

**Perceptions of school stakeholders towards the use of English as a
Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grade 9 Social
Sciences**

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By

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DECLARATION

I declare that 'Perceptions of stakeholders towards the use of English as Language of Learning and Teaching in Grade 9 Social Sciences, in three rural schools in the King William's Town district is my own work. I have completely acknowledged all the sources used, quoted and cited in the list of works cited.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my late brother Khulele Soya.

ABSTRACT

The dawn of democracy in South Africa led to the development of Language in Education Policy (LiEP) as one of the pieces of legislations that promote languages in schools where parents, learners, who have come of age may choose a language for instruction. LiEP, together with the Constitution of South Africa, promote equal value of all eleven official languages spoken in this country. The promotion of language policies clearly shows that language is the bedrock of the academic development of every child. Unfortunately, Spaull, Van der Berg, Wills, Gustafsson and Kotzè (2016) found that South African Foundation Phase learners lack the most basic skill needed for academic achievement, reading for meaning. Spaull et.al (2016) findings show that language problems start during the early years of schooling.

This study aimed at finding out the perceptions of school stakeholders about the use of English as LoLT in Grade 9 Social Sciences, and it is located in the Interpretivist Paradigm. In this study, stakeholders are learners because they are central to learning, parents, as they have the responsibility of choosing LoLT for their children and assist them in their schooling career. Lastly, teachers are stakeholders because of their critical role of imparting knowledge and skills during classroom interaction. The researcher uses a Qualitative approach to identify data-collecting tools suitable for this research, and chooses semi-structured interviews and observations. Semi-structured interviews are flexible and allow deeper probing during the interview. The sample consists of nine Grade 9 learners, three teachers of Grade 9 Social Sciences and six parents from the School Governing Body (SGB). The aim of conducting observations was to find out the language used by learners and teachers during classroom interaction.

This study found out that most participants prefer learning Social Sciences in English than in isiXhosa. They are aware of the challenges experienced in the classroom when learning in English but they still choose it. From the sample used, participants clearly indicate that learning in English causes some barriers in the learning and teaching process. However, it also became clear that the benefits associated with learning in

English make it difficult to put it at the same level as other languages and participants do not link mother tongue to career opportunities. It is also evident that English will enjoy its hegemony until such time that all stakeholders in Education view the mother tongue as a foundation for learning other languages and as a resource as well so that they can use it in the classroom to understand the content.

Policy developers must look deeply into the question of LoLT so that learners receive instruction in a language that will assist them in improved academic performance. Teachers must be equipped with adequate skills to assist learners in developing reading and comprehension skills in the classroom. There is a dire need to develop the culture of reading in rural school learners; and teachers must expose learners to a variety of English reading material.

Content	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction and background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	4
1.3 The main research question	5
1.3.1 Specific research questions	5
1.4 Purpose of the study	5
1.5 Specific research objectives	6
1.6 Significance of the study	6
1.7 Rationale of the study	6
1.8 Scope of the study	7
1.9 Sampling	8
1.9.1 Sample size	8
1.10 Definition of key concepts	9
1.11 Chapter outline	9
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Deeper analysis of concepts	11
2.2.1 Analysis of the concept 'school stakeholders'	11
2.2.2 The importance of the Language of Learning and Teaching	13
2.2.3 Analysis of the concept 'perceptions'	14

2.2.4	Bilingual education in the classroom	15
2.2.5	The role of motivation in English First Additional Language classrooms	17
2.2.6	Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation as contributing factors in learning	19
2.2.7	Self- efficacy and academic achievement of learners	20
2.2.8	The value learners place on tasks.....	22
2.2.9	Causes of academic failure and of success.....	23
2.3	The value of Self- Regulated Learning when learning in a Second Language.	24
2.4	Constructivism in South African classrooms.....	25
2.5	Teaching perspective.....	27
2.6	Classroom practice	28
2.6.1	Learner – teacher interaction.....	28
2.6.2	Teaching technique.....	31
2.7	Language in Education Policy (LiEP).....	33
2.7.1	Policies in Education and Language	33
2.8	The Dominance of English in Education.....	34
2.9	The Role of Mother Tongue in Education.....	35
2.10	Challenges facing the development of African languages.....	36
2.11	Language and learning.....	39
2.12	Effects of English as Medium of instruction on learner performance	42
2.13	Learner background.....	44
2.13.1	Parental involvement in the choice of English as MOI	44
2.14	Conclusion.....	47
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		49
3.1	Introduction	49
3.2	Research Paradigm.....	49

