al (2012) discuss learning styles and different types of learners in language learning and one of them is a tactile learner. Tactile learners are said to learn better in an environment where they are exposed to touching and being hands-on in a learning process and they enjoy activities like role play. The language they learn makes it possible for them to do these activities because there is a lot that can be role played including the cultural activities and the stories in the literature texts that they do in siSwati literature.

Other learners said they liked siSwati because it is their first language. For instance, the learners said they liked reading siSwati texts as they were easy to understand and unlike English texts, in siSwati they did not need to consult the dictionary for difficult expressions. According to the learners siSwati texts motivate them to read extensively because they are easy to understand. Explaining this response, one of the learners said:

I love reading siSwati novels. They are easy to understand and I do not need to consult the dictionary for difficult words like I would do with English novels (Learner 2).

A related response pertaining to this issue was:

I enjoy literature lessons because I love reading and discussing important issues that are raised in siSwati novels, plays and poetry (Learner 20).

This is in line with Negar et al (2016) who argue that extensive reading is part of out of class learning strategies. They opine that extensive reading becomes helpful in learners learning a home language as a target language in an out of class environment if the reading material is easy, comes in different types and on a wide range of topics. They also assert that learners should be given the opportunity to choose what they want to read and be allowed to read as much as they can and at a faster pace than they would if the target language was foreign to them. In this way learners become motivated and develop a positive attitude towards reading. Reading is one of the skills learners use to receive a language, so it's a good habit that these learners had cultivated as it would help them learn more about their indigenous language.

The learners also said they liked siSwati lessons because they were less formal compared to lessons in other subjects. In siSwati lessons they were able to discuss issues and interact with the teacher easily because they use a language that everyone can speak well. These learners mentioned that in siSwati lessons it was easy even to

ask for clarifications if there was anything they did not understand because there was no language barrier. Below is what one of the learners said:

I enjoy all my siSwati lessons because even when we are having grammar lessons we are able to ask for clarifications where we do not understand because there is no language barrier (Learner 18).

This idea is supported by Gupta (2017) who argues that the classroom is the most important aspect in language learning which determines whether learners effectively learn a language or not. Teachers should make sure that a language classroom is stress free with a relaxed environment. Teachers are admonished to come to class well prepared to avoid tension. As mentioned by the learners of siSwati in this study, it is possible for teachers to provide an environment where learners would be free to interact and express themselves freely because the teachers are also native speakers of the language. This is a benefit to the learners as mentioned by the learners of siSwati because there is no language barrier and the learners are not just learning the language but also the culture of the target language from their teachers. Learners of siSwati will also come with pre-knowledge in that they are first language speakers of the language thus bringing diversity into the learning environment which the teacher can use to help learners learn the target language better.

One of the learners responded to the same question by saying that what she liked with regard to learning siSwati is the fact that even though it is a compulsory subject, it is not a passing or failing subject. So, during lessons, they learn without the pressure of making sure that they pass it. This is what this learner had to say:

I like the fact that even though it is a compulsory subject, it is not a passing or failing subject. So during lessons we learn without the pressure of making sure that we pass it (Learner 9).

This is in contrast with what Kobia and Ndiga (2013) found out on learners of Kiswahili, where they discovered that learners had a negative attitude towards learning Kiswahili because they do not like the fact that it is a compulsory and examinable subject. These learners of siSwati still enjoyed learning siSwati even though it is compulsory and examinable unlike the Kiswahili learners who had a negative attitude towards their indigenous language for the same reasons. The following is a discussion of the second theme, "What learners dislike regarding learning siSwati."

5.3.2 What learners dislike regarding learning siSwati

The next theme focused on what learners disliked regarding learning siSwati. Learners were asked to talk about what they did not like with regard to learning siSwati at school. In response, a majority of the learners said they hated it when they had to do grammar lessons. Only one learner said grammar lessons were interesting to her. Most of the learners gave different reasons why they felt this way. Some said this was because grammar was difficult for them and they did not do well in grammar compared to the other components of the language. Others said grammar lessons were boring because they tended to be teacher centred as most learners could not participate because grammar was difficult for most of them. Responding to this question, one of the learners said:

I do not like grammar lessons. They are boring because most of the time it is always the teacher talking and we don't participate because most of us do not know much about grammar (Learner 6).

Related responses were given by other learners who said they hated grammar lessons because they were teacher centred which makes it difficult for learners to participate especially because for most learners grammar is difficult.

When talking about learning styles, Vaseghi (2012) talks about analytic or field independent learners who enjoy focusing on the details of language such as grammar rules and sentence structures of the target language. These are said to be good at

using the correct grammar because they take time to come up with what they want to say. However, from the responses of learners of siSwati in this study, it looks like there are very few learners who are this type because most of them were complaining about grammar lessons and how difficult and boring they were to them when they were explaining why they disliked learning siSwati at times. The following is a discussion of the third theme, "Learners' views about siSwati teachers."

5.3.3 Learners' views about siSwati teachers

This theme sought to explore learners' views on their siSwati teachers. Learners were asked to say something about their teachers and explain whether these siSwati teachers met their expectations. Responses from learners were supposed to give the researcher insight on why they experienced learning siSwati the way they did. In response to this question, all but one of the learners said they thought their teachers were good and they met their expectations. The learners said they loved the way their teachers taught them and they met their expectations because among other reasons their teachers were qualified to teach the subject unlike Mathematics and Science teachers whom learners said were not qualified to teach the subjects as most of them were hired on contract basis. Explaining this response, this is what one of the learners said:

I like my teachers because they are qualified for the job they are doing unlike the contract teachers that we get in subjects like Maths and Science and they make most of our lessons enjoyable but grammar lessons are boring most of the time for me (Learner 11).

These learners were confident in saying that their siSwati teachers seemed to be good at teaching them the language because they understood the different components of the language that need to be taught and they did not seem to have a problem answering whatever questions learners have while also doing a good job in preparing them for the examinations which enable them to do well in the subject. This is what one of the learners had to say:

I like my teachers because they seem to be good at what they are doing and whenever we ask them questions they give us satisfying answers (Learner 12).

Similarly, another one said:

My teachers are good at what they are doing and they make sure that they prepare us well for examinations which enable us to pass the subject well (Learner 14).

Learners also expressed their happiness regarding the fact that their siSwati teachers are first language speakers of the language and their confidence when teaching the language rubs on, on them enabling them to do well in the subject. One of these learners had this to say:

Our teachers are also first language speakers of siSwati and they seem to know what they are teaching. Their confidence rubs on, on us and we do well on the subject (Learner 17).

Another learner said that she liked the fact that siSwati teachers work as a team and that as learners, they are not confined to one teacher for all the lessons for the rest of the year as sometimes teachers from other grades teach them different concepts which add a variety in their learning, making their learning interesting instead of being monotonous. This is what this learner had to say:

I like the way my teachers work as a team. We are not confined to one teacher for all the lessons for the rest of the year. Sometimes a teacher from another grade would come to teach us a certain concept maybe which our teacher is not good at. That adds variety in our learning and makes it interesting (Learner 20).

Another thing that these learners said they liked about their teachers is that their teachers use teaching methods that enable them to participate in class, such as the question and answer, pair work, and group work. One of these learners said:

Our teachers definitely meet my expectations because they understand that we are first language speakers of the language which means we have some knowledge on the concepts we learn. That is why they give us a lot of opportunities to participate in classroom activities like pair work, group work and other interesting activities so that we enjoy our lessons (Learner 19).

