

**TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON  
ACADEMIC LITERACY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

By

**K. B SELEMELA**

Student no: 2009075686

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial requirements for:

Master's Degree in Development Studies

in the

**FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**

**CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE**

**BLOEMFONTEIN**

Supervisor:

Dr Oliver T. Gore

04 September 2020

## DECLARATION

Student number: 2009075686

I declare that **Teachers' perspectives on the role of home language on academic literacy: A case study of two South African schools** is my own work and has not been submitted anywhere except at the University of the Free State for the Masters in Development Studies at the Centre for Development Support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, positioned above a horizontal line.

SIGNATURE

04 SEPTEMBER 2020

DATE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my humble appreciation to my supervisor **Dr Oliver T. Gore** for his contribution towards the fulfilment of this study. This was a challenging journey that needed guidance and patience. Your support and tolerance made this an achievable project. I am a far better researcher than I was yesterday, all because of your guidance.

I also wish to extend my genuine gratitude to the following:

- All glory and praise go out to the Almighty God, I am because He is.
- To my daughter, **Reatlehile Thuto Mathe** who became my source of strength when all hope was gone. God knew better when He chose to bring her into my life, His timing was just perfect. Though she could not understand the midnight tears, the look in her eyes would often say "*it is well mommy*" and I'm grateful for the soul that she is.
- A special thank you to my paternal uncle, Popoti Selemela for starting my academic journey with me. Your financial sacrifice paved the way up to this point, I will eternally be thankful to God for your life.
- To my sisters Lerato Selemela, Refiloe Selemela and Keabetswe Ndebele and my mother Mamotsieloa Ndebele; thank you for the confidence you have in me and to my brother Motsieloa Selemela and his wife Malireko Selemela for their support and prayers.
- To my friend for the social, academic, spiritual and emotional support, aus Pontsho Ya Sefapano Gloria Molefe.
- A special thank you to M'e Lieketseng Taole-Kolisang, thank you for filling in the gap for my mother when she could not be there.
- I would also like to thank the Free State Department of Education, the participating school principals and the respective teachers for agreeing to be part of this study.
- To my colleagues and work supervisor; thank you for your understanding and support.

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my daughter, Reatilehile Thuto Mathe, who gave me hope and inspiration to continue. A source from which I pulled all my strength.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS.....	ix
ABSTRACT.....	x
CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	1
1.3 SOUTHERN AFRICA’S LITERATURE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY FOR THE FOUNDATION PHASE.....	5
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	5
1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY.....	6
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	6
1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY.....	7
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	7
1.9 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY.....	7
1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	8
CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	9
2.2 ACADEMIC LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT.....	9
2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LoTL) IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CLASSROOMS.....	10
2.4 CHALLENGES RELATED WITH THE USE OF HOME LANGUAGE IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS.....	14
2.5 OVERVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICAN GRADE 4 LEARNERS’ ACADEMIC LITERACY.....	16
2.6 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE FOR ACADEMIC LITERACY ..	19
2.6.1 The Subtractive approach.....	20
2.6.2 The Additive Bilingual Approach.....	20
2.6.3 The Multi- bilingualism Approach.....	21
2.7 CONCLUSION.....	23

CHAPTER 3 : RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	24
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	24
3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: INTERPRETIVISM .....	24
3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN .....	25
3.4 CASE STUDY .....	26
3.4.1 Case 1: Mohau School.....	26
3.4.2 Case 2: Thuto School .....	26
3.4.3 Advantage for using a case study .....	27
3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS .....	27
3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews.....	27
3.5.2 Population.....	28
3.5.3 Sampling strategy .....	28
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS.....	29
3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	30
3.8 CONCLUSION.....	31
CHAPTER 4 : RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	32
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	32
4.2 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF HOME LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS	
32	
4.2.1 THEME 1: Home language as LoTL in Grade 1 to 3 .....	32
4.2.2 THEME 2: Teachers' training needs .....	37
4.2.3 THEME 4: Parential involvement .....	39
4.2.4 THEME 5: Challenges associated with the use home language as the LoTL.	40
4.3 DISCUSSION .....	41
4.4 CONCLUSION.....	44
CHAPTER 5 : SUMMARY OF FINDINGS .....	45
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	45
5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS.....	45
5.2.1 THEME 1 .....	46
5.2.2 THEME 2 .....	47
5.2.3 THEME 3 .....	48
5.2.4 THEME 4 .....	48
5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	49
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	49
5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	50
APPENDICES .....	63

2.7.1	APPENDICE 1: DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS (CODES, SUBTHEMES AND EMERGING THEMES) .....	63
2.7.2	APPENDICE 2: ETHICS APPROVAL .....	65
2.7.3	APPENDICE 3: CONSENT FORMS .....	66
2.7.4	APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....	71

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: South African Grade 4 achievement compared to the PIRLS Literacy countries	16
Figure 2.2: Grade 4 PIRLS Literacy achievement by language of test.....	19

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Descriptive table of participants.....	29
---------------------------------------------------	----

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curriculum Assessments Policy Statements
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
FP	Foundation Phase
LoTL	Language of Teaching and Learning
NCS	National Curriculum Standards
NDP	National Development Plan
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Standards
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## **ABSTRACT**

South Africa adopted a Language in Education Policy that stipulates the use of home language as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoTL) in Foundation Phase (Grade 1 to 3). Through the LiEP, the Foundation Phase learners are supposed to be taught in their home language, Sesotho, and switch to English in Grade 4. However, learners fail to adjust easily to the use of English as the LoTL in Grade 4. This study investigates the views from teachers on the use of home language for the Foundation Phase and academic literacy development of learners. The language used in Grade 1 to 3 is crucial as it forms the foundation for the academic development of learners in their early and later grades and higher education.

The study is informed by the Multi-bilingualism approach (Owen-Smith 2010) that stresses the use of multiple languages for effective teaching and learning where learners have diverse linguistical backgrounds. The Multi-bilingualism (Owen-Smith 2010) model is deemed appropriate for this study considering the heterogenous linguistical backgrounds of learners in South African schools. A qualitative case study approach was employed for this study using semi-structured interviews conducted with 11 teachers from two primary schools in one district in Bloemfontein. The audio recorded data were transcribed, coded and analysed using a thematic analysis technique.

The study offers some insights on the challenges associated with the use of multiple languages in class. In addition to Sesotho, which is the learners' home language in the sampled schools, teachers used other African languages including SeTswana for all learners to understand what was being taught. Although teachers initiated these strategies, they struggled when conducting lessons due to the limited training they had on the use of home language, particularly the multiple languages they resorted to. As learners were expected to learn using English as the LoTL in Grade 4, they failed to adjust to learning in English resulting in teachers code switching from English into Sesotho and other African languages in an English class. The constant translations from English to Sesotho and other African languages affected teaching which resulted in teachers failing to complete the syllabus. Poor socio-economic backgrounds, inadequate resources for teaching, large class sizes, and insufficient support from parents emerged as barriers to the effective implementation of the Language in

Education Policy. These findings have some policy and practical implications for the South African Department of Basic Education and the schools on finding ways of consolidating the use of multiple languages as a way of improving learners' performance. The study recommends the recognition and formalisation of the use of other African languages in class besides the use of Sesotho along side English in the Foundation Phase. Additionally, further training of teachers on the use of multiple languages and increasing support of teachers could be considered for improving teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** Home language; transition; academic literacy development; academic performance

# **CHAPTER 1 :**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

South Africa adopted the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) in order to improve the performance outcomes of learners and preserve the indigenous African languages (Republic of South Africa 1997). Through the LiEP learners are expected to learn through their home language while English is offered as a subject and introduced gradually as a Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) from Grade 4 onwards (Desai 2012). Despite the implementation of the LiEP, most learners from disadvantaged communities continue to perform poorly due to lacking a solid academic literacy foundation. Among the reasons for the poor academic literacy are the challenges associated with the use of the home language as the LoLT given the different linguistic profiles of the learners in most South African classrooms (Foley 2010). This study investigates the teachers' perspectives on the use of home language as a LoLT for academic literacy development in two quintile 1 schools in Mangaung Bloemfontein. 'Home language' and 'mother tongue' will be used interchangeably in the study to mean the language that learners are most familiar with<sup>1</sup>.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africa gained its political freedom and became a democratic state in 1994. Prior to gaining political freedom the South African apartheid education policies which were governed by the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953, promoted learners' segregation between various ethno-linguistic groups where Afrikaans was the dominant language in black education (Basson 2019). The political freedom came with the responsibility of addressing the inequalities that came as a result of the Bantu Education Act of 1993.

---

<sup>1</sup> Authors such as (Foley 2010, Banda 2010) use the word 'mother tongue education' in their studies to refer to the use home language. Churr (2013) explains that mother tongue is a language that a learner used first, identifies themselves with and the one best known to them.

During the apartheid era, indigenous languages and native speakers in South Africa were oppressed and expected to function as monolingual societies (Banda 2010). African languages were therefore little recognised, which has contributed to English and Afrikaans being the two languages that are prominent than any African language in South Africa to date (Lafon 2009). Subsequently, English and Afrikaans continue to enjoy a rich exposure to academic literature (Taylor & Coetzee 2013). Cook (2013) reaffirms that most African languages still lack enough literature for effective classroom learning using the mother tongue. This necessitates the institution of more effective policies that redress the marginalisation of the indigenous languages both in the wider society and schools.

The South African Government set up the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) in accordance with Act No 59 of 1995 in order to protect language rights and promote multilingualism and equal respect for all the official South African languages (Desai 2012). Shortly after the PanSALB, the Department of Education (DoBE 2010) introduced and adopted the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) to address the educational effects of the apartheid discriminatory education policies. The LiEP came as a replacement of the 1953 Bantu Education Act. Amongst other things, the LiEP was aimed to ensure that black learners receive formal education through their mother tongue (DoBE 2010).

The LiEP also promotes multi-lingualism, including teaching foundation phase learners in their home language whilst ensuring that they are taught English as an additional language. Equall access and use of all other official languages in South African, including sign language (DoBE 2010), are also encouraged through the LiEP. The LiEP emphasises that learners have a constitutional right to receive education in their mother tongue from Grade 1 to 3 (Cekiso, Meyiwa & Mashige 2019). At implementation level, the school governing bodies decide which home language teachers use as the LoLT depending on the geographical location of the school and the ethnic languages used in that area (Sibanda 2019). When the policy is translated for schools in Bloemfontein, it means that most black learners from low income

backgrounds can be taught for example in their indigenous language, Sesotho<sup>2</sup>, in their their Grade 1 to 3 before switching to English in Grade 4.

After the introduction of the LiEP, various initiatives were made towards improving the quality of education in South African schools. These initiatives included introducing first system of teaching called the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), known as “Curriculum 2005” (Mokhaba 2005). The OBE was centralised around the learner and the expected outcome from the learner. The Ministry of Education later introduced the Revised National Curriculum Standards (RNCS) so as to address challenges that were related to the implementation of the Curriculum 2005 which include for example, its dependence on the teacher for motivating and leading the educational transformation in schools (Gumede and Biyase 2016; Klapwijk & van der Walt 2011).

The RNCS was later amended into the Curriculum Assessments Policy Statements (CAPS). The then Minister of Education appointed the Ministerial Task Team to review the RNSC in 2009 and CAPS was introduced in 2012, and piloted in 2014 (Moodley 2013). The CAPS was introduced to address challenges related to the implementation of the NCS and to foster learners’ academic literacy in schools (Gumede and Biyase 2016). Through the CAPS, language of instruction is emphasised as learners are believed to perform better if they are introduced to learning in their home language for the first three years of primary school (Taylor and Coetzee 2013).

The the Curriculum Assessments Policy Statements is used together with the implementation of the LiEP. Van Staden (2010) acknowledge the role of the LiEP in preserving the use of home language(s) whilst ensuring that additional languages are fairly accessible to learners. Language forms an integral part for learners’ acquisition of academic literacy skills, especially for the Foundation Phase (Cummins 1998; Wium and Louw 2011; Fouche 2016; Cekiso et al. 2019). Learners who are not taught in their mother tongue are likely to lose their confidence and perform poorly (Monyai 2010; Madiba 2013; Krause 2018). This means that for effective learning to occur, teachers should use a language understood by learners in class. According to Nomlomo and Desai (2014) learners use language to synthesise, grow their

---

<sup>2</sup> South African schools are classified according to an official school poverty category known as a “quintile” with schools in quintile 1 to 3 schools being located within a poverty- stricken areas. On the other hand, a quintiles 4 and 5 school would indicate wealth and that parents of learners from these school can afford the high fees that are paid.

understanding and make sense of what they learn in class. It can therefore be argued that the language of learning at the first three years of schooling is a crucial element for learners' academic literacy development. Research has shown that allowing a child to access literacy in their native language helps them to build a solid foundation on knowledge, concepts and skills that they are able to transfer to a second language (Benson 2004; Colliers and Thomas 2004; Cekiso et al. 2019). These observations highlight the centrality of home language for learners' academic development. However, most learners in disadvantaged communities are not taught using their home languages but multiple African languages and English. The use of multiple languages is as a result of teachers attempting to conduct the lessons in languages understood by the learners from different linguistic backgrounds (Van Staden 2010; Sibanda 2019).

South African learners perform poorly compared to other countries in the International Reading Literacy Standards (PIRLS 2016). The PIRLS (2016) report reveals that from the 50 countries that participated in the study, South African Grade 4 learners were ranked the last. The report further shows that at least 8 out of every 10 Grade 4 learners in South Africa cannot read and understand for meaning (PIRLS 2016). It is important that learners' academic literacy skills are transferable across languages as they start their education in the home language (Boateng 2019). The PIRLS (2016) statistics flag some questions on the use of multiple languages together with the mother tongue as learners continue to perform poorly.

From a policy perspective, it is important to note that improved education and training are the goals of the South African National Development Plan (NDP). The plan suggests that South African education system needs urgent action; especially on the language skills of learners that have led to poor quality of basic education (NDP:2012).

Curriculum developers should take the linguistic diversity of a country into account so that learners are provided with academic literacy skills that are transferrable across languages. This will allow them an opportunity to demonstrate their academic abilities in any given language they are assessed in (Madiba 2013, Boateng 2019).