3.2.1 Interpretivist Paradigm.....	49
3.3 Research Approach.....	50
3.3.1 Qualitative research approach.....	50
3.4 Research design	51
3.4.1 Case Study Design.....	51
3.5 Research Methods	52
3.5.1 Data-collecting tools	52
3.5.2 Semi- structured interviews	52
3.5.3 Observations	53
3.6 Scope of the study.....	54
3.7 Sampling strategy.....	54
3.7.1 Sample size.....	54
3.8 Pilot interviews	55
3.9 Trustworthiness of the research	55
3.10 Ethical Considerations.....	56
3.10.1 Informed Consent	56
3.10.2 Anonymity	57
3.10.3 Confidentiality	57
3.11 Qualitative data analysis approach.....	57
CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION	58
4.1 Introduction.....	58
4.2 Data presentation: Themes and sub-themes from the data	59
4.2.1 Learner participants	59
4.3 Preferred language of teaching.....	60

4.3.1	English as preferred LoLT.....	60
4.3.2	Mother tongue (isiXhosa) preference.....	61
4.3.3	Bilingual instruction	62
4.4	Benefits derived from learning Social Sciences in English.....	63
4.5	Language(s) of teaching S. S.....	64
4.5.1	English as the sole language for teaching.....	64
4.5.2	Code-switching as a tool in the classroom.....	64
4.5.3	Mixed learner responses.....	65
4.5.4	Language of classroom interaction.....	66
4.6	Learner experiences when learning Social Sciences in English.....	67
4.6.1	Perceived disadvantages when learning Social Sciences in English	67
4.6.2	An appropriate LoLT for learners.....	68
4.7	Strategies to assist in learning S.S. in the LoLT	70
4.8	Teacher participants	71
4.9	Preferred Language of Teaching	72
4.10	Language of teaching Social Sciences.....	73
4.11	Language of classroom interaction.....	73
4.12	LoLT and learners' language experiences	75
4.13	Perceived appropriate LoLT for learners.....	76
4.14	Strategies to assist in learning S. S using English.....	77
4.15	Parent participants	78
4.16	Preferred Language(s) of Learning and Teaching	79
4.16.1	English as preferred LoLT.....	79
4.16.2	Mother tongue as the preferred LoLT	79
4.17	Benefits of learning Social Sciences in English.....	80

4.18	English as LoLT and learners' language experiences.....	81
4.19	Appropriate LoLT for learners	82
4.20	Classroom observations.....	83
4.21	Conclusion.....	84
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS.....		86
5.1	Introduction.....	86
5.2	Themes from the data	86
5.2.1	Preferred languages of learning.....	86
5.2.1.1	English Preferred Language of Learning and Teaching.....	87
5.2.1.2	IsiXhosa as a preferred language.....	89
5.2.1.3	Bilingual instruction as a choice for LoLT	91
5.2.2	Language of teaching Social Sciences.....	93
5.2.2.1	Participants' views on the language used for teaching S.S.....	93
5.2.2.2	Language of classroom interaction.	94
5.2.3	English LoLT and learner experiences	96
5.2.3.1	(Low) English proficiency levels	96
5.2.3.2	Poor Learner Performance	99
5.2.4	Self-confidence and self- esteem when learning in a second language/ First Additional Language	102
5.2.5	Strategies to assist learners improve English proficiency.....	103
5.2.6	The role of teachers and the wider society in learning	105
5.2.7	Summary	106
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
107		
6.1	Introduction.....	107
6.2	Summary of the key elements of this study.....	107

Summary of the findings	109
6.3.1 Language used in the classroom.....	109
6.3.2 Policy versus practice	110
6.3.3 Preferred language of teaching.....	110
6.3.4 The challenges experienced when learning through a second language	111
6.3.5 Strategies to assist learners in learning Social Sciences in the LoLT.....	112
6.3.6 Remedial action taken to assist learners.....	112
6.3.7 Language in Education Policy makers.....	113
6.3.8 Reskilling of Foundation Phase and English language teachers.....	114
6.4 Conclusion.....	114
6.5 Recommendations	115
6.6 Issues for further research.....	115
6.7 Reflections.....	116

List of Tables

Table 4. 1: Research sites.....	58
Table 4. 2: Profile of learner respondents	59
Table 4. 3: Teacher profile	71
Table 4. 4: Parent profile	78