What the learners of siSwati in this study said was in agreement with the way effective teachers are described by Gupta (2017) in the article, "Characteristics of an awesome language classroom where Gupta (2017) starts by describing a good classroom environment. He suggests that the language classroom environment is the most important aspect which determines whether learners learn effectively or not and it is the teachers' responsibility to make sure that it has all the features that are outlined in the article. Describing an effective teacher he further says, it is one who is always prepared and organised to avoid tension in the classroom and to show enthusiasm towards the learning process. An effective teacher is also one who makes sure that learners are engaged in interesting activities which will help them learn better, and has positive expectations for students' success.

Talking about an effective teacher Kalpana (2014) states that constructivists assert that there are a lot of differences in learners found in the present day classroom and these learners have different strengths regarding the target language. So, it is the responsibility of a good language teacher to use those strengths to the advantage of the whole class so that maximum learning is achieved. Constructivists advocate for curriculum negotiation and the teacher should prepare in advance to provide learners with the opportunity to contribute and share knowledge with others. The teacher's role is to create an environment where learners feel free to be active thinkers, working together to construct knowledge with others instead of being passive learners.

The teacher should facilitate, guide and stimulate learners to be active learners while providing constructive feedback. This researcher believes that it is possible for home language teachers to provide an environment where learners are free to interact and express themselves because most of the teachers will be native speakers of the

language (Kalpana 2014). In agreement with Kalpana (2014) the learners mentioned that it is a good thing that their teachers are first language speakers of the language because their confidence in teaching the language rubs on them and this enables them to be confident also and do well in the language. The way siSwati learners described how happy they are because of the way teachers teach them, shows that their teachers have the qualities of good/effective teachers and this is one of the things that enabled them to experience the learning of siSwati the way they did.

However, some of the learners said even though their teachers met their expectations, there were a few things they were not happy about regarding their teachers. For example, two of them said they wished their teachers could find better methods of teaching grammar and other support means so that it could also be as interesting as the other components they learn in siSwati. These learners mentioned that they did not like the fact that grammar lessons tend to be teacher centred. One of these learners had this to say:

My teachers seem to know what they are teaching and they always look for ways to make lessons interesting but I hate it when we learn grammar because we are not given opportunities to participate (Learner 6).

Similarly, another learner said:

I like my teachers for they try to use teaching methods that enable us to participate in class except in grammar lessons where most of the time they lecture to us (Learner7).

Vander (2016) discusses learning support, which is what the learners of siSwati need when it comes to learning grammar so that the grammar lessons could be as interesting as the other lessons that they enjoy. According to this researcher, learning support from peers happens when there is an interaction among learners with minimal participation from the teachers. The same feeling was revealed by learners of siSwati in the same chapter when learners were asked about what they did not like with regard to learning siSwati and learners mentioned that they did not like the fact that grammar lessons tend to be teacher centred so maybe teachers can remedy that

situation by using some of the aspects on learning support discussed by this researcher.

According to Vander (2016) two or more learners can work together in a given activity or activities meant to improve their proficiency in the language. Teachers can use peer tutoring, which is when one learner who is more proficient in the target language helps another learner with a lower proficiency. Peer interaction in the classroom can also come in the form of discussions done in groups or in pairs where learners share their understanding of certain concepts in the language learning process and this would result in better comprehension and improved proficiency in the language. If learners of siSwati could experience learning grammar this way, they might enjoy grammar lessons.

One of the twenty learners expressed his dislike for siSwati teachers. He said most siSwati lessons bore him to death and for this reason he had developed a negative attitude towards siSwati teachers. He felt that they were wasting learners' time teaching them about things they already knew when they could use this time on important subjects that would help them to pursue careers that would result in good paying jobs in the future. This is what this learner had to say:

Most siSwati lessons bore me and because of that I have developed a negative attitude towards siSwati teachers. I feel they are wasting our time teaching us about things that we already know. We should be using this time on more important subjects which will enable us to get good paying jobs in the future (Learner 15).

This learner's view was discussed in the same chapter when learners were asked to describe their journey on learning siSwati. The following is a discussion of the fourth theme, "Learners' views regarding teaching and learning materials."

5.3.4 Learner's views regarding teaching and learning materials

This theme sought to find out how learners felt about teaching and learning materials used in the teaching and learning of siSwati language and learners had to explain their responses, which again gave the researcher an understanding on why learners experience learning of siSwati the way they do. In response to this question, all learners said they felt that they had enough teaching and learning materials. They said this was because there were a lot of written materials in the language because it is the first language for most citizens of the country. They also mentioned that this made it easy for the teachers to select good textbooks which help them to cover the syllabus. According to one of these learners:

We have grammar books which cover everything that we need to learn in the syllabus, so I think the prescribed books have everything we need to pass the subject well (Learner 1).

Similarly, another learner said:

We have enough learning/teaching materials maybe because this is the first language for most people living in Swaziland so there is a lot that is written in siSwati (Learner 6).

Again, in this regard one of the learners said as learners of siSwati, they have enough learning/teaching materials because there are a lot of books written in the language for almost all the components and those who decide on the prescribed books have a variety to pick from.

Damayanti et al (2018) is in agreement with the participants in this study when they say that for most languages that are taught in schools, there will be a wide range of books from which teachers have to choose but then these researchers differ a little

from siSwati learners in that they say this makes it difficult for teachers to choose the right books to be used as prescribed books or supporting materials. They opine that the fact that there is a lot written on that particular language requires teachers to make informed and appropriate decisions to make sure that the chosen materials are compatible with the syllabus, the context in which they will be used and the needs of both learners and teachers.

Others mentioned that because they are living in a society that speaks the language as a mother tongue, it is easy for teachers to find resource persons and teaching aids for any information that cannot be found in books. The learners mentioned that they got a lot of information that they needed to learn the subject from their communities as they lived with people who speak the language as a first language. They also talked about how as learners, they got a lot of information from siSwati museums and siSwati villages which makes them feel that apart from the information they get from prescribed books, they have more than enough teaching and learning materials for the subject. In this regard, one of the learners said:

Learning/teaching materials are enough to cover the syllabus and this is maybe because we live in a siSwati speaking country and there is just a lot that has been written in the language (Learner 17).

A related response was also given by another learner who said on top of the variety of learning/teaching materials which come in the form of books, they also get a lot of information pertaining to the subject from their families and the community they live in.

This is supported by Negar et al (2016) who discuss different out of class strategies. These researchers assert that interacting with native speakers of the language is another out of class learning strategy which is based on being in contact with speakers of the target language. Language learning is said to be a social event that incorporates the culture of the target language. It helps to develop communicative skills in out of class learning. It is believed that learners improve their competence and proficiency

in the target language if they live in the target language community. Interaction between learners and the native speakers of the language can improve not only their speaking skills but also their listening comprehension skills, helping them to understand and retain information. The following is a discussion of the fifth theme, “The importance of siSwati in Eswatini.”

5.3.5 The importance of siSwati in Eswatini

This came forth as a result of learners being asked to talk about values that are attached to siSwati in the country. A majority of the learners’ responses showed that they thought there was some importance or value that was attached to siSwati in the country. This came forth as a result of learners being asked to talk about values that are attached to siSwati in the country. A majority of the learners’ responses showed that they thought there was some importance or value that was attached to siSwati in the country. Most of the learners thought siSwati was important in the country as it has been made an official language together with English which is considered as one of the important languages in the world. Other learners talked about the fact that siSwati has been made a core subject so they think there is some value attached to it as a language in the country because in all public schools in the country, it is a compulsory subject for all learners together with important subjects like Mathematics, Science and English. Another reason given by learners for siSwati being an important language is the fact that during world mother tongue day, siSwati is celebrated annually in the country. Learners also mentioned that they thought there was some value attached to siSwati because government is doing something to promote the language. For example, learners are now allowed to use siSwati as a medium of communication in schools instead of English and in the country, there are museums and siSwati villages where people are taught more about the language.