### **1.3 SOUTHERN AFRICA'S LITERATURE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY FOR THE FOUNDATION PHASE**

Lesotho recognises the use of both English and Sesotho as the country's official languages and learners use Sesotho as the LoTL, which is their mother tongue (Constitution of Lesotho 1993). Namibia also promotes the use of home language in Grade 1 to Grade 3, with the provision for allowing parents or schools wishing to use English to get permission from the Minister of Basic Education (Namibia 2003). Zimbabwean schools use three languages namely: Shona, Ndebele and English for learning and teaching in the classroom from Grade 1 to Grade 3 (Marungudzi 2009). Learners who speak Shona at home are taught in both Shona and English and learners who speak Ndebele are taught in English and Ndebele. Similarly with South Africa, learners in Zimbabwe transit to English as the main medium of instruction in Grade 4 (Marungudzi 2009) although learners in Zimbabwe are reported to perform better than those from South Africa (Prew 2012). What is clear from the above statements is that if the language spoken at home is the same language used in the classroom for learning, learners tend to perform well. While learners in both Lesotho and Zimbabwe use their mother tongue as LoLT, this is not the case in South Africa where the variegated linguistic backgrounds makes it difficult for the home language to be used as LoLT (Sibanda 2019). However, South Africa has at least 20 different spoken languages, and only 11 of those languages are recognised as official languages (Banda 2010). It seems therefore that the discrepancies that exist between language spoken at home and language used as a LoLT is affecting the implementation of home language education in South African schools.

### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The LiEP aims to promote and preserve African languages and encourages teaching learners in their home language from Grade 1 to Grade 3 whilst ensuring that they are taught English as a subject and second language (Department of Education 2013). To support the aim of the LiEP, Barron (2012) argues that teaching learners in their home language from Grade 1 to 3 enhances their academic performance and quick acquisition of a second language. However, even though the LiEP is well envisioned towards learners' academic success as learners start schooling, the central problem

often starts in Grade 4. Children have been reported to struggle with understanding English as the language of instruction in Grade 4 (Taylor and Coetzee 2013). The PIRLS (2016) report also showed that Grade 4 learners fail to show any basic reading, listening, thinking and writing skills when they are tested in any language, including their home language. The poor performance of the learners has been attributed partly to learners being taught in other languages which are not their mother tongue in their foundation stages.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the central role teachers' play in the academic success of learners, teacher involvement in developing, interpreting and implementing changes in education policies is limited in South Africa (Cekiso et al 2019; Snow 2000). While, teachers voices are seldom heard in the plannery stages, the decisions made affect them when implementing the home language policy. This study attempts to understand teachers' experiences concerning how they blend other languages to the home language in class.

## **1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The primary aim of the study was to ascertain teachers' perspectives on the use of home language for academic literacy development of learners in two identified quintile 1 South African schools, situated in Mangaung District of Bloemfontein.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In order to achieve the aim of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions on the use of home language in the Foundation Phase in schools?
2. How can the understanding of the implementation home language education be used to develop strategies that can promote fair acquisition of academic literacy skills in South African schools?

## **1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

Research has shown that South Africa invests more on education; however, the outcomes do not match the investment (Modisaotsile 2012). Masenamela (2017) reports that at least 80% of South African Grade 4 learners perform lowly in international reading literacy. The low performance of learners suggests that regardless of home language policy having been adopted, there could be challenges in implementing it. Specifically, teachers are using English and other African languages which are not the learners' home languages. It is without a doubt that much has been reported on the challenges that Grade 4 learners experience when transitioning from home language to English as a medium of instruction using learners' experiences (Desai 2012, Taylor & Coetzee 2013). It is therefore necessary to understand the perspectives of those who implement the home language policy as most of the literature (e.g. Gacheche 2010, Banda 2010 & Nyika 2014) focus on student experiences.

## **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study has the potential to generate knowledge that can be used to inform policy and practitioners on the implementation of the LiEP in South African schools. This could improve the performance of learners in their foundational stages, later grades and in their higher education. Fostering the academic literacy of learners has some benefits that are beyond educational as individuals are able to secure employment, participate in political debates and master technology in the current global environment (Deneulin 2009).

## **1.9 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The study adopted a qualitative case study approach using two Mangaung schools in the Bloemfontein as case. The said schools are implementing the LiEP and they are also quintile 1 schools. They are located in a less privileged area and most learners come from households where parents are unemployed. The researcher sought to understand the lived perspectives of teachers on home language instruction. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather information from foundational phase (Grade

1-3) and Grade 4 teachers. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions and further probe where clarity was needed as suggested by Nell (2011). Data collected was analysed through the thematic technique.

The qualitative research methodology was deemed appropriate for this study as it enabled a deeper and rich understanding on the use of mother tongue in schools. Teachers were conveniently selected to take part in the study based on their availability and willingness to participate. Mohau School has grades 1 to 4 classes and Thuto School has grade 1 to 4 classes; as a result; the researcher focused on teachers in grade 1 to grade 4 due to their daily experience with learners taught through the LiEP since the study was on teachers' perspectives on home language and its role on academic literacy.

## **1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

Chapter two will review literature on learning and academic literacy and the state and performance of South African Grade 4 learners. It will also explore a theoretical framework used for the study. Chapter three will focus on the research design and reasons for employing it in the study. The research philosophy and approach, sampling, data collection, population and ethical considerations will be presented in chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents findings from the study. Chapter five will summarise the study; outline the recommendations, limitations, potential contribution of the study; and provide suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter introduced the study, the problem statement as well as the study's research questions. This chapter discusses literature on academic literacy and development, language and academic literacy, challenges associated with language at the foundation phase level and the state of academic literacy skills of South African Grade 4 learners. A synopsis of languages used in the Foundation Phase in some of the Southern African countries will be presented with the aim of understanding these countries' approaches to the language issues. Finally, the chapter will discuss the theoretical framework informing the current study with a focus on the use of multiple languages in class.

### **2.2 ACADEMIC LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT**

While there are many definitions of 'academic literacy'<sup>3</sup>, this study adopts a definition by Madiba (2013) that stresses on ones' ability to read, write, listen and think creatively. In the context of sustainable development, academic literacy is fundamental for employment opportunities, protection of the environment and poverty reduction (Oghenekohwo and Frank-Oputu 2017). Academic literacy is therefore a powerful tool and it has enduring benefits that goes beyond school years. Information and knowledge gained by being literate has the potential to influence ones' choices. Furthermore literacy can give value to lives and may enhances creative thinking. It is also much easier to work towards personal development when one is literate. Being academic literate could contribute to development, which encompasses several aspects including economic, political and social (Barder 2012; Deneulin 2009).

The South African Constitution (1996) recognises the learners' right to receive basic education in an official language of their choice.

---

<sup>3</sup> Academic literacy also refers to the ability to read and write in at least one language a learner can speak or write.

The acquisition of academic literacy skills is important for learners to progress through their primary school education. Being able to proficiently write, read, listen and understand concepts thoroughly contributes to success of learners' passing their subjects. Gumede and Biyase (2016) have however raised concerns about the quality of education in South African schools considering the low performance of learners partly as a result of language challenges. Much emphasis has been on how teachers could be better prepared for effective teaching and learning in schools. It should be stressed that learners' literacy development is not entirely dependent on the learners alone. Focus should be put on both teachers and learners in the Foundation Phase (Wium 2011). Elements such as language of learning and teachers' language skills also have a significant role to play. Benson (2004) is of the idea that more investment should be made on teacher training on reading and understanding while promoting the culture of reading amongst primary school learners.

### **2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LoLT) IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CLASSROOMS**

There appears to be a link between proficiency in the LoLT and academic performance. According to Theron and Nel (2005) a limited LoLT proficiency contributes towards low learner achievements in class. The importance of language in education is highlighted in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). The RNCS states that learners of a multinational country such as South Africa are expected to reach high proficiency levels in at least two additional languages (DoE 2002). In the debate for effective language of instruction in the classroom, Taylor and Coetzee (2013) found that exposing learners to learning in English medium of instruction as the LoLT from Grade 1 to 3 often impacts negatively on English performance in higher Grades (4, 5 and 6). On the other hand, Churr (2013) is of the view that mother tongue has the cognitive benefits for best language expression and reception. The above literature point to that the use of the mother tongue as LoLT increases the opportunities for the academic success of learners.

Sakati (2016) argues that schools need to realise the benefits that teaching in the home language gives learners the opportunity to identify themselves in a multicultural society. Additionally, a study by Gacheche (2010) emphasises the importance of

language in the classroom and argues that people learn better when using a language they understand. What this implies is that the language used during teaching may affect learners' opportunities to succeed. It is therefore essential to build literacy skills in a language that both the students and the teachers are familiar with. Without a clear understanding of a language of instruction in class, learners tend to struggle during learning and tend to perform poorly in the later grades (Mackay 2014).

Heugh (2013) indicates that in order for a switch to English to be successful, learners are expected to have sufficient academic literacy in both languages (bilingual education). Heugh (2013) explains that 3 years exposure to both languages is not enough to facilitate learners' understanding of a second additional language as a longer period is required (at least 6 – 8 years) for one to successfully switch to English. Similar findings were observed by Owen-Smith (2010) that effective learning of basic academic literacy concepts in the home language requires at least 6 years of learning to prepare learners for the English transition. Drawing from this literature learners need more years of learning and teaching in both their home language and additional language before switching to using English as the main LoLT for LiEP to achieve its aims outlined in Chapter 1.

Mashiya (2010) emphasises on the importance of creating an environment that allows learners to use the language they understand so that they are in the best position of explaining their acquired knowledge and experiences at home. Additionally, Governder (2015) says that the development of learners' writing skills depends largely on their understanding of what is being taught in the classroom. Language used for teaching should therefore be able to facilitate the understanding and learning as opposed to being a barrier for learning. Mackay (2014) pointed out that learners with limited proficiency in their LoLT may experience difficulties in their listening, thinking, speaking, reading and reasoning abilities in an additional language.

Using the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) Cummins (2001), argues that teaching in home language should afford learners the skill and ability of being able to transfer literacy skills learned when they transit into a different language, which is

English in the present study. Cummins (2001) believes that home language provides a strong basis for any learner to develop skills in the second language<sup>4</sup>.

Understanding the language of instruction allows the child to interact in the classroom, to anticipate upcoming activities and to be inquisitive and be confident in class to ask questions when they do not understand (Madileng 2007; Gacheche 2010). Sanni (2013) emphasise the use of home language at foundational stages in schools. The study reveals that home language facilitates a firm foundation on the development of learners' intellectual skills such as thinking and problem solving, whilst fostering participation, fluency, and confidence in the classroom (Sanni 2013). Owen-Smith (2010) highlights the importance of teaching learners in a language they are already familiar with. When learners are met with an unfamiliar language, they are more likely to underperform in the classroom which in turn might affect their confidence levels.

The above studies suggest that in many instances learners often fail to express themselves in a language that is being used for assessments, which is often a language they are less fluent in. These researches also mean that when learners are taught in other languages which are not necessarily their home language, their performance is affected. It is therefore important for schools to recognise and acknowledge that the development of literacy relies on at least more than the language of instruction in class; meaning that using home language, together with other African languages has great linguistic, cognitive and language development benefits for learners.

Although the LiEP encourages a transition from home language to using English as a medium of instruction in Grade 4 (Taylor and Coetzee 2013), the transition serves as a barrier towards learners' literacy development in Grade 4 (Hoadley 2012). This however should not be the case as learners are supposed to be in a position where they are able to read in Grade 4. Equally important, learners should be able to show progression by understanding and explaining scenarios, developing their own vocabulary and do basic calculations with minimal assistance. Most learners in South African schools nevertheless, struggle to achieve these skills. This implies that there could be gaps in the implementation of the LiEP in South African schools.

---

<sup>4</sup> Which is the English language for the purpose of this study

On the other hand, there are studies that view the use of home language as inappropriate LoLT in the Foundation Phase. Using home language in early grades may be problematic for learners for example, Jansen (2013) holds the notion that the use of English from an early grade is the ultimate solution to improve the academic literacy of learners in South Africa. Furthermore, Spaul (2017) demonstrates that using English from Grade 1 has greater benefits for learners. These authors mention that the acquisition of English from early Grades has the potential to assist learners later in their lives with regards to accessing employment, being able to communicate eloquently in social environments and performing well in their academics at higher grades. This is also considering that English is a widely used international language.

The above sentiments were also shared by the Minister for Basic Education during the time of the study; Angelina Motshekga (2017), who reported a significant improvement on learners' performance who were taught in English as the language of instruction from Grade 1. The opinion by the Minister suggests that the use of English from an early stage has potential to impact positively on learners. Furthermore, some scholars believe that learners who were taught in English as a medium of instruction from Grade 1 perform better at tertiary level (Johnston, Juan-Garau and Salazar-Noguera 2018). This is because their comprehension and writing of the English language; which is a language used at tertiary level is significantly better than those who started with home language.

Despite what the LiEP advises on the use of home language for the first three years of schooling, Jansen's (2013) study shows that parents of children who speak English as an additional language have different preferences. They want their children to be introduced to English earlier as they view it as the language of success. Parents prefer their children to be taught in English as the LoLT because they associate English language with excellence (Foley 2010). However, Heugh (2013) points out that the perception that African language speaking parents elect English only for their children is a myth that comes as a result of misdiagnosing the problem and using public perceptions to make scientific claims. The methodological flaws in conducting the research were therefore blamed for the misconception about English being the

preferred language by parents for their children. What this suggests is that home language as the LoLT is fundamental in the Foundation Phase.

## **2.4 CHALLENGES RELATED WITH THE USE OF HOME LANGUAGE IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

Although teaching learners in their home language might be beneficial to learners (Benson 2004), studies by Mashiya (2010) and Banda (2010) indicate that there are several challenges on the implementation of the LiEP in South Africa. One of the constraints relates to lack of learning material for both teaching and learning in home language for the Foundation Phase level in most schools (Banda 2010). As a result, the lack of material is believed to contribute towards the difficulties for schools to teach using using mother tongue. Due to insufficient resources for learners, teachers resort to encouraging learners to share books. More over, there is still limited literature that has been developed in the African languages which can allow for effective academic discourse (Foley 2010).

There are also constraints on adopting English as the LoTL in the disadvantaged South African schools. It is problematic to expect primary school teachers who themselves have insufficient English proficiency to teach effectively through English (Heugh 2013). This underscores the assertion by Snow and Fillmore (2000) that teachers have a central role in the academic development of learners through being proficient themselves on the LoLT so as to optimise learning and academic literacy.

The difficulties in implementing the LiEP are exacerbated by the decline in teacher education enrolment specialising in African languages in South African Universities. The decrease in the training of these teachers has hampered the development of skills needed for successful teaching using the mother tongue for the Foundation Phase (FP) in disadvantaged communities (Harris, Hartel & Steyn 2011; Adendorff, Mathebula and Green 2015)). Coupled with the above, Broekhuizen (2016) reported that the Foundation Phase of South African schools already has fewer teachers. The inability of schools to recruit and retain current Foundation Phase teachers who are already in the system is another setback mainly in the rural areas (Masinire 2015). Teachers are not motivated to stay in the teaching profession, with a lot of them resigning and looking for opportunities in other sectors (Harris, Hartel & Steyn 2011).