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter requesting to conduct research.....	142
Appendix B: District Director Letter	144
Appendix C: Informed Consent Letter	146
Appendix D: Interview Schedule.....	147
Appendix E: Proof from the Editor.....	154
Appendix F: Letter to the school requesting access.....	156
Appendix G: Letter from the school.....	158
Appendix H: Ethical Clearance Certificate.....	160

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE- Advanced Certificate in Education

ANA- Annual National Assessment

BICS- Basic interpersonal Communication Skill

CALP- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CAPS- Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

DoE-Department of Education

EDO- Education Departmental Officer

LiEP- Language in Education Policy

LoLT- Language of Learning and Teaching

LTSM- Learner Teacher Support Material

Mol- Medium of Instruction

NCS-National Curriculum Statement

PIRLS- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

SASA- South African Schools Act

SAQMEC- Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality

SGB- School Governing Bodies

S.S- Social Science

TIMSS- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

UNISA- University of South Africa

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

The primary aim of this study is to find out perceptions of the school stakeholders about the use of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grade 9 Social Sciences. English is a widely spoken language and people regard it as a language of power. Many countries around the world use English as the language of teaching and learning while inhabitants speak their own languages at home. Hernandez (2003) says learners use a language for acquiring knowledge, so it must offer an environment for the interaction and engaging with the subject matter without the need to decode it. He further says that for learners to achieve acceptable English proficiency levels they must possess principal communicative and intellectual skills and the grasp of other approaches needed in the classroom. Biber (2006) adds that the comprehension and production of oral and written work are prerequisites for academic work and that students must be prepared for the demands of oral and written work (in Alvarez, 2012). Therefore, if English language is to be the Language of Learning and Teaching, learners must have developed the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) that are necessary for oral fluency accompanied by Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which is prerequisite for academic achievement.

Understanding LoLT becomes very important in understanding Social Sciences, because it is challenging to master content using a language in which learners have limited linguistic abilities. The Department of Basic Education (2011) acknowledges the critical role that language plays in learning. In the same breath Hernandez (2003), also points out the importance of understanding the English language structures needed to interpret readings across subject matter instruction and warns that learning content in a second language may pose challenges. Social Sciences as a school subject consists of a history part, which aims at providing opportunities for learners to look at their own world with a fresh critical eye, and geography that provides chances of learning about human and physical environments (DoE, 2011). Among other aims of the DoE (2011) is

for learners to debate past events based on available data and to write history in an organised way with a coherent argument. Therefore, learning Social Sciences requires learners to have linguistic abilities that allow them to engage with texts in a meaningful way. Hernandez (2003) argues that the capacity of English language learners to thrive in learning content depends mostly on their ability to infer meaning, draw conclusions, learn terminology and analyse information from different sources. Most of the time, those would be learners who have mastered both communicative and academic language skills and can use them in engaging with the text at the level of analysing information and drawing conclusions from it.

Globally and locally, research reveals that learning in a second language impacts negatively on learner performance. The Thai government implemented strategies to help Math and Science learners improve English proficiency to meet standards in tertiary institutions but the results were unsatisfactory in spite of numerous efforts to improve their English proficiency levels (Khamkhien, 2010). In Nigeria, learning in the English medium, which is the second language, has also proved to be a challenge to both teachers and learners (Omoniyi, 2012). Olanipekun, Atteh, Zaku and Sarki (2014) find it difficult to understand why Nigerian learners achieve very low English levels when it is the language of instruction. Oluwole (2008) also documents low English literacy levels that do not do justice to the academic performance of Nigerian learners.

In South Africa, learners use the English medium, which is a second language to most of them. Poor academic performance starts from the Foundation Phase up to tertiary levels of education. Spaull, van de Berg, Willis, Gustafsson and Kotzè (2016) confirm that most South African learners in rural schools go through their schooling without adequate skills to meet academic requirements. Madisaotsile (2010) observes the failing standards of the South African education system and notices low literacy and numeracy levels as contributing factors, among others. Nel and Muller (2010) reveal lack of proficiency in English Second Language teachers enrolled for an Advanced Certificate in the University of South Africa. These students struggled in language, as the results showed in an alarmingly low pass rate. They recorded 49.85% in 2006,

47.86% in 2007, and 44.39% in 2008. Foley (2008) also states that it is clear that currently in South Africa, learners do not receive proper teaching of English, adding to what other researchers have shown: the lack of language proficiency on the part of the teachers. Again, the challenge of teachers with limited English proficiency levels is not unique to South Africa. Omoniyi (2012) indicates that it is a recurring phenomenon because teachers continue to pass on their limited proficiency to learners. Wa-Mbaleka (2014:20) also found learners whose mother tongue is not English do not receive English teaching in the best possible way.