This has led to siSwati being used as a medium of communication in some important events in the country where even the head of state uses siSwati to address his people and an interpreter interprets his speech to English for those who cannot understand siSwati. These learners were quick to mention that in the past their King used to make

his speeches in English with an interpreter, interpreting in siSwati for Emaswati. From what the participants said the use of siSwati by the King when addressing the nation is political in that it contributes in promoting the language. Below is an example of how learners responded to the question:

It has been made an official language together with the so called important language; English and it is compulsory for every learner to do it at school (Learner 3).

A related response pertaining to this issue was:

It is annually celebrated as a mother tongue in Eswatini and every learner must learn it as it is compulsory. This means that it is respected (Learner 2).

Similarly, another learner said:

It is one of the official languages in the country and learners have been allowed to communicate in siSwati during school hours even though sometimes teachers punish them (Learner 5).

Again, in this regard another learner said:

We have a siSwati village and museum where people get jobs explaining our customs and traditions to those who do not know about them (Learner 6).

Responding to the same question, another learner said:

It is important because when the nation has gathered together before the King, siSwati is used as a means of communication and in all public schools it is a core subject (Learner 16).

In line with the reasons given by learners on why they think siSwati is important in their country, Phyak and Bui (2014) hold the belief that language issues are political. Their view slightly differs when it comes to the relationship between power, politics and the importance attached to indigenous languages. In their study, Phyak and Bui

(2014) concluded that seeing indigenous languages being implemented as subjects in schools was nothing but a dream. Contrary to this view the siSwati learners who were part of this study implied that power and politics is what has made siSwati a core subject in schools and an official language together with English in the country. The King of the Kingdom of Eswatini, who is at the centre of politics and power in the country is seen promoting siSwati by using it as a medium of communication in important events in the country, with interpreters to interpret his speeches to English for those people who do not understand siSwati.

Most of the learners thought siSwati was important in the country as it is still part of Eswatini culture which Emaswati still practice. The learners who thought there was some importance attached to siSwati as a language in the country said this was because siSwati is part of the siSwati culture and customs and the fact that Emaswati still keep their culture and customs means that Emaswati valued their language. According to one of these learners:

SiSwati is part of our culture and customs and Emaswati still keep their culture and customs which shows that our language is important (Learner 13).

Similarly, another learner said:

Swazis are known for loving their culture and respecting their culture means they also respect their language which is part of their culture (Learner 6).

Bamgbose (2011) concurs with the learners of siSwati when asserting that like in most African countries, Eswatini has accepted siSwati as the main instrument that informs people of their culture. Therefore, it is true that there is some importance attached to siSwati in Eswatini because Emaswati still practice their culture and the only language that informs them of their culture is siSwati.

Only one learner said he did not see any importance attached to siSwati as a language because he thinks all the importance that the country is supposedly attaching to the

language works on paper only as things are still the same practically as far as siSwati language is concerned in the country. He made an example with the status of siSwati in schools, saying on paper it holds the same status as English but in practice English is still more important than siSwati and as it still determines whether one is accepted or not in tertiary institutions in the country but passing or failing siSwati still makes no difference. The other example that he made was of the declaration made that learners in schools are now allowed to freely communicate in siSwati, saying things are still the same as teachers still punish learners when caught speaking siSwati around the school premises. This is what this learner had to say:

There isn't that importance attached on siSwati when compared to other subjects because all the importance is on paper. Learners are still not accepted at tertiary institutions if they have not passed English. Passing or failing siSwati does not matter and teachers still punish us if caught communicating in siSwati in schools (Learner 18).

Nkosi (2014) concurs with the learner who believes that there is no importance attached to siSwati when she argues that on paper, South Africa has the most democratic and the most pro-African policy but in reality, English still dominates in most government institutions and in the private sector. She contends that this is true of many African countries, where on paper, African indigenous languages have been elevated to the status of official languages when in reality it is still English or other imported languages which are the most important languages in those countries.

This learner's view is also in agreement with Nkosana (2011) in his paper entitled, "Language planning and policy in Botswana." In this paper the researcher looks at how language planning and policy in Botswana are used as tools of political and economic control. He asserts that English language was made the important language in Botswana as it is the language of education. This is because of the fact that in many Sub-Saharan countries, the ruling elite who are given the task of looking into language planning are people who are proficient in English and obviously their values and ideals

will continue to be in line with what is good for the ex-colonial language at the expense of the African indigenous languages (Nkosana 2011).

The learner who said he did not see any practical importance attached to siSwati is merely saying siSwati can be used as a language of unity but the language that is important in the country is still English because most of the roles that are allocated to siSwati are only on paper, practically all the importance is still attached to English. English is still the passing/failing subject and learners are still punished for communicating in siSwati in schools. Even though on paper siSwati is said to be equal in status to English, English still assumes most of the roles which are never assigned to siSwati. English is the language of administration, education, commerce and the language of communication with no-governmental organisations which the Kingdom of Eswatini depends on for help in many things. The reasons learners gave for the importance or non-importance attached to siSwati have an impact in the way learners of siSwati experience the learning of siSwati. The following is a discussion of the sixth theme, "Learners' views regarding classroom activities."

5.3.6 Learners' views regarding classroom activities

This theme came forth as a result of learners being asked to talk about siSwati classroom activities they enjoyed and also those that they did not enjoy. They were also asked to explain their responses. In response to the question, learners said they enjoyed role-plays. The learners said they enjoyed role-playing cultural events like the traditional wedding where they would have a bride, groom and guests. They would sing and dance to traditional songs and have a great time. The role plays also came in the form of role-playing novels and plays that learners studied in class. As learners they would volunteer to play characters in chosen texts and they would be given time to prepare for the actual presentation and do it in front of the whole class. The learners said apart from the fact that it was fun role-playing and watching these role plays, helped them to do well in the language. In this regard, one of the learners had this to say:

I enjoyed role-playing cultural events because I gained a lot of knowledge about them as a Swazi and also as a learner. For example, after role-playing a traditional wedding, I understood the topic better (Learner 1).

Similarly, another learner said:

I enjoyed role-playing our cultural activities. For example one time we role played a traditional wedding. We had a bride and a groom and guests. We sang and danced to traditional songs and we had a great time (Learner 4).

Role plays were discussed at length in chapter 5 where learners were talking about the best practices when learning siSwati and they mentioned role-plays as teaching methods that worked for them. The learners who said they enjoyed role-plays were said to be converging learners according to Kolb and Kolb (2005) as they learn well when given opportunities to do demonstrations of what they learn in class.

For other learners, classroom activities they enjoyed were class discussions. These learners said the teacher would introduce the topic for the day based on literature or culture and then use questions to enable learners to discuss the topic. These discussions could be on texts analysis where the teacher would have learners work in small groups analysing a given text they would be doing in class. Different groups would analyse different characters and then group representatives would share with the class what the groups had been discussing, leading to a whole class discussion.

One of these learners said:

I enjoyed class discussions. The teacher would introduce the topic for the day especially in literature and culture lessons and then use questions to enable us to discuss the topic. I am not fond of grammar lessons because they tend to be teacher centred and they limit our participation in class most of the time we would have little knowledge about the topic under discussion (Learner 6).

Another participant responded by saying that she enjoyed class discussions that the teacher facilitated after a trip to the siSwati village or museum. The teacher would lead a class discussion on what learners learnt or saw during the trip and relate all that to what learners learnt in class. She said she liked these discussions because she

learns effectively when she sees and experiences the things she is learning about. This participant had this to say:

I enjoyed class discussions especially after a trip to the siSwati village or museum. The teacher would lead a class discussion on what we learnt or saw during the trip and we would relate it to what we had learnt in class. I liked such discussions because they made it easy for me to remember the concepts discussed when writing tests and examinations. (Learner 20).