There is therefore a need to consider these impediments when thinking of ways of improving the implementation of the home language in South African schools.

Another issue on the use home language as a LoLT is the lack of support by black parents. As mentioned earlier, most South African parents favour taking their children to schools where English is the predominant LoLT (Churr 2013). Most black parents tend to associate academic excellence with English language and poor performance with mother tongue or home language instruction (Banda 2010). This literature illustrate the role played by the community perceptions in the success of the LiEP in schools.

More importantly, most Grade 1 to 3 South African learners are not necessarily being taught in their mother tongue, which has contributed to their poor performance (Taylor 2007; Van Staden 2016). This is especially true for most disadvantaged black learners. The variegated linguistic situation found in most South African classrooms is one of the limitations affecting the implementation of the mother tongue education (Sibanda 2019). The adoption of the multiple languages seems however not to improve the academic outcomes of the learners as the black South African learners continue to be disadvantaged even after the introduction of the LiEP. Additionally, as opposed to benefitting African language speaking learners, the use of the mother tongue education tends to be advantageous to first language English and Afrikaans learners where either Afrikaans or English are their native dialects (Sibanda 2019). The first English and Afrikaans speakers are mostly white and a few black learners from the middleclass while the the majority of the black learners come from low income households use indigenous languages in schools.

Besides learners in poor township schools being taught in other languages which are not their mother tongue, lack of reading material in African languages negatively affects their learning. Teacher proficiency in African languages is also a critical element for the effective teaching as stipulated in the LiEP. Benson (2004) identifies the training of teachers on multilingual strategies as crucial for effective literacy in the African languages. Snow and Fillmore (2000) emphasise the importance of teachers in assisting learners to construct meaning from the texts they read in class. Learners also struggle with making meaning from texts so that they are able to construct

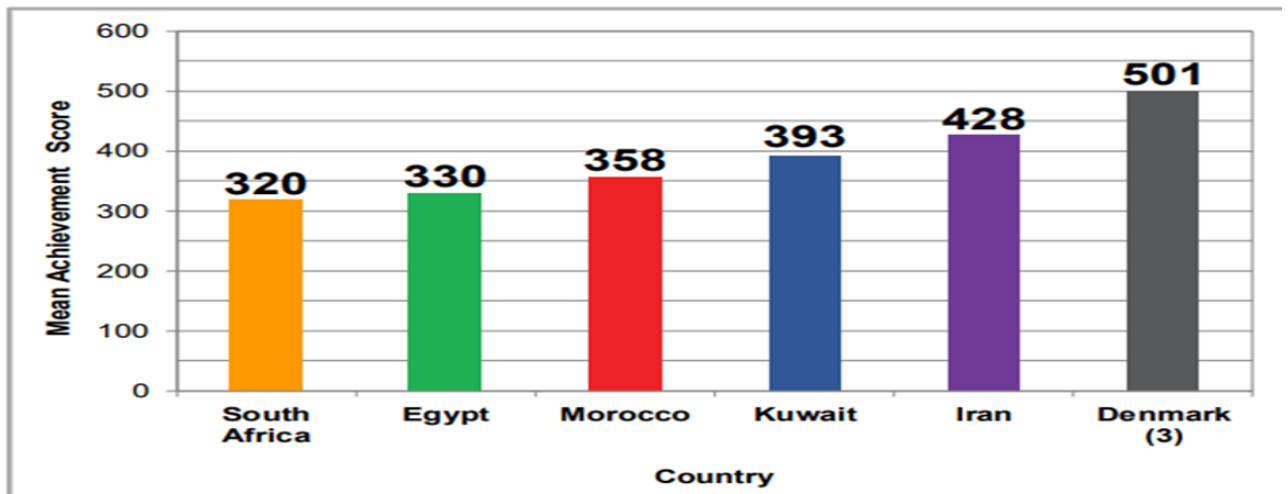
answers (Klapwijk & Van de Walt 2011). This further shows the challenges associated with the implementation of the LiEP.

It can be drawn from the above literature that the implementation of LiEP is characterised by several challenges including the lack of human resource skills and teaching materials for African languages. Teachers also resort to teaching using multiple languages which are not necessarily the learners' mother tongue. Little is however, known on how the teachers manage their sessions using these multiple African languages. Though it remains unknown whether teachers will receive training on teaching in multiple African languages; the reality in the classrooms is the existing African linguistic diversity amongst learners, which in turn forces teachers to adapt and resort to using the multilingualism approach in order to ensure fair exposure to literacy development to a largely African linguistic diverse class.

## **2.5 OVERVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICAN GRADE 4 LEARNERS' ACADEMIC LITERACY**

Most learners struggle when tested in English as the LoTL. As previously mentioned in chapter 1 of the study, South African Grade 4 learners participated in PIRLS and unfortunately out of the 50 countries that participated in the PIRLS study (2016), the country stood at the last position (Howie & Combrinck 2017). Figure 2.1 shows the performance of the different countries that participated in the PIRLS study (2016).

***Figure 2.1: South African Grade 4 achievement compared to the PIRLS Literacy countries***



(Source: <http://www.saep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/pirls-literacy-2016-hl-report-3.zp136320.pdf>)

The goals of chapter nine of the South African National Development Plan (NDP) aim to improve education in the country. The NDP (2012:2) suggests that South African education system needs urgent action; and further identifies the language skills of learners as one of the contributing factors to the poor quality of basic education. This implies that there is a high chance of academic literacy improving if the language used during learning is one that they fully comprehend, can explain their ideas and concepts and can transfer the same understanding across other languages.

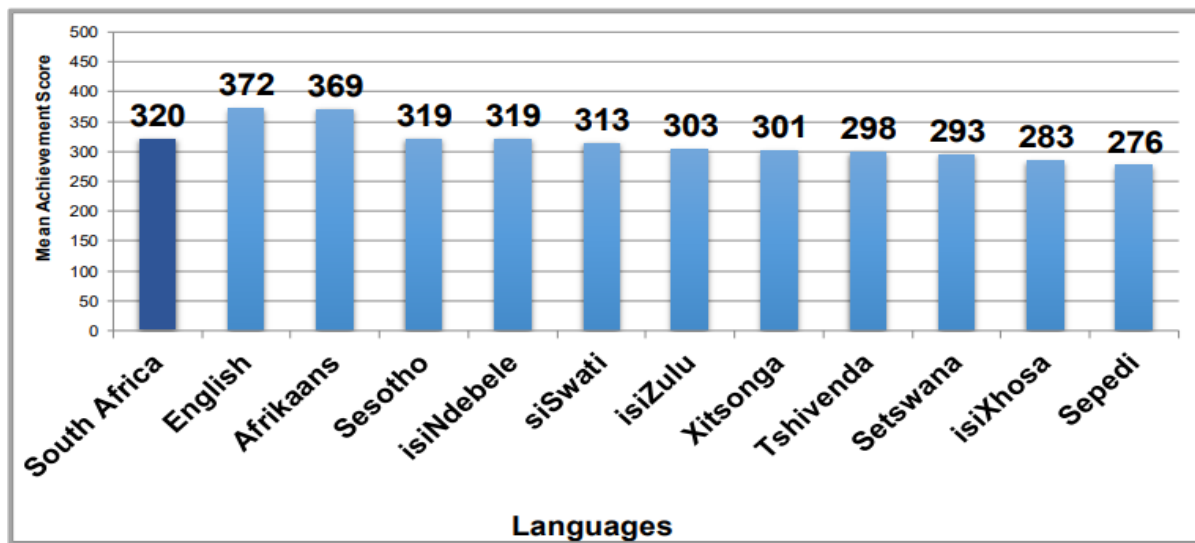
The Annual National Assessment report (2014) suggests that learners in independent schools, which are quintiles 5 schools, generally achieve higher scores than learners in quintiles 1 public schools. Amongst other things, learners in quintile 5 schools start their schooling with English as a medium of instruction. Quintile schools are believed to have better learning resources and most parents in these schools can afford to pay for extra mural learning activities. Furthermore; parents in quintile 5 schools are believed to have better English language skills which allows them to contribute positively to their children academic literacy development. Additionally, the good quality teaching in these schools combined with adequate teaching resources and parental support are pivotal for the success of learners from quintile 5 schools where English is the LoLT (Gore 2018).

More importantly, most of the learners in these schools use English as their home language. The above statement suggests that in the context of supportive structures, adopting English could increase the learners' academic outcomes.

Studies conducted to assess language performance show that learners who use English language perform higher when compared those who use other languages.

Figure 2.2 summarises Grade 4 achievements by language of test, indicating that learners performed better when tested in English as compared to other languages (Howie 2013).

Figure 2.2: Grade 4 PIRLS Literacy achievement by language of test



(Source: <http://www.saep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/pirls-literacy-2016-hl-report-3.zp136320.pdf>)

However, the use of English as the LoLT could be problematic due to inadequate human resource skills and supporting structures from home (Van Staden et al. 2016). The complexity of the language issue in South African schools therefore requires alternative approaches that are more effective to improve academic literacy and learners' performance.

## 2.6 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE FOR ACADEMIC LITERACY

The implementation of the LiEP has proven to be largely ineffective as learners in township schools are learning using languages which are not their mother tongue.

Coupled with that, most black learners are still subjected to learning in English or Afrikaans (Banda 2010). The ineffective implementation suggests that an alternative effective model is thus required. The next sub-sections summarise and critique the subtractive and additive approaches to language in education before focusing on the Multi-bilingualism approach.

### **2.6.1 The Subtractive approach**

The subtractive approach uses the immersion model in which the school utilises two languages for instruction (Luan and Guo 2011). Immersion model was firstly adopted in Canada in 1960 and its focus was mainly to rapidly grow learners' English fluency (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis 2009). The aim of this model is to induce learners to learn in English as a first additional language whilst offering their home language as a second additional language subject (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis 2009). Luan and Guo (2011) have argued that the subtractive style of teaching is effective in terms of delivering swift improvements and development on learners' enthusiasm, skills, and confidence in learning English. Additionally, the subtractive immersion approach works better and is more effective in schools with well trained bilingual teachers who are well equipped in their practice of second language acquisition (Sibanda 2019).

The subtractive approach might not be appropriate in South Africa because of the disadvantaged multilingual backgrounds learners come from. Lack of support from home where learners' parents have limited mastery of English could constrain the implementation of the model (Sibanda 2019). More over, the majority of the schools in South Africa rely on non-English mother tongue speaking primary teachers who themselves lack the English proficiency to teach English effectively (Heugh 2013; Sibanda 2019).

### **2.6.2 The Additive Bilingual Approach**

The bilingual model of education aims to expose learners to two languages of education when they start schooling (Madrinan 2014). The bilingual model underpins the South African LiEP by allowing learners to develop two languages, their first language as the LoLT and English as their second additional language (Welch 2012). Sibanda (2019) notes that in order for additive bilingualism to be effective, learners would need at least 6 years exposure to their mother tongue education, which is not necessarily the case in most South African schools. Similar to this model is the transition model of education in South Africa, which is regarded as a model of learning in home language from Grade 1 to 3 and English in Grade 4. However, this model is problematic as learners find it difficult to shift from a familiar language of learning while trying to adapt to the new way of learning. As highlighted before, learners are not able

to adjust to this model and they become confused and anxious from fear of embarrassment due to not participating in class and performing poorly (Wrench, Garret and King 2013).

### **2.6.3 The Multi- bilingualism Approach**

Besides the above-mentioned models there are other models which use more than one language for example; the Multilingualism approach. This model promotes the use of or attainment of more than two languages alongside each other (Jesser 2008). This study adopted a Multi-bilingualism approach as advanced by Owen-Smith (2010). The Multi-bilingualism approach was employed in this study for it promoting the development of at least two languages. At the same time, the Multi-bilingualism approach aims to benefit all South Africa children and not just the previously disadvantaged (Owen-Smith 2010).

The Multi-bilingual approach outlines that:

- Home languages (HLs) can be used alongside each other to support the common language, even where the teacher is monolingual.
- The bilingualism centres around two languages as subjects with only one of these being used as a communication medium or the LoLT.
- A multi-bilingual approach treats the home language (HL) as a support LoLT across the curriculum with many HLs being able to play this role. It breaks away from the assumption that there can be only one LoLT in a classroom (Owen-Smith 2020).

As a result, the above approach promotes a concurrent usage of two or more languages in a classroom for learning and teaching without having to replace one language with the other (Mabiletja 2015). This is appropriate for addressing language issues and academic literacy in South African schools where one language is regarded as first language and others as second or third language. In other words, this model puts more emphasis on ensuring that learners can write, speak and read perfectly in those languages that are used as the LoLT (Mabiletja 2015). Similar observations were made by Van Staden, Bosker and Bergauer (2016) who suggest that learners

could be taught in their mother tongue as a LoLT as well as other alternative indigenous language that have similar characteristics to their home language.

The Multi-bilingual approach was used in this study to explore the language issues and their subsequent contribution to academic literacy development of learners within the two schools that participated in the study. Multi-bilingualism enables learners to use their home language orally in class when interacting with their peers who use the same language alongside common language (English in this case). This allows the same language partner learners to share ideas and think about how they tackle problems. In other words, learners should have a “language buddy” to support them on the oral use of the Sesotho as part of everyday life (Owen-Smith 2012).

This study assessed whether teachers are employing strategies that are not teacher-centred in trilingual contexts. Learners are allowed to use their third language with their peers “language buddy” to learn and solve problems alongside the use of Sesotho, which is the LoLT. It also evaluated the extent the teachers are able to employ the innovative strategies when teaching in trilingual contexts even when they themselves are not familiar with the home languages learners bring in class. Furthermore, the study explored whether learners are able to transfer acquired knowledge of concepts they have learnt in the third language when interacting with their peers to English and Sesotho.

Central to the Multi-bilingualism approach is the notion that language is key in education and that without language, everything is nothing in education (Churr 2013). Learners in the schools that were studied are taught through the LiEP, however they are part of a multiple linguistic community, this is where the Multi-bilingual approach will assist when used in African multilingual classes.

The Multi-bilingual approach gives recognition to the use of indigenous languages in class in order to facilitate better understanding, whilst still giving learners the opportunity to develop confidence and fluency to communicate in both their home language and any additional LoLT. The use of Multi-bilingual approach can also be effective in cases where learners’ home languages are found to be translingual. Teachers implementing the Multi-bilingual approach can enjoy the use of more than one home language for teaching and learning in class.

Contrary to Multi-bilingualism, is the additive bilingualism which also acknowledges the use of home language for the first 3 years of schooling, however this approach tends to overlook the transition challenge where learners fail to transfer acquired knowledge in their home language to English (Sibanda 2019) and it also focuses on one home language as the LoLT in class. This could however prove to be problematic where the nature of South African classes is multilingual. Therefore the two approaches should complement each other for a mutually enriching outcome for the learners.