Lack in English proficiency affects other subjects as well. Maseko, Van Lelyveld, de Beer, Kakoma and Ramnarain (2010) analysed scripts from Gauteng learners where they look at History among other subjects. They conclude that limited English proficiency is a contributing factor to poor performance. They notice that learners responded by using incomplete sentences, incoherent formulations and irrelevant statements. They also found that learners struggle to respond to questions requiring higher order thinking skills. Learners perform poorly in Math and Science because they face the challenge of decoding both the English language and the Math problem (content) (Setati and Adler, 2000). It is clear that second language learners will always experience challenges in learning using English as the LoLT because teachers have not mastered enough language skills to transfer them to learners.

In spite of what research reveals about English language and poor performance, it is still the language of choice among many South African parents, learners and teachers. Evidence-based research stipulates clearly, why people choose the English language over their indigenous languages. It is because of the benefits associated with it. People are optimistic about the use of English as a language of tuition although they experience challenges with it. Learners lack the English language abilities necessary for academic progress. Exposure to different genres of English material seems to be of great value if learners' English proficiency levels are to improve. It is unfortunate because, as Ngidi (2007) observes, learners get exposure to English only at school and schools often lack the resources to develop learners' language proficiency levels because there are no

textbooks and other leisure materials.

Challenges around Language in Education Policy practicability have been inadequately addressed, because literature around this issue reveals that learners, especially those in rural areas, are struggling in using the English language, hence this research, to find out the perceptions of learners, teachers and parents about the use of English as the LoLT in the King William's Town District.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The researcher, being a practising teacher in one of the high schools in a rural area, has observed that learners struggle to interact in the classroom using the English language, which is the Medium of Instruction. They either use isiXhosa or keep quiet during classroom interactions. Even those who know the answers are shy to speak using English language. Challenges with English are also evident in written activities. Learners produce pieces of writing that are full of grammatical mistakes. They perform poorly in comprehension passages that test comprehension abilities. Learners' English proficiency levels do not seem to improve, because most Grade 12 learners are still struggling to use English in the classroom.

Having observed the above, the researcher was interested in finding out the perceptions of learners, teachers and parents about the Language of Learning and Teaching, focusing mainly on the oral history component in Grade 9 Social Sciences. The oral history component requires learners to conduct interviews where they investigate about historic issues (Department of Education, 2011) (DoE). Learners also use English language during these interviews and the DoE (2011) states it clear that they must be encouraged to ask different types of questions, from lower order to higher order questions. Learners must debate historic issues and do their interaction in English. Most of the time learners from rural areas experience challenges when confronted with English text especially when it requires higher order levels of thinking. The researcher

wanted to find out the views of school stakeholders about learning using the current LoLT, because researchers have written about difficulties of learning in the Second Language.

1.3 The main research question

What are the perceptions of the school stakeholders about the use of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in teaching of Social Sciences in rural schools in the King William's Town district?

1.3.1 Specific research questions

Based on the main research question, the research questions of the study are:

1. What are the stakeholders' views about the use of English as LoLT in teaching Grade 9 Social Sciences?
2. What are the advantages (disadvantages) of using English as LoLT in teaching Grade 9 Social Sciences?

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders about the use of English as the LoLT in Grade 9 Social Sciences in rural schools.

1.5 Specific research objectives

Based on the purpose of the study, the objectives of this study were:

1. To investigate stakeholders' views about the use of English as the LoLT
2. To investigate the advantages and disadvantages of using English as the LoLT

1.6 Significance of the study

This study has policy significance. The Language Policy developers may move away from a “blanket approach” where they treat learners in the same way, even in different contexts. It will help the Department of Education to become aware of the views of parents and teachers regarding the LoLT. Because these views come from the people at operations level, their needs are particularly relevant and need consideration. The Departmental officials will be able to identify areas of strength and those that need changes in the Language Policy. Most of all, this study will benefit the learners who are at the centre of learning, because once the Department becomes aware of their perceptions about LoLT, it will be able to help them according to their needs.