All these learners said they enjoyed class discussions because they made lessons to be interesting as everyone got the opportunity to say something on issues being discussed.

In chapter 5, under best practices when learning siSwati, learners also mentioned class discussions as a teaching method that worked well for them and this was discussed in line with the views of Palmer et al (2017). They refer to activities like class discussions as cooperative learning where learners get to interact on different concepts in language learning in well-structured groups, pairs or as a class with the teacher giving them proper guidance. In the same chapter, talking about learners taking trips to museums, Kolb and Kolb (2005) say the learner who learns effectively when she sees and experiences the things she is learning about is a diverging learner which corresponds to the concrete experiences and reflective observations stage in the 4 stage learning cycle by Kolb (1984). Such learners are said to learn effectively when given a chance to observe and get a wide range of information on concepts learnt in class.

Some learners said they enjoyed class debates. The teacher would divide the class into two groups and come up with an argumentative topic based on the theme they had been doing. Each group would choose a side and group representatives will debate on the topic. They said this helped them especially when writing an argumentative composition which the teacher would ask learners to write after the debate on the debate topic. Explaining this, one of these learners said:

I enjoyed class debates. We would be divided into two groups as a class and the teacher will come up with an argumentative topic based on the theme we had been learning. Each group would choose a side and group representatives will debate on the topic. Even though I did not enjoy composition writing, after the debate it was easy for me to write an argumentative composition based on the debate topic (Learner 5).

They also said that they enjoyed it when one of them was put on a hot seat. One of them said that she enjoyed this when one of them was put on the hot seat on culture or literature lessons. One of the learners would sit in front of them and as a class they would ask him or her questions about a given topic. She said it was fun having another face in front of them other than that of the teacher. The other one said he enjoyed being put on the hot seat and showcasing his knowledge of a cultural concept that will be discussed on that particular day or imagining that he was a given character from a novel or play that they were studying and answer his classmates' questions on issues that have to do with that character. This is what this learner had to say:

I enjoyed taking the hot seat and showcasing my knowledge of that cultural concept that was discussed on that particular day or imagining that I am a given character from a novel or play that we are studying and answering my class mates' questions. I come from a traditional family which still practices the Swazi culture and it was fun answering other learners' questions on our culture. (Learner 13).

Debates and putting learners on hot seats are interesting classroom activities that can be put under active learning which is described by Mcleod (2019) as an approach in learning that views learning as an active process rather than a passive one. Learners are expected to actively engage themselves in the learning process and make meaningful links between previous and new knowledge. Active learning becomes more interesting for both teachers and learners when learners engage teachers and other learners in discussions. Learners might not agree with the ideas of the teacher or of

other learners resulting in a healthy discussion or debate on the issue under discussion (McLeod, 2019).

The second subtheme had to do with classroom activities that learners did not enjoy. Learners were asked to talk about classroom activities that they did not enjoy and explain their responses. When asked about classroom activities that they did not enjoy, learners responded by saying they were not fond of grammar analysis lessons for various reasons. Some of these learners said grammar analysis was not interesting as it was teacher centred and limited learners' participation as most learners would have little knowledge about the topic being discussed. Others said they did not enjoy grammar lessons because the component was difficult for them. These said this was because they did not have a good academic background on grammar. According to one of these learners:

I did not enjoy grammar analysis...it wasn't interesting for me (Learner 3).

Explaining how he felt about grammar lessons, another learner said:

I am not fond of grammar lessons because they tend to be teacher centred and they limit our participation in class most of the time we would have little knowledge about the topic under discussion (Learner 6).

This view of siSwati learners was discussed in the same chapter where learners were asked to talk about what they did not like with regard to learning siSwati as a subject. Most of them said they did not like grammar lessons. In fact, one (1) out of the twenty (20) learners said she enjoyed grammar lessons while the rest said they did not. On the same issue, Vaseghi (2012) talked about analytic or field independent learners who enjoy focusing on the details of language such as grammar rules and sentence structures of the target language and it looked like most of the learners of siSwati were not analytic or independent learners because of their dislike of grammar lessons.

5.4 Summary of the chapter

The chapter discussed the three research questions: What are the learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region in Eswatini? How are the learners affected by their experiences in learning siSwati as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini? Why do learners experience learning of siSwati as a subject in the way they do at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini? Data that were gathered from learners of siSwati on their experiences of learning siSwati as a home language were categorised into themes that responded to the three questions and this was followed by a discussion in relation to what other researchers have said regarding the same ideas. The next chapter is the dissertation chapter and it presents the researcher's perspective regarding learners' experiences on their learning of siSwati as a language in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini.

CHAPTER 6

DISSERTATION CHAPTER

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. It deliberates on what was revealed by the themes presented in chapter five. The chapter further provides the researcher's perspective with regards to the learners' experiences on their learning of siSwati as a language in two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. The discussion is based on four (4) broad themes that were identified from the experiences that were given by the learners. The following themes will be discussed:

- The value of learning siSwati as a subject to the learners
- The importance of society in effectively learning a language
- The role of classroom activities in the language learning process
- The importance of siSwati in Eswatini

The following is a discussion of the first theme, "The value of learning siSwati as a subject to the learners."

6.1 The value of learning siSwati as a subject to the learners

The study found that a majority of siSwati learners were happy that they were made to do siSwati as a home language and their happiness was as a result of various reasons. From my perspective, the learners felt this way because they thought that learning their language was one way of promoting it. My view on how a language can be promoted is that it has to be used by its speakers so that more people can use it and in that way it does not become extinct. Using it also ensures that it does not become overshadowed by other international languages as such languages tend to dominate in terms of the number of people who speak them. The learners therefore felt that learning their indigenous language will make them pioneers in its promotion. The view that using a language is one way of promoting it so that other languages do

not overshadow it would in my view prevent the situation described by Hinton (2016) who states that if international languages like English spread out throughout the world, this would result in indigenous languages spoken by a small number of people, hence the language would become extinct together with the people's livelihoods and cultural practices as they are embedded in the indigenous languages. Again, I am of the view that the learners in this study cherish their language so much that they do not want to lose it so they feel that in order for them to preserve it, it should be used. Preserving the language also entails preserving their cultural practices and as Hinton (2016) puts it, this has led to a movement of language revitalization where after the realization that they are losing their indigenous languages, speakers of minority languages are finding ways of revitalizing them as they consider them as symbols of their traditional values, religion and culture (Hinton, 2016).

In line with Hinton (2016), Ndhlovu (2015) speaks on language development and mentions the importance of the role of language in the development of African countries. He argues that language plays an important role in our understanding of Africa's involvement with herself and the world at large and that it would be useless for Africans to talk about the development of African countries if their indigenous languages are not given the importance they deserve in their discussions. He asserts that it is through language that individuals are either respected or looked down upon in a society.

Ndhlovu compares languages to citizenships and argues that African indigenous languages are so important that unlike citizenships cannot be exchanged for other languages. People can move from the African continent and settle permanently in other continents but even after they have assumed citizenships of the countries they have moved to; the fact remains that they continue speaking their indigenous languages. This confirms what the learners of siSwati say about their language; even though it cannot help them achieve material gain, it is still the most important thing in their lives as it cannot be exchanged for anything in the world.

It is also my view that learning siSwati makes learners proud of their nationality, honour and heritage. What this means is that the learners thought it was important to learn their mother tongue because as a nation siSwati sets them apart from other nationalities. It is only through their speaking of siSwati as well as their knowledge of siSwati cultural practices and values that they can be differentiated from other nationalities. This is because there are practices that are only unique to Emaswati and whoever engages in those practices is identified with Emaswati as a nation. It is my view that knowing these cultural practices, values and ideals of Emaswati will enable the learners to pass them on to generations to come as Batibo (2005) says that the mother tongue is important because it conveys cultural experiences from one generation to another and it provides a means of self-identity; that is the ability of one group to distinguish itself from others.