The subtractive bilingualism in contrast to additive bilingualism and Multi-bilingual approach strictly aims to induce learners to learn in English as a first additional language in their initial introduction of schooling whilst offering their home language as a second additional language. The disadvantage of the subtractive bilingualism comes as a result of contextual factors around the model. Sibanda (2019) reports a lack in the resources for successfully teaching through this model, including English mother tongue speakers who are willing to pursue teaching as a career.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

The chapter synthesised literature on the use of mother tongue in learners' acquisition of academic skills. It also discussed the importance of language in the South African classrooms. The literature in this chapter revealed that most South African learners are not necessarily taught in their mother tongue, an element that could be contributing towards the ineffective implementation of the LiEP. Challenges associated with the implementation of LiEP were also discussed. The chapter ended with a presentation of theoretical approaches to understanding language and academic development of learners. The next chapter focuses on the methods followed in conducting this study.

## **CHAPTER 3 :**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research methodology and justifies the use of the procedures taken. The research methodology, sampling, participants, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations are presented in this chapter. The primary aim of the study is to ascertain teachers' perceptions on the use of home language in the Foundation Phase and academic literacy in two quintile 1 schools situated in Bloemfontein. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions on the use of home language in the Foundation Phase in schools?
2. How can the understanding of the implementation home language education be used to develop strategies that can promote fair acquisition of academic literacy skills in South African schools?

#### **3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: INTERPRETIVISM**

This study is guided by the interpretivist philosophy that is concerned with the incorporation of human interest into a study (Chowdhury 2014). Underlying Interpretivism philosophy the interpretation of events or experiences. (Padilla-Diaz 2015, Rennie 2012). The interpretive philosophy is deemed relevant to the study as the aim was to obtain teachers' views and perceptions on the role of home language on academic literacy for Foundation Phase learners.

I adopted an interpretivism research philosophy for this study as it enabled the understanding of the teachers' perspectives on their subjective interpretations of teaching experiences using home language in schools and how that influenced the acquisition of literacy skills. More so, an inductive research approach was employed for this study as the aim was not to prove a certain hypothesis or theory, but to build knowledge on the implementation of the LiEP in South African schools. Babbie (2010)

states that inductive reasoning moves from the particular to the general, from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents a phenomenon.

The interpretive philosophy was helpful in providing indepth knowledge on home language and learners' academic development. The study followed a cross-sectional time horizon as data were collected at a single point in time that is, over a period of 6 weeks. The researcher did not return to do a follow up study once data was collected to full saturation and results written.

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN**

The study used a qualitative methodology to explore the home language and academic literacy in two schools. A qualitative approach is more interested in understanding why and how things happen hence it relies on the use of words for explanations and explorations (Creswell 2014). This means that a qualitative research approach is an interactive process in which the persons being studied teach the researcher about their lives, actions and viewpoints. Focus in a qualitative study is more on the experience as it is lived, undergone or felt. The great benefit for using qualitative approach for this study lies in its nature of describing and explaining data in words and not in numbers. This provided room for understanding teachers' perspectives on home language as the LoLT and how this affects learners' performance as constructed by the participants and respondents of the study.

The researcher interacted with teachers in their natural setting which was their respective school environments. This implies that through the qualitative approach, the researcher was able to understand teachers' perspectives on home language instruction, and how learners experienced the transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 and how the transition affected their academic performance. The researcher also provided interpretations on how participants (teachers in this case) viewed the challenges learners experience in class as a result of the use of mother tongue as a LoLT. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the findings of the study are not a generalisation but offer a deeper understanding of teachers' regarding the implementation of home language in schools.

### **3.4. CASE STUDY**

Simons (2009) defines a case study as a process of conducting a well organised enquiry into a phenomenon of choice with the aim of generating understanding that will contribute to public knowledge. According to Gaille (2018), a case study may be defined as an investigation or examination of either a person, event, business, group of people or an organisation into a single or an individual case or situation. The investigation usually involves collecting detailed data about what is being studied by a selected data collection method. The study employed a case study approach using two cases of schools in Motheo District in Bloemfontein. The schools were selected on the basis that they are both implementing the LiEP and they are also both quintile 1 schools, which made them convenient for the study. They are located in a less privileged area and most learners come from households where parents are unemployed and slightly illiterate. The schools were assigned pseudonyms: Thuto School and Mohau School. Both schools are located in Bloemfontein.

#### **3.4.1 Case 1: Mohau School**

Mohau School has 2 classes per Grade (from Grade 1 to 4) with an average pass rate of 90 percent. The school experiences only a few dropouts in the Foundation Phase. Most of the learners who are enrolled in this school are black from the low- income neighbourhood and use Sesotho as their mother tongue. As the school is in quintile 1, learners do not pay any school fees but receive supplementary feeding from the DoBE. The recommended number of learners in each class is below 30 to allow for teachers to give individual attention to learners, however the class size averages 40 learners per classroom currently (Mohau School 2020).

#### **3.4.2 Case 2: Thuto School**

Thuto School has three classes per Grade from Grade 1 to 4. Like the Mohau school, Thuto School is in quintile 1 and does not charge any school fees to learners. The school also enrolls learners who use Sesotho as their mother tongue from the low-income neighbourhoods. Learners from this school also receive supplementary feeding from the DoBE. The class size per each Grade is 40 although the

recommended number is 30. The average pass rate is at 95% with a dropout rate of 20% at the Foundation Phase level (Thuto School 2020).

### **3.4.3 Advantage for using a case study**

A case study approach was found to be more appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to holistically put the teachers' perspectives within a context (Stake 1995). As a result, the approach enabled the researcher to have a complex comprehension of the use of home language for academic literacy within the schools taking into perspective the history of the schools, location and socio-economic backgrounds of learners.

## **3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

### **3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews**

The researcher used semi-structured interview method for collecting data so as to get a more in-depth story from respondents. *(See Appendix 3 for the interview schedule)*. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2011) define a semi-structured interview as one that involves elaborate answers from those being interviewed and where the researcher expects a broader comment on issues beyond responding with a simple yes or no answer. This method gives respondents an opportunity to expand on the topic as they see fit and the interviewer can intervene to get clarity or further explanations with probing questions. For instance; the researcher was able to pause participants and ask for an elaboration where responses were vague and closed ended. This permitted participants to give practical examples of how they taught using home language and how that influenced the acquisition of basic literacy skills.

Trust is an essential element the researcher may need to establish in the interview process. Therefore, Du Plooy (2009) posits that an advantage of using a semi-structured interview is that they create a platform where respondents can feel free to speak about the topic or research questions. This suppleness can also build relationships and trust between the interviewer and interviewee and result in participants revealing their inner-most feelings and attitudes about the topic at hand.

The researcher built trust and rapport with the participants through sharing her schooling experiences with them before conducting the interviews. It was also important for the researcher not to judge and criticise participants in their responses. The researcher achieved this by being neutral and by allowing participants to freely express their opinions whilst ensuring them that their responses were not going to be attached to their identities. Lastly, the interviews were recorded using English and Sesotho as most of the participants preferred to answer and explain themselves in Sesotho.

### **3.5.2 Population**

It is impossible to practically study the entire population of the study. It becomes feasible then to collect data from parts of the population so as to interpret relationships between the variables that are being measured. According to Kenton (2019) a population in a research study refers to any group of people that are selected to be studied from a wider pool of people. The population in this study are all the teachers in schools that implement home language policy in Bloemfontein.

### **3.5.3 Sampling strategy**

Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and Mickibbon (2015) define sampling as a process whereby the researcher selects data sources from which data will be collected in order to address the objectives or questions of the study. According to Welman and Kruger (2000) various methods of sampling may be employed when conducting a qualitative research. This study followed a non-probability sampling in form of convenience and purposive techniques .

1. **Convenience sampling:** This sampling techniques focuses of the people who are of a criterion according to the view of the researcher. This may involve, their location to the researcher, their availability, and their desire to agree to take part in the study (Alkassim, Etikan & Musa 2015).
2. **Purposive sampling:** refers to deliberately choosing the participants due to the qualities they possess, such as knowledge and experience (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim 2015).

Considering the above-mentioned types, convenience and purposive sampling were selected and used in this study. These two schools were conveniently selected due to their proximity to the researcher. It was also cost effective to investigate the implementation of LiEP in these schools. Teachers were purposively selected to take part in the study based on their availability and willingness to participate. The rationale for choosing the Grade 3 teachers was to establish their perceptions on whether the use of home language facilitated Grade 1 to 3 learners to read, write, think, and understand concepts in class. The Grade 4 teachers were also interviewed to establish their experiences of teaching learners who have been subjected to the home language in the earlier grades.

These teachers comprised of five Grade 1 to 3 teachers (teaching subjects in the home language), and six Grade 4 teachers (teaching all subjects in English). Table 3.1 below summaries the profiles of the participants:

**Table 3.1: Descriptive table of participants**

	Rank	Number	Grade	Subject	Age	Gender	Language ( <i>in which the research will be conducted</i> )
Mohau School	Teachers	5	1-3	All	All	All	English
Thuto school	Teachers	6	4	All	All	All	English

After sampling, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from the selected teachers. Each interview took an average of 45 minutes long. Participants were recruited through the help of one of the administrative teachers who was not part of the teaching staff to ensure voluntary participation. The interviews were conducted until there was no new information emerging (saturation point), then the process was stopped. Pseudonyms such as “*teacher 1*” and “*teacher 2*” were allocated to all respondents in order to respect their anonymity.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data gathered from teachers were analysed through a thematic analysis technique. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a technique that allows the researcher to carefully identify, analyse and report on patterns as they

emerge within the study. Subsequently, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to interpret, present and analyse data in the form of classification and themes (Ibrahim 2012).

The following steps were taken to interpret and analyse the data. The researcher transcribed the audio tapes from the semi-structured interviews. This was followed by manual coding that identified common patterns and categories from the data. The researcher then merged categories of data to form sub-themes. The last step involved merging the sub-themes into themes (*See appendix 1 for the codes, subthemes and themes*). The themes that emerged were as follows:

- 1) Teaching using both languages
- 2) Teachers' training, motivation and support
- 3) Language vocabulary and perceived effective medium of instruction
- 4) Parents' involvement and strategies to monitor and improve the LiEP
- 5) Learners' English second language proficiency, and challenges.

Each one of the themes is presented in Chapter 4.

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2011) it is always the researcher's responsibility to ensure that their study is conducted ethically. The researcher took sought ethical approval from the university and the DoBE (*See appendix 2 for the ethical approval from the university*). The researcher respected the rights of all participants through for example informing them about the purpose the research and the procedures involved before their participation. The full information about the purpose, procedures involved in the study and risks that the study could expose them were all explained (*See appendix 3 for the Information Sheets and Consent forms*). These strategies were done to ensure their informed and voluntary participation. The researcher also sought for permission to conduct interviews from both schools. Once permission was granted, the researcher made sure that interviews were conducted with honesty and dignity through being non-judgemental and respecting the participants.

Babbie (2010) posits that ethics do not only apply when collecting data but throughout the research process including data analysis and reporting. Thus, the researcher did not tamper with the data and responses were not fabricated to reach a desired outcome during data analysis. The analysis reflected a true reflection of what participants mentioned in interviews. Lastly, the participants remained anonymous through delinking the data collected from the participants' real names. This was achieved through the use pseudonyms during transcription and the presentation of the data. Furthermore, pseudonyms were used on the two schools that were used as case studies. All data collected were stored in a security locked phone and the researcher further ensured that information was not shared with anyone. Data were also kept kept it in a password locked computer as a way of protecting it from other people to access.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The chapter outlined the research design of the study. The qualitative research methodology was adopted for the study while convenience and purposive sampling strategies were used to select the schools and participants respectively. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis was used in helping th researcher interpret the data. The next chapter will look into how data was analysed.

## **CHAPTER 4 : RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents, analyses and interprets findings from the data that were collected from school teachers. The semi-structured interviews were used to gather the teachers' perceptions on home language education and academic literacy in two quintile 1 schools in Mangaung District of Bloemfontein. The previous chapter presented the methodology of the study, specifically through outlining and justifying the research paradigm, sampling technique, data collection and data analysis. The argument advanced in this chapter is that learners should be taught in a language that they understand in class for their academic literacy development. This would enable the learners to explain their ideas and concepts and be able to transfer the same understanding across other languages used as LoLT hence improve their performance in school. A total of 13 participants were interviewed in this study. The teachers were selected from the two schools that were implementing the LiEP for their foundation phase learners.

### **4.2 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF HOME LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS**

The results in this section are based on data collected from teachers. Specifically, it presents the school factors on the Language for Teaching and Learning and teacher training as well as home factors including parental involvement and socio-economic background of the learners. Challenges experienced in class concerning the use of mother tongue are also presented.

#### ***4.2.1 THEME 1: Home language as LoTL in Grade 1 to 3***

At least 4 out of 6 Grade 1 to 3 teachers indicated that they were in support of teaching learners in their home language in the Foundation Phase, as learners were being introduced to the schooling environment for their first time. Learning in a familiar

language to the learners was therefore critical for their academic development. These teachers explained that it was easier to understand a second language when one had a firm foundation of knowledge and skills in their own language. One of the teachers indicated that:

*I don't see any problems with using home language for Grade 1 to 3 learners. In my view its simple when children start learning in their home language. I think it allows them to understand themselves as they are being introduced to the new schooling environment. Remember that at this age, these learners are still confused and still identifying with themselves. In my view the sooner they start understanding home language then it will be easier for them to understand other languages (Teacher 1, Grade 1, Thuto School).*

Based on the previous statement, teaching in home language is more effective on developing children's literacy skills when they are starting their schooling. One of the teachers notes that:

*Home language in my view unlocks the learning potential of every child, especially at this fragile stage of being introduced to the school environment. In all honesty I can say that learners seem to understand better, again as you know that learning does not end in the classroom, home language make it possible for teaching to continue even after the classroom (Teacher 2, Grade 3, Thuto School).*

*Children don't struggle to understand as teaching with home language supports learning but when we teach in English some learners find it hard to understand. This is especially true considering that some kids come where there is no TV or where nobody speaks English, so it becomes difficult for them to understand (Teacher 1, Grade 1, Mohau School).*

4 out of 6 teachers believed that learning in the English language could confuse the learners as they were still in their foundational stage. At this stage learners needed to identify themselves and adjust to the new school learning environment. Home language was therefore seen as helpful to learners when adjusting to the school environment.

*Learners are still confused in Grade 1. They are still unsure about what is going on in their lives, so the use of home language assists them in dealing with that confusion. At least that is one thing that still remains familiar to them (Teacher 2, Grade 1 Mohau School).*

Being able to adjust quickly using home language was therefore seen as an aspect necessary for the academic literacy development of learners. Home language instruction was therefore viewed as giving learners an opportunity to contribute towards class discussions and also be able to express their opinions with confidence.