1.7 Rationale of the study

Literature around the hegemony of English language globally indicates clear that, English language is indispensable, because it is the *lingua franca* (Murali, 2009). In Malaysia, they perceive English as a language of advantage. However, findings from this very same study show that English does not help students' performance in Math

when it is a language of instruction. Learners are still positive towards English as Medium of Instruction, even among those with low proficiency (Zakaria and Sallehuddin Abd Aziz, 2011). The situation seems to be compelling learners to study English language or through the medium of English because of the reasons stated earlier.

Revealing the views of learners, teachers and parents toward the LoLT is a step toward the improvement of literacy levels. It is very important for Language Policy developers to know exactly what they are dealing with, and this study tries to reveal the views of those people the policy makers plan for, when it comes to English as a language of instruction. South African learners come from diverse backgrounds, and experience different educational contexts. This means that addressing their needs according to their contexts should be of paramount importance.

This study will help the Department implement an intervention programme to help learners improve their literacy levels. The Department might also introduce sustainable ways to empower second language learners, teachers and parents. The DoE (2003) envisages a learner who, by the end of the Further Education and Training (FET) band, is able to detect and provide solutions to problems using innovative ways. Only when the Department of Education addresses language needs properly, then there could be more problem solvers and critical thinkers.

1.8 Scope of the study

The scope of the study refers to the parameters under which the study is conducted (Simons and Goes, 2013). This is a case study, which investigates the perceptions of stakeholders towards the use of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching in the rural schools of the King William's Town district. Learners and teachers in these schools are isiXhosa language speakers and English is the LoLT. The main focal point is the oral history component in Grade 9 Social Sciences.

1.9 Sampling

The researcher uses purposive or judgemental sampling because it allows the researcher to identify and choose the sample that possesses the characteristics of the issue under investigation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; de Vos, Strydom and Fouchè and Delport, 2011; Babbie and Mouton, 2015). In this research, the defining characteristic of participants is that, they are school stakeholders from rural areas where learners learn Social Sciences in English, so they are the holders of data. The researcher uses learners whose mother tongue is isiXhosa but use English as LoLT. Parents of learners in this research are also isiXhosa speakers and so are their teachers. Researchers suggest that it is also important consider the context, incidents and activities to be included for data collection to maximise the information that can be collected. The researcher notes that learners under investigation are exposed to English (their LoLT) when they are at school, schools that do not have libraries, and at home parents hardly buy newspapers or magazines to read (Ngidi, 2007).

1.9.1 Sample size

In this research the researcher uses the small sample size because Borg and Gall (in Cohen et al; *ibid*: 93) advise that sample size has to begin with an estimation of the smallest number of cases in the smallest subgroup of the sample. Therefore, the small sample size is more appropriate for this research. The researcher used three schools in this study and these schools are in the rural villages in the King William's Town District. Parents, learners and teachers in these schools are isiXhosa speakers and learners who receive education in the medium of English, so this is their defining characteristic. The researcher interviewed one teacher who teaches Grade 9 Social Sciences, 3 learners and 2 members of the School Governing Body from each school. In total, there are eighteen participants in this study.

1.10 Definition of key concepts

1. Code switching: This is a skill used by teachers to change from English to the learners' home language (isiXhosa in this research) in order to make learners understand well (Broeder et al, 2008).
2. Home language: A home language is a language used by a speaker for day-to-day purposes. It is the language in which users first develop their thinking and is their strongest resource (UNESCO, 2008). For the purposes of this research, isiXhosa is home language because in the Eastern Cape where this study takes place this is the language widely used.
3. Literacy levels: refers to the ability to read, write and speak in a particular language.
4. Perceptions: A belief or an opinion often held by many people based on how things seem

1.11 Chapter outline

Chapter 1:

Overview and rationale

This introductory chapter gives the background to the study. It explains key concepts relevant to this study.

Chapter 2:

Literature review

This chapter deals with the review of literature conducted by other researchers around the issue of Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).

Chapter 3:

Research method and methodology

This chapter discusses research method and research design. It clearly defines the paradigm chosen, as well as the sample relevant to it. An interview schedule is prepared to conduct interviews with parents, teachers and learners from the rural schools. The researcher conducted case studies to record as they unfold.

Chapter 4:

Presentation of findings

This chapter presents the results of the study. The analysis of data collected from parents, teacher and learners also forms part of this chapter.