According to Batibo (2005) groups of people can differentiate themselves by means or racial features, dress code, the food they eat and other practices but it is still language that clearly marks the difference in groups of people. In Eswatini, that is the reason for the on-going campaigns such as the siSwati day and allowing learners to use siSwati around school premises which are meant to promote the language so that learners do not lose out when it comes to learning their culture. The following is a discussion of the second theme, “the importance of society in effectively learning a language”

6.2 The role of the society in enhancing effective language learning

The study also found that society plays a significant role in assisting learners to learn a language effectively. The findings of the study indicated that there is a close relationship between the learning context and the social and cultural context and also that when it comes to language learning, learners do not come to school as empty vessels but they come with some knowledge from their social and cultural contexts, which becomes the basis for what they are learning at school. Learners’ responses in

this study proved that language learning is a social event that incorporates the culture of the target language. This therefore means for learners to effectively benefit in a language class, teachers should not consider themselves as the only custodians of information but should view themselves as facilitators of the teaching and learning process. In this regard, more emphasis should be on learners soliciting information from their social context as well as taking an active role during the teaching and learning process by incorporating prior knowledge to the new knowledge. Taking into consideration as well as appreciating the prior knowledge that learners come with to class enable teachers to use them as resource persons to explain certain concepts to others. This also opens up opportunities for varied classroom activities as learners stand to benefit, for example from group or pair work or class discussions which are activities that make learning interesting.

Considering that the social context is vital in language learning, learners should therefore not be confined to the classroom as there is a lot that they can learn from their social context. Consequently, learners should be given the opportunity to explore the environment as there is a lot that they can learn from it in terms of language concepts. For example learners should be given opportunities to take field trips to siSwati museums and cultural villages where they can observe and learn a lot about the language. This view is in line with the experiential learning theory of Kolb and Kolb (2005) in which the study is underpinned which explains how learners should experience their learning. When aligned to the different styles of learning expressed in this theory which are assimilating, accommodating, converging and diverging, learners of siSwati could be diverging, which corresponds to concrete experiences and reflective observations in Kolb and Kolb (2005). They could learn siSwati effectively if they are given the chance to observe and get a wide range of information on concepts learnt in class as suggested in the example given above.

The idea of learners learning effectively from their social contexts and from interacting with other people in the environment is congruent with Cherry (2019) who states that

social interaction is key to not only learning in general but also in learning a language. The society is said to have a great impact in promoting an effective learning process. On the same note, social theorists like Vygotsky (1962) ((as cited in Cherry, 2019) suggest that for effective learning to take place, learners should be given the opportunity to interact with peers, care givers, parents, the society, teachers and other experts regarding the target language. The experts that Vygotsky (1962) (as cited in Cherry, 2019) is making reference to are the resource persons that teachers invite to explain certain concepts to learners and learners who participated in the study made reference to such people. Similarly, Negar et al (2016) puts emphasis on out of class learning as a strategy where speakers of the language interact with one another for language learning purposes. The belief here is that learners improve their competence and proficiency in the target language if they live in the target language community. Interactions between native speakers of the language and learners can improve not only their speaking skills but also their listening comprehension skills (Negar et al, 2016).

In consideration of learners taking an active role on their learning, Kalpana (2014) asserts that constructivism focuses mainly on the provision of insightful and meaningful learning which results from learners' active participation during the learning process. It further focuses on learners being given the opportunity to find information for themselves as teachers are not the only custodians of information. In my view, the findings of the study relate well with constructivism, which is the conceptual framework in which the study is underpinned when they assert that teachers should provide learning opportunities to learners through social interaction. It further puts emphasis on learners sharing their understanding of given concepts with others, thus building and constructing knowledge together with those they interact with. Again, the finding that learners have the ability to construct information using their prior knowledge as well as knowledge gained through social interaction resonates well with, Kolb and Kolb (2005) which is the theory in which the study is underpinned. According to these theorists, learners come to school with prior knowledge and experiences about concepts learnt at school. The following is a

discussion of the third theme, “teaching methods and activities that enhance language learning.”

6.3 Teaching methods and activities that enhance language learning

The study found that the learners were happy to learn siSwati because of the way it is taught, which includes the teaching methods used and the classroom activities done, as well as the fact that it is their mother tongue and that it is no longer a failing or passing subject. The study revealed that learners enjoyed doing culture or literature where they acquired a lot of information about their culture and getting to appreciate the importance of national celebrations. According to the findings of the study when doing culture and literature lessons learners felt happy because the texts they analysed and the culture lessons, dealt with issues that they were familiar with, which made it easy for them to actively participate in class.

According to the findings learners enjoyed class discussions, debates, hot seats and role-playing cultural events like the traditional wedding. The role plays also came in the form of role-playing novels and plays that learners studied in class. The study revealed that siSwati lessons became interesting when learners are allowed to play characters in chosen texts. From the study, it was discovered that apart from being fun for learners, role-plays left a lasting picture in the learners’ minds which made it easy for them to remember important concepts during tests and examinations. It was also another finding of the study that the methods of teaching adopted by teachers when teaching siSwati had an impact with regards to the attitude that learners have on the subject, hence my view is that teachers have to always ensure that they utilise teaching methods that will make the subjects that they teach interesting. In addition the teaching methods that were found to make learning interesting could be adopted and used by all siSwati teachers so that the teaching of siSwati country wide will be interesting.

Contrary to the finding that classroom activities made the learning process interesting, the study found that learners were worried about the way they are taught grammar. Most of them expressed their dislike for grammar lessons. This therefore means to make learning grammar interesting, teachers need to find better methods of teaching it other than the lecture method which was said to be used by siSwati teachers so that learners can be as interested in learning grammar as they are when it comes to the other components.

Teachers can ensure that they teach grammar using interesting methods if they adhere to the ideas contained in social constructivism, which is the conceptual framework used in the study. This theory puts emphasis on learning through social contexts as constructivists believe that learning happens effectively in the process of interacting with others where learners get to share their understanding of given concepts with others thus building and constructing knowledge together with those they interact with. In this regard teachers could use ideas discussed under co-operative learning which is one of the concepts discussed under the conceptual framework where Palmer et al (2017) opine that co-operative learning works well when learners are made to work in small well-structured groups and that learners are motivated by the fact that they are not entirely dependent on the teachers but on one another to get the knowledge they need.

Co-operative learning also encourages learners to be active learners instead of being passive learners and expecting to get all the information from teachers. In my view, co-operative learning could be the solution for teachers who teach grammar because it will help them avoid using the lecture method and enable them to use other teaching methods that will promote active learning in the classroom, thus making the learning process interesting to learners. The following is a discussion of the fourth theme, "the importance of siSwati in Eswatini."

6.4 The importance of siSwati in Eswatini

The study also found that there was some importance or value attached to siSwati in the country. According to the findings of the study siSwati is an official language together with English which is considered as one of the important languages in the world, therefore it is now considered valuable. SiSwati has also been made a core subject, meaning the subject is now valuable because being core means it is a compulsory subject, hence all learners in all schools have to do it together with other important subjects like Mathematics, Science and English. The study also found that siSwati was considered as an important language because during world mother tongue day, siSwati is celebrated annually in the country which is an indication that the government of Eswatini is doing something to promote the language. Another finding was that in line with the Language in Education Policy (2011) learners are now allowed to use siSwati as a medium of communication in schools instead of English and in the country; there are museums and siSwati villages where people are taught more about the language. This has led to siSwati being used as a medium of communication in some important events in the country where even the head of state uses siSwati to address his people and an interpreter interprets his speech to English for those who cannot understand siSwati, yet in the past the King used to make his speeches in English with an interpreter, interpreting in siSwati for Emaswati.