Concomitantly, the combined use of both home language and English languages in their early grades was believed to foster the academic literacy of learners in their foundation phase. Some of the Grade 4 teachers were of the view that the use of both languages promoted the transfer of skills and knowledge when learners started using the new language of instruction.

*I think teaching in English together with home language from as early as Grade 1 is better. What I would say is that it is much better to use home language maybe in just Grade 1 and Grade 2 but Grade 3 (learners) need to be prepared for transition into Grade 4. Meaning that the moment they start Grade 3, they must be introduced to more English work. So I feel like if the teachers in the lower grades could put them into that gear of learning to use English terms, being able to write sentences, being able to notice that okay. When I start a sentence it must be a capital letter, because the problem is that they get to Grade 4 and still struggle with those things. [If they are not taught English early] this would mean that we as Grade 4 teachers now have to go back and teach them those basics again. For example, I find myself teaching how to write the word "town", we use this, we do that, it becomes very difficult, I mean I am expecting them to be knowing such things at Grade 4 (Teacher 4, Grade 4, Thuto School).*

The above teacher appreciated the use of both languages as the LoLT in the foundation phase. The argument made by this teacher was that if learners began to use English second language and their home language early, this would give them a smooth and rapid transition into English in Grade 4. This perception relates to the

bilingual model of education that exposes learners to two languages of education as they start schooling (Madrinan 2014; Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis 2009).

Furthermore, some teachers in Grade 1 to 3 classes expressed that learners participated more in classes where both home language and English were used. Teaching in both languages seemed to enhance learning among the learners:

*Learners participate more, they are active, they act out the characters, they really are enjoying themselves and I can say I see a lot of understanding of the concepts we are teaching them. And another thing I see is that they are very talkative. It's a whole lot easier for them to express ideas at least when it's in their own language (Teacher 3, Grade 2, Thuto School).*

One Grade 3 teacher expressed that both English and Sesotho languages were essential even beyond the classroom as this makes it easier for children to communicate more effectively with other learners whilst engaging in sports and extracurricular activities.

*Remember in recent years you find Sotho school sometimes competing with Model C schools in sports activities, so it becomes so difficult for them to understand the competition instructions. And because we are also parents, it hurt us so badly to see our kids struggling to understand in front of their peers' it's really bad (Teacher 5: Grade 3, Mohau School).*

The above quote underscores the importance of learning in English together with home language in the early grades. The point to highlight here is that unlike the notion that learners were taught in their home language teachers were also using English when conducting lessons.

Another perception that emerged from the data was that teachers were not only using home language and English when teaching but other African languages as well. While home language was viewed as more appropriate for bolstering academic literacy in the Foundation Phase of the learners, some learners struggled to learn in Sesotho:

*There are some kids who still struggle to learn fast even in Sesotho. For example, we use the word "**Ditukiso**" [this means corrections] in class and in street language is to "correcta" [correcta is how they best understand the word **Ditukiso** in class]. Also a learner doesn't say "**o fositse**" [the meaning of you*

*are incorrect] because in the streets they say “o wrong”. This is one of the examples that challenges us when they have to write or understand (Teacher 5, Grade 2, Mohau School).*

Even though Sesotho was regarded as the official home language for the two schools, the previous quote illustrates that some learners were not proficient in the language, which made learning difficult for them. Due to this complication, teachers resorted to the use of multiple indigenous languages to promote the development of academic literacy. Thus, teachers did not always use Sesotho as the LoTL in class as some learners were not that fluent in that language. Most teachers for Grade 1 to 3 classes used other languages such as Setswana together with Sesotho in class. One teacher responded that:

*“I prefer using their mother tongue because for me it gives them an opportunity to master the vocabulary in their own language. Even when I code-switch I often do it amongst the African languages. For example, we use Sesotho home language as the language of instruction, but I have Setswana speaking learners in my class, so when I want to maximise understanding I will explain the same concepts in Setswana to also give them a fair advantage” (Teacher 3, Grade 1, Thuto School).*

The preceding account reflects that multiple indigenous languages were used in class to support Sesotho as opposed to the notion that learners were only taught in Sesotho. Learners were believed to be using the translingual home language vocabulary in the classroom.

The same view also emerged from Grade 4 teachers who reported to be using home language in class together with English regardless of them being required to teach only in English. Realising that the learners struggled with English, mixed English and home language in English classes as a way of enhancing learning.

*Well this becomes possible when I apply the translation strategy in class. I use the required language of instruction, which is English in Grade 4 and immediately translate what I have just taught in their home language, which for most learners is the different languages they understand (Teacher 8, Grade 4, Thuto School.)*

The extract demonstrates that teachers were creative in an attempt to improve learning in the classroom. The teachers also used home language which was not only Sesotho but several African languages that learners spoke at home. Although the strategy might be helpful, its effectiveness is questionable for developing learners' proficiency in using English.

Three major points that we can draw from the teachers' experiences include the following. Firstly, some teachers perceived home language as a more effective LoTL as learners were able to adjust to the school environment easily, which enhanced their confidence and learning. Nevertheless, this resulted in learners failing to adjust to using English in their Grade 4 when English is introduced as the LoTL. Secondly, some Grade 1 to 3 teachers thought that learners could perform better if English was introduced simultaneously with home language in the early grades. Introducing English was viewed as essential in preparing learners for the higher grades and for conversing with diverse people from other schools and in the community. Thirdly, although teachers reported to be using home language (Sesotho), they indicated to be using other African languages as well including Setswana. The responses from teachers reflect a complex situation beyond what the LiEP emphasises, that is the use of learners' home language which is supposedly to be Sesotho in these two schools.

#### **4.2.2 THEME 2: Teachers' training needs**

Teachers were asked questions on the training they received on home language use and the adequacy of that training. A teacher in the Grade 1 to 3 category mentioned that they received training and follow-up support from the DoBE specifically on teaching using Sesotho. While this is true, the teachers indicated that the training itself was offered in English yet they were supposed to apply and implement what they have learnt in a Sesotho class:

*Yes, I wouldn't lie, we receive support from the Department (of Basic Education), and yes at least it is mostly relevant to my specific needs as a teacher. I don't know about other teachers though. But you must bear in mind that we are not trained in Sesotho, we still have a task of translating to Sesotho when we prepare for our lessons (Teacher 3, Grade 3, Thuto School).*

On the other hand, some Grade 1 to 3 teachers reported that the training they received was inadequate as it did not cover aspects on teaching effectively using many languages.

*Perhaps to engage with us and establish our gaps and needs. I already know how to teach on reading using Sesotho. I can be given other training to complement what I already know; lets say on how best I can use English, Sesotho, Setwana and the street language learners use (Teacher 2, Grade 2, Thuto School).*

Highlighted there is the gap in the training received which affects teaching. Grade 1 to 3 teachers felt that the training could be tailor- made to meet their day to day realities that is, using multiple languages in class.

Another participant indicated that training was adequate although it could be conducted more frequently. Trainings were conducted once a week after school, so the time allocated for training could also be improved.

*It will help a lot if they [DoBE) can supply us with enough teaching materials and frequent trainings on how to teach in home language. Over and above that I see myself managing this Grade (Teacher 1, Grade 1, Mohau School).*

The short supply of training materials also affected the effectiveness of the training. Some training sessions offered to them were seen as less relevant to their needs.

Lack of teaching materials in Sesotho and other indigenous languages was cited by some of the teachers as a barrier to effective teaching and learning. It was mentioned that:

*The teaching materials are not enough my sister but we are doing our best to see to it that we simplify Sotho materials to make learning easy. More learning objects, again these children learn better when they touch and see what you are talking about. We also do not have teaching material for other languages we use in class, lets say Sesotho (Teacher 4, Grade 3, Mohau School).*

Inadquate materials for teaching using home language therefore acted as an obstacle to effective teaching.

It can be highlighted from the preceding accounts that despite teachers using other languages that were not Sesotho in class, the training did not equip them on how to handle the diverse linguistic backgrounds of learners. Teachers indicated that they could have benefitted more from the training if it was conducted in Sesotho and when it covered aspects on using other secondary African languages. Both training and teaching materials were reported to be insufficient to fully prepare the teachers for effective teaching and learning.

#### **4.2.3 THEME 4: Parential involvement**

Teachers were asked whether they thought parents were assisting the learners' with homework in the home language. Grade 1 to 3 teachers thought that parents are involved and assist their children.

*Parent yes are supportive, but you must remember that I teach Grade 2, transition only happens in Grade 4 so I honestly cannot tell you how things are from that Grade (Teacher 5, Grade 2, Thuto School).*

However, Grade 4 teachers stated that most parents were not fluent in English. These teachers felt that failure by the parents to speak English placed their children at a disadvantage as their children could not receive academic support from their parents.

*There are some parents who do assist their children but the majority don't, particularly those who come from a home where parents are both uneducated. But imagine if this is the case what was going to happen if they were to be taught in English from early Grades? Teachers were seriously going to struggle (Teacher 11, Grade 4, Mohau School).*

The above response supports the notion that learning does not end in the classroom as it should be extended to learners' homes. Even when they are willing to support, inability to understand and speak English by some parents prevented them to assist learners.

*I remember one child did not do her homework and when I asked her why, she told me she did not understand. Her parents refused to help her because they say those things are difficult for them to understand in English (she laughs). I*

*can say parent's engagement to their children homework is still a challenge*  
(Teacher 12, Grade 4, Mohau School).

If parents lack literacy and are not fluency in English, how then can they play a meaningful role in promoting the academic development of their children at an early stage? Mackay (2014) further highlighted that parents with a limited English proficiency often feel embarrassed and make little efforts to interact with their children's educators. Yet parental support contributes to the performance of the learners.

#### **4.2.4 THEME 5: Challenges associated with the use home language as the LoTL**

Teachers for Grade 1 to 3 felt that there was sufficient vocabulary to use in class when teaching in the home language:

*It is fairly sufficient, I teach Sesotho and for me the words are well described and the learners seem to understand easily. In cases where I see a need then I use English words to make myself clearer" (Teacher 1, Grade 2, Thuto School).*

However, a few Grade 1 to 3 teachers noted that the vocabulary was slightly lacking:

*Somewhere somehow the vocabulary might be a bit insufficient, we do not have enough vocabulary words in home language like we have in English so sometimes this affects our teaching lessons. For me in situations like that I try to borrow an English term just so they can understand what I'm talking about, but I try to speak pure Sesotho in this class when I teach (Teacher 5, Grade 3, Mohau School).*

Again, teachers noted that they switched to English as a result of limited vocabulary even though they were supposed to use the learners' mother tongue. The perceived lack of vocabulary does not only reflect the insufficient training teachers received but suggests the underdevelopment of the African languages as LoTL.

The use of home in the foundation stage resulted in Grade 4 teachers experiencing a heavy workload due to constantly translating from English to Sesotho and other indigenous languages so that learners understand. Additionally, the limited vocabulary in African languages and the structure of the wording contributed to teachers'

struggling to deliver the lessons effectively. For example, some Sesotho words were viewed as too long:

*To start with Sotho words are too long so which is also challenging when you teach children to read sentences. Although it's also challenging to teach in English but it is more advantageous because English has words that are not long so it's easy to read English than Sesotho. A sentence that takes 2 min for a child to read in their home language takes only 1 minute in English (Teacher 9, Grade 2, Mohau School).*

This suggests that teachers were not fully trained to use Sesotho as the LoTL. Such challenges also promoted the use of other indigenous languages in class deemed by the teachers as easier to teach in. Concurrently, learners were thought to be performing poorly because of the short period (three years) they were taught using home language.

*I don't think that 3 years is enough for using home language. Learners are introduced too early to English. Now it would look as if we didn't teach them enough at this stage. They honestly cannot transfer skills learned in home language as they start changing to English (Teacher 2, Grade 3 Mohau School).*

Learners were thus believed to learn better in their home language when the number of years they were taught in home language were extended.

### **4.3 DISCUSSION**

The findings reveal that teachers used multiple African languages together with Sesotho in Grades 1 to 3 when delivering sessions in class. Due to the diverse linguistic backgrounds, learners were taught in multiple languages as opposed to single indigenous language (Van Staden, Bosker and Bergauer 2016; Sibanda 2019). Owen-Smith (2010) observes that the mother tongue can be supported by other African languages spoken in that geographical location so that all learners understand. These findings have implications on ways on recognising and improving the use of multiple languages as LoLT.

Although literature also shows that teachers use multiple languages in the Foundation Phase, what this study shows as outstanding are the challenges teachers experience in conducting lessons using these multiple languages. Teachers reported that they struggled with switching from informal Sesotho to formal Sesotho as well as other African languages. Although this approach reflects a multi-bilingualism model as advanced by Owen-Smith (2010), these findings have implications on ways on improving that practice in schools. These results are in agreement with (Benson 2004) who highlighted the need to further train teachers on the use of multi languages in schools.

This study goes on further to reveal the strategies employed by the teachers teaching Grade 4 learners. Grade 4 teachers used a technique of code switching to help learners to understand the English concepts in Grade 4. As Altinyelken (2010) explained that code switching is a best method that teachers can apply when they assist learners to effectively understand classroom instructions for an activity and participation. However, the application of the code-switching method can also prevent learners from putting enough effort towards mastering English. Consequently, code switching may affect learners during assessments as no assistance is offered, which could result in poor academic performance. Foley (2010) warns that as much as code-switching plays an important role for the purposes of clarification and explanation in the classroom, it is important not to interpret code switching as the best strategy for academic language proficiency.

Findings suggest that teachers were inadequately involved in the planning of the strategies employed in schools particularly for teaching and training. Lack of coordination between teachers from the Foundation Phase and those for Grade 4 to ensure a smooth transition of learners could be as a result failure by the school authorities to involve teachers in the formulation of strategies to improve learners' performance. Teachers could become demotivated due to them being sidelined which affects the performance of the learners.

Aside from the above-mentioned challenges, findings from his study show that the average South African classroom is filled up with learners who are from various language backgrounds, making the classroom to be highly multilingual. These findings point to the possibility of learners learning through their language buddies using a

common language in the classroom as the LoLT as well as their similar home languages in order to facilitate effective education (Owen-Smith 2012). This in turn contributes towards learners' understanding of concepts as they are able to understand the language used by each other. Earlier on in the study, Sanni (2013) postulated that learners learn better and faster when they are taught in a language that is familiar to them.