However, my observation is that despite the pronouncement that like English, siSwati is both a core subject and official language of the country, siSwati is still minimally utilised more especially in homes of educated Emaswati where when talking to their children, English is used. The minimal use of siSwati is also noted during gatherings of educated Emaswati where you find them communicating in English even in the absence of foreigners who do not understand siSwati. Again as a researcher it is my observation that some of the contents of the Language in Education Policy of the country are not adhered to. The policy allows learners to communicate in siSwati in schools but teachers still punish them and force them to communicate in English.

Another observation that I have made is also that despite the pronouncement that English has been scrapped off as a passing/failing subject, practically English is still a passing/failing subject as it is still an entry requirement at tertiary level and one cannot be awarded the government scholarship if he or she has not credited English even when they have done well in siSwati.

My observations seem to be in line with Bagmbose (2011) who talks about negative attitudes and defective language planning. Bagmbose (2011) opines that language planning in most African countries is not done properly, resulting in a situation where languages are not given a definite status or specialized roles in the language policy. This has resulted in African indigenous languages remaining inferior even after the countries' language policies have certified them as important languages. Nkosi (2014) concurs with Bagmbose (2011) when she argues that on paper, African indigenous languages have been elevated to the status of official languages when in reality it is still English or other imported languages which are the most important languages in these countries.

On another note, it is my view that there is a conflict of interest among teachers who teach siSwati when instead of putting emphasis on learners doing well in the subject, emphasise on them doing well in English. I feel that such teachers are not helping in promoting the learners' indigenous language. This could be because in Eswatini most siSwati teachers major in both siSwati and English at tertiary level. This means that these teachers will teach both languages and they may be tempted to encourage learners to do well in English as they also have an interest in the teaching and learning of English. Their behaviour could also be attributed to the current status of these two languages in the country's language policy. Even though on paper, siSwati and English are said to be equal, practically English is still more important than siSwati because learners cannot be accepted at tertiary institutions if they have not obtained a credit pass in English. The source of this problem goes back to the fact that even though language policies are made to promote indigenous languages, practically the situation remains the same as learners need to do well in English to further their studies. Therefore, as long as learners are going to need a credit pass in English and not in

siSwati to further their studies, teachers will be tempted to encourage them to do better in English than in siSwati.

This view is in line with what is discussed by Kadenge (2018) in a study exploring chances of bringing in an African indigenous language as a medium of instruction at Wits University in South Africa. The study revealed that students and their lecturers showed a negative attitude towards the initiative but showed interest in English as it is believed by many people to be the language that enables people to access better opportunities in life. The study also revealed that it was difficult to promote an African indigenous language when it is competing with English, a well-established language. This might be the reason why teachers of siSwati learners who participated in this study seemed to be promoting English while teaching siSwati. Their aim was to remind learners to do well in a language that will help them further their studies not that they had anything against siSwati. This section responded to the Why question and discussed why learners experienced siSwati the way they do from the researcher's perspective using the themes developed in data presentation and analysis. Four broad themes were discussed in relation to the theory of experiential learning and the social constructivism which are theories in which the study is underpinned. This discussion is followed by a section on the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

6.5 Summary, conclusions and recommendations

This section presents a summary of the research undertaken to establish experiences of learners learning siSwati language as a subject at two senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. The summary provides a justification for carrying out the research, a summary of the literature reviewed, the methodology used in carrying out the study, and the findings of the study. Conclusions and recommendations are also discussed.

6.5.1 Summary

The study was motivated by an interest to find out from learners' experiences if there is any value attached to siSwati as a subject or language in Eswatini now that it has been made a core subject together with English language and other core subjects like science and mathematics in the education system of the country. The study aimed at establishing what learners considered to be the best practices in learning siSwati and the challenges they experienced in their learning of siSwati. It was hoped that the study would help the Ministry of Education in Eswatini as it could give an insight on the experiences of learners on learning siSwati as a subject so that appropriate decisions can be taken to help learners see and appreciate the value or non-value of the subject. The study could also inform inspectors, curriculum developers and teachers of siSwati as a subject on learners' experiences of learning siSwati so that they can see if the activities done by learners are appropriate. From the study, teachers of siSwati could also benefit from knowing what learners considered to be the best practices in learning siSwati and that teachers of siSwati could be in a better position to come up with ideas on how to help learners of siSwati face challenges that come with learning the language as a subject with success.

The literature reviewed revealed that for a long time even after independence from countries that colonised them, African countries have continued making English and other foreign languages to be dominant languages, including them in their language policies as official languages because they are used as languages of communication with foreign countries globally. Studies have shown that countries like Eswatini have no hope in succeeding to resist the power of English as they still depend on investments from foreign countries to develop and sustain their economy. Despite that indigenous languages are included in the language policies of African countries; some as official languages together with the colonial language and others as the language

of instruction in given levels of primary school education, but it is still not easy to implement all that has been put on paper in the policies in practical terms. The colonial languages continue to dominate over the indigenous languages.

This was crucial to the study as it depended partly on whether siSwati had become as important as English when it came to the attitudes that learners would have towards studying their indigenous language. For example, if learners of siSwati think that English as one of official languages is given more power than siSwati, then they might not be eager to learn it. Other studies revealed that most African countries have continued promoting their indigenous languages not because they wanted them to compete with the colonial languages but because they have accepted that their indigenous languages are the main instruments that inform their people of their culture so that their citizens would have a sense of identity, knowing where they are coming from. These studies assert that learners do not need to choose an African indigenous language over an international language as a subject of study but they can do both because irrespective of the fact that they are indigenous or ex-colonial, these languages have an important role to play in the lives of the learners.

Literature reviewed in the study referred to languages as commodities, which means there is a linguistic market where these languages are sold like commodities. However, it was noted that English has become a highly valued commodity in the global linguistic market and in the study, this is the language that siSwati is up against as the participants of the study were expected to say whether as a language, siSwati can be considered as a valuable commodity in the linguistic market.

The study adopted the interpretive research paradigm and the qualitative approach. These were used together with the case study research design where two (2) senior secondary schools were engaged with a sample of twenty (20) learners that took part in the study. The selection of the learners was done using purpose sampling as the intention was to engage learners who do siSwati as a subject at senior secondary school level. Questionnaires, semi-structured interview guide, and focus group discussions were used as tools for gathering data. Data were analysed using the

content analysis procedure and the participants' responses were divided into main themes and sub-themes in data analysis, relating them to the literature review.

The findings of the study indicated that learners of siSwati as a subject were happy that they were made to learn the language because even though they mentioned that there is not much that they were going to benefit from learning the language in monetary terms, the language still taught them about their traditions and customs, helping them to know where they are coming from as Emaswati and setting them apart from other nationalities. According to the participants one way of promoting their indigenous language was learning it as a subject. The learners agreed that siSwati has not reached the status of languages like English in the linguistic market as there are very few job opportunities waiting for those who have done well in it but they still thought there was some value attached to it as it is still their mother tongue and the only thing that gives them a sense of identity as a nation. Another finding was that the learners were happy with the way their teachers taught them siSwati, however, they were worried about the way they are taught grammar. Most of them expressed their dislike for grammar lessons.

The study also found that the participants were worried about what they termed a conflict of interest among teachers who teach them siSwati but instead of putting emphasis on them doing well in the subject, emphasised on them doing well in English. The learners felt that such teachers were not helping in promoting their indigenous language. Another finding was that the participants were also not happy that some of the contents of the Language in Education Policy of the country were not adhered to. The example they gave was that the policy allowed learners to communicate in siSwati in schools but teachers still punish them and force them to communicate in English. The learners were also not happy that despite the pronouncement that English had been scrapped off as a passing/failing subject, practically English is still a passing/failing subject as it is still an entry requirement at tertiary level and one cannot be awarded the government scholarship if he or she has not credited English.

The study achieved what it sought to accomplish as the participants' responses answered the research questions. The researcher got answers to learners' experiences of learning siSwati as a core subject, how learners were affected by their experiences in learning siSwati as a subject and why learners experience learning siSwati as a language the way they do.

6.5.2 Conclusion

The study was underpinned by Kolb's theory of experiential learning. The theory fits into the study of learners' experiences on learning siSwati as a subject at senior secondary school level in that the theory emphasizes that people learn better as they interact with their social and cultural environment, as well as that people come into the learning environment with prior knowledge and experiences. This is what learners in this study said worked for them as they learnt siSwati as a subject. According to them when they are learning siSwati; they come with the knowledge of some of the cultural aspects that they are taught and they also communicate in their indigenous language.

The study therefore concludes that although siSwati has been made a core subject together with English, it is still not as important as English. According to the learners, even though on paper, English was removed as a passing\failing subject, it is still more important than siSwati as it is still an entry requirement to tertiary level and learners are not awarded government scholarship if they have not credited English, while passing or failing siSwati does not affect them in any way. Learners also mentioned that even though they were happy with learning siSwati as it is the language that informs them of their culture and gives them a sense of identity as a nation, there is still not much value attached to it as there isn't much that they benefit in monetary terms if they have done well in siSwati. The recommendations that were made were meant to influence the Ministry of Education so that the position and status of siSwati in the education system of the country can be revisited so that siSwati can be at the same level in terms of importance as English.

6.5.3 Recommendations

The study was aimed at establishing experiences of learners of siSwati in learning siSwati as a subject at senior secondary school level and it focused on two schools in the Lubombo region of the country. Because of that, the findings may not be generalized to other regions as the country has three more regions. It is therefore recommended that a study that is going to cover all the regions of the country be undertaken so that the experiences of learners from all the regions may be put together to form generalized findings.

As a result of the findings in the study, different stakeholders have different roles to play so that learners' attitudes towards siSwati and the teaching of the language can be improved. Language policy makers, curriculum developers, inspectors, the government scholarship awarding board and teachers of siSwati should do the following:

Language policy makers should make a follow up on the policy made to make sure that what is stipulated in that policy is implemented. They should make sure that learners are not punished for speaking in siSwati in schools because the policy stipulates that they are free to do so as siSwati has been made the official language together with English. Therefore, it should not seem as if on paper these languages are equal when practically English is still allowed to remain the dominant language. Language policy makers together with the government scholarship awarding board should also look into the issue of English as a passing/failing subject. On paper it has just been declared that English is no longer a passing/failing subject but entry requirements to tertiary education still require a credit in English and a credit in English is required for one to be awarded the government scholarship to study at tertiary level.

Curriculum developers, inspectors and teachers of siSwati have a challenge of finding better methods of teaching grammar so that learners enjoy grammar lessons as much as they enjoy doing the other components in the language. Teachers of siSwati should

also make sure that in what they say or do, they should not seem to favour English language as a subject over siSwati. They should treat the two languages in the same way because literature reviewed in the study asserted that by what they do or say about indigenous languages, teachers can contribute in learners having a negative attitude towards their indigenous languages.

6.5.4 Future studies

There is need for further research on the topic. Future studies could cover a large sample so that the findings may be generalized to all senior secondary schools in Eswatini. Further research can also explore the experiences of learners of siSwati who are learning it as a second language as this one was focused on learners of siSwati as a home language.

6.5.5 Limitations of the study

The study had its weaknesses and among these was the time and financial limitations as the researcher is working full time and the study was self-sponsored. Therefore, even if she would have liked to conduct it on a bigger scale, she had to focus on only two schools in one region and ten learners per school. Another weakness of the study is that the researcher had to use free periods for the interviews and focus group discussions as she was dealing with learners who did not have time for the research as they were at school. The feeling is that she would have obtained more information if she had more time with the participants. It is therefore, recommended that in future research on the topic, the researcher should arrange for more time with the participants to get more information.

6.5.6 Concluding Remarks

The study set out to explore the experiences of learners on learning siSwati language as a subject in senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. Its aim was to get information from learners on whether siSwati has become as valuable and

as important as its new status in Eswatini or not. The study was interested in learners' experiences on learning siSwati as a subject as well as looking at what learners consider to be the best practices in learning siSwati and the challenges learners experience in their learning of siSwati.

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Appendix 1 Ethical clearance letter



UNIVERSITY OF 1M
KWAZULU•NATAL

INYUVESI

YAKWAZULU.NATALI

01 August 2018

Ms Lungile M Nxumalo 214584282

School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Nxumalo

Protocol reference number: HSS/0339/016M

Project title: SiSwati Language as a subject in Senior Secondary Schools in Swaziland: Learners' views in two selected schools in the Lubombo Region.

Full Approval — Expedited
application With regards to your response received on 31 July 2018 to our query of 27 July 2018, I wish to inform you that your research protocol has been granted Full Approval

This approval is granted provisionally and the final clearance for this project will be given once the above-mentioned condition has been met. Note that data collection may not proceed until final ethics approval letter has been issued after the remaining conditions have been met and approved by the research ethics committee.

Please submit your earliest response as soon as possible to Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair) % ximbap@ukzn.ac.za Research Office, Westville Campus.

Yours faithfully



Prof. Shenuka Singh (Chair)

cc Supervisor: Dr Zinhle Nkosi cc Academic Leader Research:
Dr SB Khoza cc School Administrators: Ms T Khumalo, Ms M
Ngcobo and Mr S Duma

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001 , Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za I
snymanm@ukzn.ac.za I mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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Westville

Appendix 2 Questionnaire for learners

Research Instrument Questionnaire for learners

1. When did you start learning siSwati language in a formal setting? Please tick in the appropriate box.

Grade 1 ☐

Grade 4 ☐

2. How many subjects are you doing at school?
-

3. Please tick in the box against subjects that you are doing at school.

Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>
English language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical science	<input type="checkbox"/>
SiSwati language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business studies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accounts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information	<input type="checkbox"/> technology
Agriculture Biology	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design and	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology

History	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design and	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology
Consumer science	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any other -----

4. Are the following compulsory subjects helping you to understand other subjects that you are doing at school? Please show your response by putting the following symbols inside the appropriate boxes:

(A)- Agree, (S A) - Strongly agree, (D)-Disagree or (SD)- Strongly Disagree

Mathematics ☐

SiSwati language ☐

English language ☐

Physical science ☐

5. What is your dream job in the future?

6. Which subjects are going to help you achieve that goal?

-
7. What are the benefits of learning SiSwati as a language at school? Please tick inside the appropriate box.

Ensures good job opportunities in the ☐ future

Promotes culture ☐

Makes communication easy ☐

Helps in understanding other subjects ☐

Any other -----
--

-
8. Should SiSwati continue being a compulsory subject at school? Please tick inside the ☐ appropriate box. Yes ☐ No

9. Are there career paths that one can follow if he or she has done well in an indigenous language like SiSwati? Please tick inside the appropriate box.

If yes, what are these career paths that one can follow if he or she has done well ☐ in SiSwati language? -- ☐ -----

Appendix 3 Interview guide for learners' interviews

Semi structured interview questions

1. If you were given a choice, would you have chosen to do SiSwati language as a subject at senior secondary level? Give reasons for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Let us talk about your experiences of learning siSwati language. How did you feel about doing siSwati as a language before the actual learning began?

.....

.....

.....

3. How do you feel now that you have got the experience of learning the language?

.....

.....

.....