A crucial finding from the study revealed that when teachers used home language together with another familiar language in class to explain learning concepts, there was more understanding from learners. Owen-Smith (2012) mentioned that after teaching in a common indigenous, learners can even be encouraged or instructed to respond and communicate in class using their home languages. Results indicate that learners were able to transfer knowledge of concepts learned from their home languages to English when they were in their Foundation Phase and in their transition to Grade 4. Cummins (2001) explains that teaching in the home language affords learners the skill to transfer literacy skills when they transition into a different language. Again, the findings point to that if Grade 4 learners were taught in English as the LoLT and allowed to respond using their home languages, they participated and understood concepts better highlighting their ability to transfer literacy skills (Cummins 2001).

Teaching using the home language in the foundation phase provides learners with a stronger basis to develop academic literacy skills in the second language (Cummins 2001). As a result, teachers can promote the use of more than one home language in class, through the Multi-Bilingualism approach and encourage more advanced learners in class to use their home language and assist and explain literacy concepts to their classmates using familiar native languages that their peers can understand. However, Owen-Smith (2012) highlights the need for a period of six to eight years for learners to learn using their home languages before a successful transition to English. This suggests that the period (3 years) that learners are expected to learn in their home languages could be shorter for literacy development.

Overall the results in this chapter reveal that when using home language learners have the opportunity to express their understanding of concepts in the classroom. Teachers stated that learners were active and talkative as they seemed to enjoy learning. Teachers further stated that it was easier for learners to articulate ideas when they are

taught in their own language. Therefore; Multi-Bilingualism contributes positively to effective acquisition of trilingual basic literacy skills in the classroom. Owen-Smith (2012) has advanced that “*learner buddying*” promotes learner verbalisation in class, meaning that the Multi-Bilingualism approach could allow teachers who might be mono-lingual in African language (Sesotho) to still teach using various home languages learners use. This shifts from the teacher-centred approach to learners collaborative learning when learners are active in their learning through peer learning (Owen-Smith 2012).

The Multi-Bilingual approach used in this study has revealed the value of giving an equal chance to using African languages that are home languages to learners in the classroom. The approach has shown that the use of more than one home language in the classroom has the benefits of empowering learners to acquire multiple language literacy skills at the same time. Additionally; the use of Multi-Bilingualism approach has also shown that learners are able to use their home languages to assist each other, as learner buddies; using familiar languages to facilitate oral communication and understanding in class.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the findings from teachers on their perceptions on the use of home language and academic literacy. It has shown that learners were taught in different languages which was not necessarily their mother tongue. This affects their academic literacy development especially when English is introduced in Grade 4. The chapter also revealed other factors besides language that play a role in the academic literacy development of the learners. Among these factors are parental involvement, inadequate resources, underdevelopment of African languages and inadequate teacher training and support.

## **CHAPTER 5 :**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a summary of findings from the study. The study is aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions on the use of home language in class and the academic literacy development of learners. This is considering that learners continue to underperform even after the introduction of the home language education in South African schools. Most of the research conducted to find ways of improving learners' performance focused on learners while little attention has been given to the teachers.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

This study is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 outlined the introduction and background of the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) with the objective of identifying the research problem. The global south literature on academic literacy in the foundation phase, the problem statement, research questions, justification and relevance of the study were discussed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 focused on the literature review. The review focused on academic literacy and development, and language and academic literacy particularly on the importance of the home language as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in the South African classrooms. The relationship between LoLT and academic literacy development of learners was also established. The challenges on LoLT in the Foundation Phase in South African schools were discussed in Chapter 2 as well. The chapter went a step further to present the various theoretical approaches used for evaluating the language issues and academic development namely: the Subtractive Approach, Additive Approach and the multi-bilingual approach. The Subtractive Approach stresses the introduction of English to non-native English speakers while the Additive Approach foregrounds the use of home language to learners in Grade 1 to 3 while English is introduced as the LoLT in Grade 4.

Underpinning the LiEP in South African education system is the Additive model that emphasises the use of home language as the LoLT. However, the approach has some limitations as it assumes that learners in the class share the same linguistic backgrounds. The multi-bilingual approach was deemed suitable for the study due to its focus on the use of home language together with other African languages in class (Owen-Smith (2010)). The multi-bilingual approach also allowed the researcher to put into perspective the other factors that affect academic literacy including teacher support, parental involvement, and learners' socio-economic backgrounds.

Chapter 3 discussed the methods that were followed in conducting this study. A qualitative case study of two public schools situated in Mangaung Bloemfontein was carried out to gain an in-depth account of how home language education was being implemented. The researcher interpreted the lived experiences of the teachers. Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection and the interviews were transcribed before thematic analysis. The ethical principles that were considered and upheld in the study were also outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 interpreted and presented the findings from the interviews. Although schools where the study was conducted were both implementing the LiEP, the findings show that in reality learners still continue to be taught in English and other African languages that are not their mother tongue. This presented some challenges to teachers especially on how to teach using the multiple languages.

### **5.2.1 THEME 1**

The findings that emerged from the study indicate that there were mixed views from teachers on the use of home language in the Foundation Phase. Most teachers from the Foundation Phase perceived the use of home language as the LoLT at Foundation Phase as more effective for learners' academic development. Home language was seen as allowing a smooth introduction of concepts and content to new school entrants.

Findings further indicated that although the majority of teachers perceived the use of home language at the foundational phase as helpful, Grade 4 teachers expressed that they had to repeat teaching in English the concepts that were learned in Grade 1.

However, some of the Grade 4 teachers were of the view that introducing English early in the Foundation Phase could contribute to an effective academic development of learners. This would reduce the academic challenges learners experience in Grade 4 when they are exposed to the use of English as the LoLT.

Although the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) was positively viewed, it emerged in reality teachers were not teaching using Sesotho, which is supposedly the mother tongue of the learners in the two schools. Due to the different linguistical backgrounds of the learners in the same class, teachers often taught using English and other African languages that were not a mother tongue to the learners. The use of multiple languages unintentionally excluded some of the learners from learning hence failing to provide a solid academic foundation to the learners. Again, teachers struggled to deliver content in classroom using the multiple languages concurrently which could be contributing to learners' poor performance.

While this is the case, teachers felt that they were not consulted in the plans for implementing the home language policy. Learners further struggled in their Grade 4 when English was introduced to them as the LoLT. In dealing with learners' inability to adjust to learning using English, some teachers translated English into home language for learners to comprehend the content. Relying on the strategy however, is problematic as this could discourage learners to develop English skills. The poor academic foundation was thought to be affecting learners' performance in their higher grades and even in universities.

### **5.2.2 THEME 2**

The findings show that some teachers thought that the training provided was inadequate. Teachers also pointed out that a needs analysis should be conducted before training so that the training is tailor made to address specific needs of the individual teachers and their grades. More importantly, the training was not designed to help teachers with using multiple African languages to support Sesotho. Teachers thought that the training should equip them with skills on handling the heterogeneity in the linguistical backgrounds of the learners. Coupled with that the training was also conducted in English yet the teachers were expected to deliver the content in home

language. Coupled with these limitations, teachers cited inadequate teaching materials to use when teaching using African languages.

### **5.2.3 THEME 3**

Some parents were not adequately supporting their children. The challenge was more pronounced for Grade 4 learners whose parents were less fluent in English. Lack of parental support is therefore an additional factor that contributed to the ineffectiveness of the mother tongue education.

### **5.2.4 THEME 4**

Findings indicated that where as Sesotho had limited vocabulary for teaching and learning, learners struggled to understand concepts in class when taught in the same language. The challenge was also experienced by the teachers when using other African languages. Some teachers further reported that whenever they struggled to find some words in Sesotho and indigenous languages, they borrowed such words from English and Setswana. More so, some Grade 1-3 teachers indicated that they struggled to use some Sesotho words due to their length and complication. This suggests the underdevelopment of these languages as LoLT. Foley (2010) pointed out to the need to develop African literature, so that more academic words are available for teaching in the African languages. Learners could also not easily adjust to the use of English in Grade 4 which negatively affected their performance in other subjects. To cope with such words, teachers translated concepts from English into indigenous languages in classes that were supposedly to be taught in English so that learners understand. This often took much of their learning time resulting in teachers not completing the syllabi at the end of the year. Some of these challenges are also reflective of the the gaps in the training offered to the teachers while others are structural as they need attention of the Department of Basic Education.

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The limitation of this study is on its small sample size because of its qualitative nature. This implies that the findings of this study cannot be generalised as they do not represent the experiences of all teachers and principals in Bloemfontein and in the country. The study also have a methodological limitation in that it excluded classroom observations on how learners behave and respond when they are being taught in Sesotho, other African languages and English. Classroom observations could have provided further information that can be used for triangulating the teachers perceptions. Another limitation is that South Africa was one of the countries severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to the pandemic, the country implemented a National lockdown to avert the spread of the virus, which saw schools being closed. The shutdown consequently affected the data collection. As opposed to conducting face to face interviews, the researcher ended up holding telephonic interviews. This meant that the researcher could not observe the non-verbal cues from the participants, which could have further enriched the data collected. The study, nonetheless, achieved its objective of having a deeper understanding of how teachers taught using home language.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

- The school authorities could consider recognising the use of more than one African language in class to compliment home language education for Grade 1 to 3. This could be achieved through intergrating the use of multiple African languages as LoLT in teacher education.
- Further training of teachers on how to teach using other African languages together with the learners' mother tongue. This will help teachers to improve their teaching skills and classroom management.
- Providing teaching materials in the learners' mother tongue and where possible teaching materials for other complimenting African languages could be readily available. Adquate training materials should also be provided in teacher trainings.

- Developing African languages as a way of enhancing the available vocabulary in the home language, which in turn will contribute to effective teaching in the home language. This could be achieved through developing literature on these languages.
- English could be also introduced concurrently with home language in Grade 1. Introducing English early will help learners to adjust easily to the use of the language as a LoLT in Grade 4.
- Strengthening co-operation between schools and communities. This allows teachers to encourage parents to support their children in their academic work.
- Involving teachers when developing strategies for teaching and learning. Consulting the staff members who implement the language strategies adopted in the basic education system plays a key role in raising teachers' motivation and improving learners' performance.

## **5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The following are recommended for future research:

- Future studies may critically focus on observing learners in classrooms when they are being taught using African languages and English to determine ways they can compliment each other better.
- Further studies can also investigate the reasons for the discrepancy between teachers' perceptions on home language instruction based on the grades they teach.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adendorff, M., Mathebula, B., & Green, W. 2015. *Relationship between teacher supply and demand and size, shape and substance of teacher education in South Africa*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.dhet.gov.za/Teacher%20Education%20Reports/Relationships%20betwe en%20teacher%20%20%20supply%20and%20demand.pdf>
- Altinyelken, H. K. 2010. *Curriculum Change in Uganda: Teacher Perspectives on the new Thematic Curriculum*. [Online]. Retrieved from:
- Annual National Assessments Report. 2014. [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://www.saga.org.za/docs/rep\\_annual/2014/REPORT%20ON%20THE%20ANA% 20OF%202014pdf](http://www.saga.org.za/docs/rep_annual/2014/REPORT%20ON%20THE%20ANA% 20OF%202014pdf)
- Babbie, E. 2010. *The practice of social research*. 12th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Banda, F. 2010. *The dilemma of the mother tongue: Prospects for bilingual education*
- Barber, O. 2012. *What is Development?* [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/what-development>
- Barron, S. 2012. *Why language matters for the Millennium Development Goals*. [Online]. UNESCO Bangkok. Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://www.ehu.eus/documents/3120344/3356415/language+matters.pdf/c617692a- 25af-41d5-a9b6-b3168edf2d75>
- Basson, Y., C. 2018. *Towards a unified curriculum for English language learners in South Africa: Possibilities for academic language development at school level*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [file:///D:/Downloads/basson\\_towards\\_2019.pdf](file:///D:/Downloads/basson_towards_2019.pdf)
- Benson, C., 2004. *The importance of mother tongue-based schooling for educational quality. Commissioned study for EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Retrieved from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000146632>
- Bless, C., Higson- Smith, C., and Kagee, A. 2011. *Fundamentals of social research methods. Fourth edition*. Cape Town. Juta & Co. Ltd

- Boateng, P. 2019. *Managing transitions from mother tongue instruction to English as the medium of instruction*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6e891240f0b647b45f6cae/520\\_Mother\\_Tongue\\_Language\\_Instruction\\_002 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6e891240f0b647b45f6cae/520_Mother_Tongue_Language_Instruction_002.pdf)
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. 2006. *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [file:///D:/Downloads/Using\\_thematic\\_analysis\\_in\\_psychology.pdf](file:///D:/Downloads/Using_thematic_analysis_in_psychology.pdf)
- Broekhuizen, H. 2016. *Teacher supply in South Africa: A focus on Initial Teacher Education graduate production*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2.-Teacher-Supply-in-South-Africa-Hendrik-van-Broekhuizen..pdf](http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2.-Teacher-Supply-in-South-Africa-Hendrik-van-Broekhuizen.pdf)
- Cekiso, M., Meyiwa, T. & Mashige M,. 2019. *Foundation Phase teachers' experiences with instruction in the mother tongue in the Eastern Cape*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1237562.pdf>
- Chowdhury, M. F. 2014. *Interpretivism in Aiding Our Understanding of the Contemporary Social World* [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPP\\_2014082211140425.pdf](https://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPP_2014082211140425.pdf) 19 July 2019
- Chowdhury, M. F. 2014. *Interpretivism in Aiding Our Understanding of the Contemporary Social World* [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPP\\_2014082211140425.pdf](https://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPP_2014082211140425.pdf) 19 July 2019
- Churr 2013: *The Right to Mother-Tongue Education: Practicable or Not?* [Online]. Retrieved from: [file:///D:/Downloads/obiter\\_v34\\_n2\\_a6.pdf](file:///D:/Downloads/obiter_v34_n2_a6.pdf)
- Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. 2004. *The astounding effectiveness of dual language education*
- Constitution of Lesotho. 1993. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Lesotho\\_1998.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Lesotho_1998.pdf)
- Cook, M.J., 2013, *South Africa's mother tongue education challenge*, viewed 12 September 2018, from <http://www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com/youth-andeducation/43culture/culturenews/3555-south-africa-s-mother-tongue-education-problem#ixzz5VwqD8ViY>.

Creswell, J., W. 2014. *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://fe.unj.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Research-Design\\_Qualitative-Quantitative-and-Mixed-Methods-Approaches.pdf](http://fe.unj.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Research-Design_Qualitative-Quantitative-and-Mixed-Methods-Approaches.pdf)

Cummins, J. 1998. *Immersion Education for the Millennium: What we have learned from 30 years of Research on Second Language Immersion*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://carla.umn.edu/cobaltd/modules/strategies/CUMMINS/CUMMINS.PDF>

Cummins, J. 2001. *Language Power and Pedagogy*  
[http://www.catesoljournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CJ13\\_reviews.pdf](http://www.catesoljournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CJ13_reviews.pdf)

Cummins, J. 2019. *Should schools undermine or sustain multilingualism? An analysis of theory, research and pedagogical practice* [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://wzb.eu/www2000/alt/aki/files/aki\\_research\\_review\\_4](https://wzb.eu/www2000/alt/aki/files/aki_research_review_4).