4. Describe your journey on learning siSwati at school? Explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. What do you like regarding learning siSwati as one of your school subjects?

.....

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6. What do you not like with regard to learning siSwati at school?

.....

.....

.....

7. What can you say about your siSwati teachers? Do they meet your expectations? Explain.

-

8. How do you find teaching/learning materials for the siSwati subject? Explain.

9. What are the benefits of learning SiSwati as a language at school?

10. Are there things that you learn from siSwati which help you to understand certain concepts in other subjects? If they are there, let us talk about them.

11. What values are attached to siSwati in your country?

12. Would you advocate that siSwati continues to be a compulsory subject at senior secondary level?

- Do you think it is good to learn siSwati in the schools? Why?

13. Do you think the school supports your learning of siSwati? Explain.

-
.....
.....
14. Describe your academic achievement in siSwati language?
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.....
.....
15. What do you think works best for a person learning siSwati?
.....
.....
.....
.....
16. Can you describe any classroom activities that you enjoyed/ did not enjoy?
Why?
.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix 4 Letter to the Director of Education

P. O. Box 287
Siteki
Swaziland

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

To the Director of Education- Ministry of Education (MOE).

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Lungile Mathamane Nxumalo. I am an education M.ED candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa.

I am interested in learning about the value of SiSwati as a subject to learners at senior secondary school level. My focus is on two (2) senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region. To gather information I would request that learners complete a questionnaire, be interviewed on a one to one, and engage in focus group discussions.

Please note that:

- The confidentiality of the learners is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interviews may last for about 20 minutes and may be split if they want. The questionnaire will also take about 20 minutes to be completed.
- Any information given by the participants cannot be used against them, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.

- The participants have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. They will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at knowing the value of SiSwati as a subject at senior secondary school level.
- The participants' involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If the participants are willing to complete the questionnaire, be interviewed, and take part in the focus group discussions they will indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not they are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

My contact details are:

Email: mathamanenxumalo@gmail.com

[REDACTED]

Phone No: +26823434340

My supervisor is Professor G.H Kamwendo, Edgewood campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Supervisor's contacts

Phone No. +27 31 2603459

[REDACTED]

Emailkamwendo@ukzn.ac.za

Research Office

HSSREC

Tel: +27 31 260 8350

Fax: + 27 31 260 3093

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for allowing me to do this research.

DECLARATION BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

I.....hereby give

Lungile Mathamane Nxumalo permission to conduct the research above with learners in two schools, in Swaziland. The purpose of the research has been explained to me and I understand it. I have also been duly informed that consent will be solicited from parents of the children before the learners take part in the study. I have also been informed that the participants have a right to withdraw from the study anytime they want, and that their identity will be protected in the final report.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 5 Letter from the Director of Education

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland



Ministry of Education & Training

Tel: (+268) 2 4042491/5
Fax: (+268) 2 404 3880

P. O. Box 39
Mbabane, SWAZILAND

25th January, 2016

Attention:

Head Teachers:
Siteki Nazarene High School

Ka-Langa High School

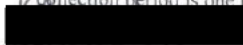
THROUGH

Lubombo Regional Education Officer

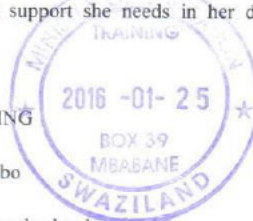
Dear Colleague,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL STUDENT – MS. LUNGILE MATHAMANE NXUMALO

1. Reference is made to the above mentioned subjects.
2. The Ministry of Education and Training has received a request from Ms. Lungile M. Nxumalo, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, that in order for her to fulfill her academic requirements at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, she has to collect data (conduct research) and her study or research topic is: *SiSwai Language as a Subject in Senior Secondary Schools in Swaziland: Learners' Views in Two Selected Schools in the Lubombo Region*. The population for her study comprises of Form 5 learners from each of the above mentioned schools. All details concerning the study are stated in the participants' consent form which will have to be signed by all participants before Ms. Nxumalo begins her data collection. Please note that parents will have to consent for all the participants below the age of 18 years participating in this study.
3. The Ministry of Education and Training requests your office to assist Ms. Nxumalo by allowing her to use above mentioned schools in the Lubombo region as her research sites as well as facilitate her by giving her all the support she needs in her data collection process. Data collection period is one month.


/ DR. SIBONGILE M. MTSHALI-DLAMINI
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

cc: Regional Education Officer – Lubombo
Chief Inspector – Secondary
2 Head Teachers of the above mentioned schools
Prof. Gregory H. Kamwendo



Appendix 6 Informed consent letter to Head teachers

P. O. Box 287
Siteki
Swaziland

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

To the head teacher

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Lungile Mathamane Nxumalo. I am an education M.ED candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa.

I am interested in learning about the value of SiSwati as a subject to learners at senior secondary school level. My focus is on two (2) senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region and your school is one of them. To gather information I would request that learners complete a questionnaire, be interviewed on a one to one, and engage in focus group discussions.

Please note that:

- The confidentiality of the learners is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interviews may last for about 20 minutes and may be split if they want. The questionnaire will also take about 20 minutes to be completed.
- Any information given by the participants cannot be used against them, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- The participants have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. They will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at knowing the value of SiSwati as a subject at senior secondary school level.

- The participants' involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If the participants are willing to complete the questionnaire, be interviewed, and take part in the focus group discussions they will indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not they are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

My contact details are:

Email: mathamanenxumalo@gmail.com

[REDACTED]

Phone No: +26823434340

My supervisor is Professor G.H Kamwendo, Edgewood campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Supervisor's contacts

Phone No. +27 31 2603459

[REDACTED]

Emailkamwendo@ukzn.ac.za

Research Office

HSSREC

Tel: +27 31 260 8350

Fax: + 27 31 260 3093

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for allowing me to do this research.

DECLARATION BY HEAD TEACHER

I.....hereby give

Lungile Mathamane Nxumalo permission to conduct the research above with learners in two schools, in Swaziland. The purpose of the research has been explained to me and I understand it. I have also been duly informed that consent will be solicited from parents of the children before the learners take part in the study. I have also been informed that the participants have a right to withdraw from the study anytime they want, and that their identity will be protected in the final report.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 7 Consent letter to parents

P. O. Box 287

Siteki

Swaziland

Dear Parent

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER (PARENTS)

My name is Lungile Mathamane Nxumalo. I am an education M.ED candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa.

I am interested in learning about the value of SiSwati as a subject to learners at senior secondary school level. My focus is on two (2) senior secondary schools in the Lubombo region, and your child is in one of the schools. I am therefore, asking you to give consent to your child to take part in the study. To gather information I would ask your child to complete a questionnaire, and will also request to interview him/her.

Please note that:

- Your child's confidentiality is guaranteed as his/her inputs will not be attributed to him or her in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 20 minutes and may be split if your child wants.
- Any information given by your child cannot be used against him/her, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- Your child has a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research.
He/she will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at knowing the value of SiSwati as a subject to learners at senior secondary school level.

- Your child's involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to allow your child to complete the questionnaire, be interviewed, and, take part in focus group discussions, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

My contact details are:

Email: mathamanenxumalo@gmail.com

████████████████████

Phone No: +26823434340

My supervisor is Professor G.K Kamwendo, Edgewood campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Supervisor's contacts

Phone No. +27 31 2603459

████████████████████

Email kamwendo@ukzn.ac.za

Research Office

HSSREC

Tel: +27 31 260 8350

Fax: + 27 31 260 3093

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of parent) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I give consent to my child to participate in the research project.

I understand that my child is at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should he/she so desire.

If I am allowing my child to be interviewed, I should indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not I am/not willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

SIGNATURE OF PARENT

DATE

.....

.....