Deneulin, S., 2009. *An introduction to the human development and capability approach: Freedom and agency*. IDRC.

Department of Basic Education. 2009. *Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://v1.sahistory.org.za/classroom/NCS\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://v1.sahistory.org.za/classroom/NCS_final_report.pdf)

Department of Basic Education: Government Gazette. 2015. *Draft language policy*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://static.pmg.org.za/1/150407DraftLanguagePolicy.pdf>

Department of Basic. 2010. *The Status of the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) in South Africa*. [Online]. Received from: <https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/Status%20of%20LOLT.pdf?ver=2011-03-30-231358-000>

Desai, Z. K. 2012. *A case for mother tongue education?* [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://etd.uwc.ac.za/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11394/1719/Desai\\_PHD\\_2012.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://etd.uwc.ac.za/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11394/1719/Desai_PHD_2012.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Du Plooy, G. D. 2009. *Communication research, techniques and methods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Elmuscharaf, K. 2012. *Qualitative sampling techniques*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2012/research-methodology/Qualitative-sampling-techniques-Elmusharaf-2012.htm>

Etikan. I., Musa. S. A., & Alkassim. R, S. 2015. *Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [file:///D:/Downloads/10.11648.j.ajtas.20160501.11%20\(1\).pdf](file:///D:/Downloads/10.11648.j.ajtas.20160501.11%20(1).pdf)

Foley, A. *Mother-Tongue Education in South Africa*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://teachenglishtoday.org/index.php/2010/06/mother-tongue-education-in-south-africa-2/#:~:text=The%20South%20African%20Constitution%20guarantees,of%20their%20choice%5B1%5D.&text=For%20some%20years%20now%2C%20educationists,before%20switching%20over%20to%20English.>

for all. [Online]. Retrieved: [https://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWIAstounding\\_Effectiveness\\_Dual\\_Language\\_Ed.pdf?864d7e](https://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWIAstounding_Effectiveness_Dual_Language_Ed.pdf?864d7e)

Fouche, I. 2016. *Assessing the impact of academic literacy interventions in higher education: an evaluation design*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://dspace.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/21064/Fouche\\_I\\_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://dspace.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/21064/Fouche_I_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Frank-Oputu. 2017. *Literacy Education and Sustainable Development in Developing Societies*. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1149291pdf>

Gacheche, K. 2010. *Challenges in implementing a mother tongue-based language in-education policy: Policy and practice in Kenya*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/dd34/3c75e8d1b47129b397e65ea510fa42d05792.pdf>

Gentles, S. J., Charles C., Ploeg, J., & Mickibbon, K, A. *Sampling in Qualitative Research: Insights from an Overview of the Methods Literature*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://www.miguelangelmartinez.net/IMG/pdf/2015\\_Gentles\\_Sampling\\_Qualitative\\_Research\\_TQR.pdf](http://www.miguelangelmartinez.net/IMG/pdf/2015_Gentles_Sampling_Qualitative_Research_TQR.pdf)

Given, L. M. 2008. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Gore, O. T. 2018. *Student's experiences of and perspectives on (dis)advantage: a case study at a South African University*. PhD Thesis in Development Studies in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Free State

Govender, R. 2018. *Factors that affect foundation phase English second language learners' reading and writing skills*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/19995/thesis\\_govender\\_r.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/19995/thesis_govender_r.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Gumede, V., and Biyase, M. 2016. *Educational reforms and curriculum transformation in post-apartheid South Africa*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://businessperspectives.org/images/pdf/applications/publishing/templates/article/assets/7389/ee\\_2016\\_02\\_Gumede.pdf](https://businessperspectives.org/images/pdf/applications/publishing/templates/article/assets/7389/ee_2016_02_Gumede.pdf)

Hanushek, E. A., and Wobmann, L. 2010. *Education and Economic Growth*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://hanushek.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Hanushek%20Woessmann%202010%20IntEncEduc%202.pdf> ,

Harris, T., Hartell, C.G. and Steyn, M.G., 2011. *Where are the foundation phase teachers for our children? Black students' perceptions*. *South African Journal of Higher Education*,

Heugh, K. 2013. *A case against Multilingual and Bilingual Education in South Africa*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <http://www.praesa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Paper6.pdf>

Heugh, K. 2013. *Multilingual Education Policy in South Africa Constrained by Theoretical and Historical Disconnections*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259438533\\_Multilingual\\_Education\\_Policy\\_in\\_South\\_Africa\\_Constrained\\_by\\_Theoretical\\_and\\_Historical\\_Disconnections](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259438533_Multilingual_Education_Policy_in_South_Africa_Constrained_by_Theoretical_and_Historical_Disconnections)

Hoadley, U. 2012. *What do we do about teaching and learning in South African Primary Schools? Education as change*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <file:///D:/Downloads/Hoadley2012Educationaschange.pdf>

Howie, S. J., & Combrinck, C., M. 2017. *South Africa Grade 4 PIRLS Literacy 2016 Highlights Report: South Africa*. [Online]. Retrieved from:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326588545\\_South\\_Africa\\_Grade\\_4\\_PIRLS\\_Literacy\\_2016\\_Highlights\\_Report\\_South\\_Africa/link/5b583de8458515c4b2439341/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326588545_South_Africa_Grade_4_PIRLS_Literacy_2016_Highlights_Report_South_Africa/link/5b583de8458515c4b2439341/download)

Howie, S., J., Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena, and McLeod Palane. 2017. *South Africa Grade 4 PIRLS literacy 2016 Highlights Report*. Online. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326588545\\_South\\_Africa\\_Grade\\_4\\_PIRLS\\_Literacy\\_2016\\_Highlights\\_Report\\_South\\_Africa](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326588545_South_Africa_Grade_4_PIRLS_Literacy_2016_Highlights_Report_South_Africa)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1080317.pdf>

Ibrahim, A.J. 2012. *Thematic Analysis: A Critical Review of Its Process and Evaluation*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://fac.ksu.edu.sa/sites/default/files/ta\\_thematic\\_analysis\\_dr\\_mohammed\\_alhojailan.pdf](https://fac.ksu.edu.sa/sites/default/files/ta_thematic_analysis_dr_mohammed_alhojailan.pdf)

Jansen, J. 2013. *Wrest power from English tyranny*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://mg.co.za/article/2013-10-04-wrest-power-from-english-tyranny>

Jesser, U, 2008. *Teaching third languages: findings, trends, and challenges ,language teaching ,4(11)*

Juan-Garau, M., Morations-Johnston, S., & Salaza-Noguera, J. 2018. The effects of English-medium instruction in higher education on students' perceived level and self-confidence in EFL. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328916874>

Kenton, W. 2019. *Population Definition*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/population.asp>

Klapwijk, N., & Van de Walt, C. 2011. Measuring reading strategy knowledgw transfer: motivation for teachers to implement reading strategy instruction. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/37350844.pdf>

Krause, L. 2018. *It's time to rethink what's meant by "mother tongue" education*. [Online]. Retrieved from:

Leonard, S. L. 2012. *Scientific literacy and education for sustainable development: developing scientific literacy in its fundamental and derived senses*. [Online]. Retrieved from:

<http://www.mandela.ac.za/helpingteachers/GroupProjectWebb/Samantha%20Leonard%20D%20Ed%202012.pdf>

Luan, Y., & Guo, X. 2011. A study on the Application of the Immersion Teaching

Mabiletja , 2015. The transition to multilingual education in South African. University of South Africa. [Online]. Retrieved from: <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/19017>

Mackay, B., D. 2014. Learning Support to Grade 4 Learners Who Experience Barriers to English As A Language Of Learning And Teaching. [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/14139/dissertation\\_mackay\\_bd.pdf;sequence=1](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/14139/dissertation_mackay_bd.pdf;sequence=1)

Madiba, K. 2013. *Academic literacy at foundation phase level: An exploratory Investigation Report.*

Madileng, M,M. 2007. English as a medium of instruction: The relationship between motivation and English second language proficiency. [Online]. Retrieved from: <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/2332/dissertation.pdf>

Madrinan, M., S. 2014. The Use of First Language in the Second-Language Classroom: A support for Second Language Acquisition. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1062663.pdf>

Marungudzi, T. 2009. *English as a language of learning and teaching: Perspectives of secondary school teachers in the Masvingo District (zimbabwe).* [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/3061/dissertation\\_marungudzi\\_j.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/3061/dissertation_marungudzi_j.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Masenamela, T. 2017. *8 out of 10 learners still cannot read at appropriate level.* [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://www.up.ac.za/centre-for-evaluation-and-assessment/news/post\\_2607612-8-out-of-10-learners-still-cannot-read-at-appropriate-level](https://www.up.ac.za/centre-for-evaluation-and-assessment/news/post_2607612-8-out-of-10-learners-still-cannot-read-at-appropriate-level)

Mashiya, N., 2010. *Mother tongue teaching at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Opportunities and threats.* [Online]. Retrieved from: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/docs/17.1/05%20Mas%20FIN.pdf>

Masinire, A. 2015. Recruiting and Retaining teachers in rural South Africa. [Online]. Retrieved from: [file:///D:/Downloads/91-Article%20Text-146-1-10-20161123%20\(1\).pdf](file:///D:/Downloads/91-Article%20Text-146-1-10-20161123%20(1).pdf)

Model to EFL learners in Institutions of Higher Learning. [Online]. Retrieved from:

Mohau School. 2020. Enrolment information (unpublished data).

Mokhaba, M. J. *Outcome-based Education in South Africa since 1994: Policy objectives and implementation complexities*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f9e6/b9596d9557ab0fde5b0de5b27448295e4390.pdf>

Monyai, S. C. 2010. Meeting the challenges of black English second language South African learners in ex-modelC primary schools. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/24289/dissertation.pdf;sequence=1>

Moodley, G. 2013. *Implementation of the curriculum and assessments policy statements: challenges and implications for teaching and learning*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/13374/dissertation\\_moodley\\_g.pdf?sequence=1#page=20&zoom=100,92,97](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/13374/dissertation_moodley_g.pdf?sequence=1#page=20&zoom=100,92,97)

Motshekga, A. 2017. *Address Delivered by the Minister of Basic Education, at the Release of the of the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) Results*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.education.gov.za/Newsroom/Speeches/tabid/950/ctl/Details/mid/6106/ItemID/5523/Default.aspx>

Moughamian, A. C., Rivera, M. O., & Francis, D. J. (2009). *Instructional models and strategies for teaching English language learners*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

National Planning Commission. National Development Plan 2030. Our Future Make it Work. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-work.pdf>

Nell, C. 2011. Linking reading literacy assessment and teaching: Rethinking pre service teacher training progress in the foundation phase. *Journal for language teaching*. [Online]. Retrieved from:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f654/e9b7d7111e58c8d1f7ff0fbf1c4f9457c2cf.pdf?ga=2.131359567.1706204814.1605698159-1653915436.1605698159>

Nomlomo, V., and Desai, Z. 2014. *Reflections on the development of a pre-service language curriculum for the BED (Foundation Phase)*. [Online]. Retrieved from:

[http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S2223-76822014000300007](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2223-76822014000300007)

Nyika, A. 2014. *Mother tongue as the medium of instruction at developing country universities in a global context*. [Online]. Retrieved from:

<file:///D:/Downloads/3508-Main%20document-14087-1-10-20171208.pdf>

Oghenekohwo, J., Frank-Oputu, E. A. 2017. *Literacy Education and Sustainable Development in developing societies*. [Online]. Retrieved from:

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Literacy-Education-and-Sustainable-Development-in-Oghenekohwo-Frank-Oputu/6f44cab0be236298cd32da3450daed9ff52c4eb6>

Owen-Smith, M., 2010. *The language challenge in the classroom: A serious shift in thinking and action is needed*. *Focus*, 56 [Online]. Retrieved from:

<https://hsf.org.za/publications/focus/focus-56-february-2010-on-learning-and-teaching/the-language-challenge-in-the-classroom-a-serious-shift-in-thinking-and-action-is-needed>

Owen-Smith, M., 2012. Overcoming inequality in South Africa through multi-bilingual education: A set of teaching methodologies. [Online]. Retrieve from:

[https://www.mandelainitiative.org.za/images/docs/2012/papers/213\\_Owen-Smith\\_Overcoming%20inequality%20in%20SA%20through%20multi-bilingual%20education%20-%20a%20set%20of%20teaching%20methodologies.pdf](https://www.mandelainitiative.org.za/images/docs/2012/papers/213_Owen-Smith_Overcoming%20inequality%20in%20SA%20through%20multi-bilingual%20education%20-%20a%20set%20of%20teaching%20methodologies.pdf)

Padilla-Diaz, M. 2015. *Phenomenology in Educational Qualitative Research: Philosophy as Science or Philosophical Science?* [Online]. Retrieved from:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1c75/935d3682047beb9723ce467a136b8456e794.pdf>

PIRLS 2011. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/downloads/P11\\_IR\\_FullBook.pdf](https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/downloads/P11_IR_FullBook.pdf)

PIRLS Report. 2016. *South African Grade 4 achievement compared to the PIRLS Literacy countries*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <http://www.saep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/pirls-literacy-2016-hl-report-3.zp136320.pdf>

Prew, M. 2012: Mail & Guardian. *Neighbourly lessons in education*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-01-20-neighbourly-lessons-in-education/>

Rennie, D. L. 2012. *Qualitative Research as Methodical Hermeneutics*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/690b/d134a17ccdddc32cae0cb21949f2419ed9a.pdf>

Republic of South Africa (1997) Language in Education Policy. Governemnt Print [https://www.gov.za/documents/language-education-policy-0?gclid=Cj0KCQiA2af-BRDzARIsAIVQUOesm8ACf0DE3-YLjGIPLu5HcUAutdvxib1Piu03KpOfGGTI3Uwr\\_KQaAtvkEALw\\_wcB](https://www.gov.za/documents/language-education-policy-0?gclid=Cj0KCQiA2af-BRDzARIsAIVQUOesm8ACf0DE3-YLjGIPLu5HcUAutdvxib1Piu03KpOfGGTI3Uwr_KQaAtvkEALw_wcB)

Sakati, P, P. 2016. *Exploring the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Grade 4: A case study of four schools in the east London education district*. 2016. [Online]. Retrieved from: <http://libdspace.ufh.ac.za/bitstream/handle/20.500.11837/531/Phelisa%20Sakati.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Sanni, O. 2013. *Mother tongue as a means of instruction in schools*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://www.academia.edu/23088112/MOTHER\\_TONGUE\\_AS\\_A\\_MEANS\\_OF\\_INSTRUCTION\\_IN\\_SCHOOLS](https://www.academia.edu/23088112/MOTHER_TONGUE_AS_A_MEANS_OF_INSTRUCTION_IN_SCHOOLS)

Sibanda, J., 2017. *Language at the Grade Three and Four interface: The theory-policy-practice nexus*. South African Journal of Education. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/view/157303>

Sibanda, R., 2019. *Mother-tongue education in a multilingual township: Possibilities for recognising lok'shin lingua in South Africa, Reading & Writing*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v10i1.225>

Simons, H. 2009. *Case study Research in practice*. California: SAGE Publication Inc. Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Snow, C., & Fillmore, L, W. 2000. *What teachers need to know about language*. [Online]. Retrieved from: [file:///D:/Downloads/What Teachers Need to Know About Language.pdf](file:///D:/Downloads/What%20Teachers%20Need%20to%20Know%20About%20Language.pdf)

Snow, C., E. Mothers' Speech Research: From input to Interaction. [Online]. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Catherine\\_Snow/publication/246873029\\_Mothers'speech\\_research\\_From\\_input\\_to\\_interaction/links/548aea090cf225bf669f0dda/Mothersspeech-research-From-input-to-interaction.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Catherine_Snow/publication/246873029_Mothers_speech_research_From_input_to_interaction/links/548aea090cf225bf669f0dda/Mothers_speech_research-From-input-to-interaction.pdf)

South African Constitution. 1996. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Government Printer, Pretoria. South Africa

Spaull, N. 2017. *The unfolding reading crisis: The new PIRLS 2016 results*. Online. Retrieved from: <https://nicspaull.com/2017/12/05/the-unfolding-reading-crisis-the-new-pirls-2016-results/>

Stake, R. 1995. *The art of case study research*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://legacy.oise.utoronto.ca/research/field-centres/ross/ctl1014/Stake1995.pdf>

Taylor, N. 2013. *The work of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit. In: Department of Basic Education (Ed.), Curriculum news. Improving the quality of learning and teaching: Strengthening curriculum implementation form 2010 and beyond*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.

Taylor, S. and Coetzee, M., 2013. *Estimating the impact of language instruction in South African primary schools: a fixed effects approach*. Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers. Stellenbosch, South Africa: Stellenbosch University.

Theron and Nel (2005): [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249051287\\_The\\_needs\\_and\\_perceptions\\_of\\_South\\_African\\_Grade\\_4\\_educators\\_teaching\\_English\\_second-language\\_ESL\\_learners](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249051287_The_needs_and_perceptions_of_South_African_Grade_4_educators_teaching_English_second-language_ESL_learners)

Thuto School, 2020. Enrolment information (unpublished data)

United Nations: Secretary General Kofi Annan. 2018. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2005/sgsm10065.doc.htm>

Van Staden, S., Bosker, R. & Bergbauer, A., 2016. 'Differences in achievement between home language and language of learning in South Africa: Evidence from prePIRLS 2011', *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 6(1), a441. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v6i1.441>

Welch, T., S. 2012, 'Why mother tongue literacy isn't working: Policy, pedagogy, parents, and publishing', guest address at the Annual General Meeting of the Witwatersrand Council on Education, Wits School of Education, 09 October. [Online]. Retrieved from: <http://research.africanstorybook.org>

Welman, J. C., and Kruger, S. J. 2002. *Research Methodology*. 2nd edition. Cape Town: South Africa

Wium, A., Louw, B. 2011. *Teacher support: an exploration of how foundation-phase teachers facilitate language skills*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://sajcd.org.za/index.php/sajcd/article/view/30/52>

Wrench, A., Garrett, R., and King, S. 2013. *Guessing where the goal posts are managing health and wellbeing during the transition to university studies*, *Journal of Youth studies*, vol 16(6).

## APPENDICES

### 2.7.1 APPENDICE 1: DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS (CODES, SUBTHEMES AND EMERGING THEMES)

Code	Sub-themes	Emerging theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learner's ability to master content easily</li> <li>Learners' struggle to use English in (Grade 4)</li> <li>Learners failing to learn using local language (Grade 1-3)</li> <li>Learners comfortable to participate in class using local language</li> <li>The use of home language assists them in dealing with that confusion</li> <li>Teacher struggle to teach using English in Grade 4</li> <li>Spend more time translating from English to Sesotho</li> <li>Their command of English is not nice at all</li> <li>They struggle with constructing sentences</li> <li>The minute they slumber on the language then everything else fails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advantages of using home language to learners (Grade 1-3)</li> <li>Limitations using home language on learners (Grade 1-3)</li> <li>Teachers experiences during teaching using Sesotho (Grade 4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>The use and teaching using both languages</i></b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequency or training</li> <li>Relevance of training</li> <li>Follow ups on training</li> <li>Consultation of teachers before training</li> <li>Yes at least it is mostly relevant to my specific needs as a teacher</li> <li>I will say its sufficient because remember it's not like we teach people who do not know the language</li> <li>Perhaps to engage with us and establish our gaps and needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>training for teachers, motivation of teachers Support for teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>Teachers' training, motivation and support</i></b></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are provided with enough support</li> <li>• Supply us with enough teaching materials and frequent trainings on how to teach in home language</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vocabulary might be a bit insufficient, we do not have enough vocabulary like English</li> <li>• So it depends on them also having a good understanding of their home language</li> <li>• I try to borrow an English term just so they can understand <i>what I'm talking about</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enough vocabulary to use in class</li> <li>• Coping mechanisms developed by teachers to ensure that that lessons continued</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Vocabulary for technical subjects and the best medium of instruction</i></b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents literacy</li> <li>• Willingness to assists on homework</li> <li>• Parents' perception on the use of home language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from parents</li> <li>• Strategies to improve language policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Parents' involvement and strategies to monitor and improve the CAPS language policy</i></b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Sesotho in Grade 1-3</li> <li>• Use of English in Grade 4</li> <li>• Support from the department</li> <li>• Few trainings for teachers</li> <li>• Irrelevant trainings</li> <li>• Lack of material in Sesotho</li> <li>• Pressure to finish the syllabus</li> <li>• Large class sizes</li> <li>• Lack of motivation to learn by some learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative challenges</li> <li>• School based challenges</li> <li>• Parent based challenges</li> <li>• Learner based challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Challenges and learners' English proficiency</i></b></li> </ul>

## 2.7.2 APPENDICE 2: ETHICS APPROVAL



### GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

21-Jul-2020

Dear Miss Konesoang Selemela

#### Application Approved

Research Project Title:

**Teachers' perspectives on the role of home language on academic literacy: A case of two South African schools**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2019/1503/2505**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Adri Du Plessis**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

205 Nelson Mandela  
Drive  
Park West  
Bloemfontein 9301  
South Africa

P.O. Box 339  
Bloemfontein 9300  
Tel: +27 (0)51 401  
9337  
[duplessisA@ufs.ac.za](mailto:duplessisA@ufs.ac.za)  
[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)



### **2.7.3 APPENDICE 3: CONSENT FORMS**



**RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM: Grade 4  
teachers**

**DATE: 25 February 2020**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

***TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY:  
A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS***

**PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):**

Konesoang Bohlale Selemela            2009075686            067 808 5968

**FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:**

Economic and Management Sciences

Centre for Development Support

**STUDYLEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:**

Dr Deidre Van Rooyen (UFS staff member)  
051 401 7059

**WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

The aim of this study is to ascertain teachers' perspectives on the role of home language on academic literacy in the first three years of learners' schooling.

**WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?**

I am the main researcher in the study, I work for the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. The interest in the study was aroused by the NGO I have in Partnership with Nalibali, where I read with grade 1 to 3 learners in English in my free time in the Bloemfontein locations. Most learners are very interactive and active whenever communicated with in their home language, however as soon as the reading starts (I used English books) then learners start showing less interest, loose attention and would rather converse than to continue with reading.

**HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?**

## **RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM (Principal)**

**DATE: 25 February 2020**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

***TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS***

**PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):**

Konesoang Bohlale Selemela                      2009075686                      067 808 5968

**FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:**

Economic and Management Sciences

Centre for Development Support

**STUDYLEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:**

Dr Deidre Van Rooyen (UFS staff member)  
051 401 7059

**WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

The aim of this study is to ascertain teachers' perspectives on the role of home language on academic literacy in the first three years of learners' schooling.

**WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?**

I am the main researcher in the study, I work for the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure as a Senior Communications Officer. The interest in the study was aroused by the NGO I have in Partnership with Nalibali, where I read with grade 1 to 3 learners in English in my free time in the Bloemfontein locations. Most learners are very interactive and active whenever communicated with in their home language, however as soon as the reading starts (I use English books) then learners start showing less interest, loose attention and would rather converse than to continue with reading. Please note that I read with learners for the love and interest of developing young children within my community and as a way of giving back be encouraging a culture of reading from a young age, I am not a teacher by profession.

## **RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM (Key Stakeholder)**

**DATE: 25 February 2020**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

***TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS***

**PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):**

Konesoang Bohlale Selemela                      2009075686                      060 711 0299

**FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:**

Economic and Management Sciences

Centre for Development Support

**STUDYLEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:**

Dr. Deidre Van Rooyen (UFS staff member)  
051 401 7059

**WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

The aim of this study is to ascertain teachers' perspectives on the role of home language on academic literacy in the first three years of learners' schooling.

**WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?**

I am the main researcher in the study, I work for the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. The interest in the study was aroused by the NGO I have in Partnership with Nalibali, where I read with grade 1 to 3 learners in English in my free time in the Bloemfontein locations. Most learners are very interactive and active whenever communicated with in their home language, however as soon as the reading starts (I use English books) then learners start showing less interest, loose attention and would rather converse than to continue with reading.

**HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?**

This study has not yet received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS.

**Approval number: N/A**

## **2.7.4 APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE: GRADE 4 TEACHERS**

#### **TOPIC:**

### **TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

#### **Challenges**

#### **GRADE 4 TEACHERS**

1. What are your experiences on teaching learners who have been taught using home language in their grade 1-3?
2. How would you compare the advantages of teaching using home language against those of using English?
3. Are learners able to explain concepts learned in their home language when they get to grade 4 and start learning in English? Explain
4. In grade 4, do learners seem to find it difficult to understand concepts explained in English? Explain
5. What challenges do you experience when teaching your subject in English?

Probe on the following:

- (a) Are there adequate resources to facilitate a transition from using home language to English as a medium of instruction? Explain
  - (b) Are there enough written textbooks that you are able to use for teaching your subject in the home language? Explain
  - (c) Are you proficient enough to teach effectively in the English language?  
Please explain
  - (d) How do you compare learners' motivation to explain concepts in English as compared to when they use their home language?
6. What can be done to improve learners' performance as far as the language of instruction is concerned?

---

Please accept my thanks for completing this interview. I am sincerely grateful for your time and effort.

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE: KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

### **TOPIC:**

## **TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

### **Improvement**

#### **PRINCIPALS**

1. What could be the best medium of instruction policy for this school?
2. Express an opinion about the use of English or home language as a medium of instruction in your school?
3. What has been done at this school to ensure that teachers are able to teach effectively using the home language?
3. What can be done to improve the use of the home language for teaching in your school?
2. What can be done in order to facilitate for a smooth transition from one medium of instruction (home language) to English?
3. How are the teachers managing to handle the home language teaching workload with regards to the teacher-pupil ratio?
4. What challenges is the school facing concerning the present language policy?
5. What do you think needs to be done in order to ensure that grade 4 learners' performance improve?
6. Do you have any other suggestions concerning the language policy in schools?

---

Please accept my thanks for completing this interview. I am sincerely grateful for your time and effort.

## INTERVIEW GUIDE: GRADE 1 TO 3 TEACHERS

### TOPIC:

## TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

### Perceptions on home language

#### GRADE 1 to 3 TEACHERS

1. What are your thoughts concerning the use of home language medium of instruction as a way of increasing learners' performance?
    - (a) What are the benefits of teaching in home language?
    - (b) How do learners perform when teaching using home language?
  2. What kind of support do you receive to enhance your teaching skills in the home language?
    - (a) If you have received training, was it sufficient?
    - (b) What could be done to improve the training?
    - (c) How sufficient are the resources?
  3. How has home language made your teaching more effective compared to when you are using English?
  4. What are the advantages of using home language when teaching?
  5. How sufficient is the vocabulary when teaching using home language in technical subjects?
  6. Have parents been assisting learners with their home work since the implementation of home language and has that remained the same with the transition to English?
  7. In your view, what language do most of your learners speak as a home language?
  8. What challenges are you facing when teaching using home language?
  9. What suggestions do you have to improve teaching when using the home language in this school?
- 

Please accept my thanks for completing this interview. I am sincerely grateful for your time and effort.

## INTERVIEW GUIDE: KEY STAKEHOLDERS

### TOPIC:

## TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

### Improvement

#### PRINCIPALS

1. What could be the best medium of instruction policy for this school?
2. Express an opinion about the use of English or home language as a medium of instruction in your school?
3. What has been done at this school to ensure that teachers are able to teach effectively using the home language?
3. What can be done to improve the use of the home language for teaching in your school?
2. What can be done in order to facilitate for a smooth transition from one medium of instruction (home language) to English?
3. How are the teachers managing to handle the home language teaching workload with regards to the teacher-pupil ratio?
4. What challenges is the school facing concerning the present language policy?
5. What do you think needs to be done in order to ensure that grade 4 learners' performance improve?
6. Do you have any other suggestions concerning the language policy in schools?

---

Please accept my thanks for completing this interview. I am sincerely grateful for your time and effort.

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE: KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

### **TOPIC:**

#### **TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF HOME LANGUAGE ON ACADEMIC LITERACY: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

1. What motivated the implementation of the CAPS home language policy?
  2. What training has the Department offered to ensure that teachers are equipped to implement the CAPS home language policy?
  3. How has the Department provided support to ensure that teachers are better equipped to teach technical subjects such as Maths and Science in home language?
  4. Are all teachers adequately trained to implement the CAPS language policy?
  5. How has the CAPS home language been received by the parents? Do parents adequately support their children to be taught using home language?
  6. From a policy perspective, are teachers able to handle the home language teaching workload as far as the teacher-pupil ratio is concerned?
  7. Does the Department avail sufficient textbooks supporting the CAPS language policy? If not, why?
  8. What monitoring mechanisms are there at Provincial or National Department of Education for the implementation of CAPS?
  9. So far what are the challenges or successes since the implementation of the CAPS language policy?
  10. How have you addressed these challenges?
  11. What can be done at policy level to improve the language policy for promoting students' success in schools?
- 

I am sincerely grateful for your time and effort