Chapter 5:

Discussion of findings

This chapter discusses the key findings that emerged from the data collected and presented in Chapter 4. It deals with the themes and sub-themes that have developed. This chapter also discusses themes, sub-themes, and links them to the literature review on chapter 2.

Chapter 6:

Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter discusses the summary of the research, its conclusions, recommendations, strengths and limitations, as well as some suggestions for future research in Language of Learning and Teaching.

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature for this study explores what researchers have documented about the use of English as the LoLT. They agree that language is central to learning, which means its development and promotion has to receive the utmost attention. It becomes crucial that the language chosen as LoLT is the language in which learners have acceptable proficiency levels. The DoE (2011:8) says language is an instrument for thought and for conveying ideas and its operational use enables learners to obtain information, express their identity, and communicate their moods and thoughts to interact with others and their surroundings. Therefore, the language used as LoLT has to be a language that both learners and teachers are able to use for communication and academic purposes. This chapter focuses on issues surrounding the use of English as the LoLT, for example, the views of school stakeholders about the use of English as LoLT, learner performance and Language in Education Policy.

2.2 Deeper analysis of concepts

2.2.1 Analysis of the concept 'school stakeholders'

Schools as organisations have stakeholders and these are people or groups have direct and indirect interests in the development and achievement of the schools' mission and vision. Dlamini (2004:1) defines stakeholders as individuals or groups who have a stake or interest in schools as organisations, and Paine and McCann (2009:4) view stakeholders as individuals or groups with an interest in the success of an organisation in fulfilling its mission in delivering the intended results and maintaining the viability of its products and serviced outcomes as time passes. There are external and internal school

stakeholders and they differ according to their contribution to the organisation. The difference between the two types of school stakeholders is that external school stakeholders are individuals or groups who have the interest in the school's development at heart but do not have direct influence on the running of the school's daily activities; while internal school stakeholders have direct influence in the day-to-day running of the school (Paine and McCann, 2009). For schools' stakeholders to realise the goals set for an organisation, there needs to be a positive school climate as Fan, Williams and Corkin (2011) link it to student academic achievement and performance. They also argue that the school environment influences learner performance because of their experiences through their perceptions. Therefore, all the school stakeholders need to create a school climate that fosters the attainment and sustainability of school achievements, as these shape the attitudes and behaviours of learners.

Dlamini (2004) lists a number of people or groups who are part of the development of each school, people who have the best interests of a child at heart, people who would like to see the school flourish as an organisation. Non- Governmental Organisations (NGO's), Department of Education, parents, unions, teachers, School Governing Bodies (SGB's), school boards and most of all, learners, are stakeholders who have different interests in the schools' effectiveness. Dlamini (2004) regards learners to be the most important group as stakeholders. Because they are at the centre of the education system, they have a direct interest because the quality of education they receive translates to their career opportunities. Each group or individual forming part of school stakeholders has a critical role to play. The Department of Education must ensure that the type of education received by learners equips them with critical thinking skills and creativity. Teachers are there to offer professional assistance in equipping learners with knowledge, skills and values. Lastly, the parent component supports learners so that they can access tertiary education and the world of work (Dlamini, 2004). From what is written above, it becomes obvious that school stakeholders should work together to improve and sustain the achievements of their schools.

2.2.2 The importance of the Language of Learning and Teaching

Marungudzi (2009) clearly states that the LoLT plays a critical role in the academic success of learners; therefore, it must be the language that learners have both BICS and CALP in it. The LoLT as a medium for instruction must be an official language, and is a language medium in which learning, teaching and assessment can occur (DoE, 2010). Researchers around the globe have written about English as a preferred Language of Learning and Teaching. In most instances, English is taught to non-English speakers as a First Additional or Second language (De Wet, 2002; Senkoro, 2005; Hornberger and Vaish, 2008; Simasiku, Kasanda & Smit, 2015; Channa, Memon and Bughio, 2016). Here in South Africa a First Additional Language is a requirement for learners and most of the time it is English language (DoE, 2010). Quite a number of studies, abroad and locally, document reasons for the hegemony of English among other languages. Researchers found that English enjoys a higher status than other languages because it is central to technology, economics and is an academic language. People view English as the only language that facilitates communication and provides access to international hospitality and academic settings (Seidlhofer, 2003 in Focho, 2010; Smit, 2010). In European universities, both teachers and learners use only English for communication though they have well developed multilingual abilities.

The use of English as LoLT has also sparked concerns among other researchers as they claim that other languages spoken downgrade to a lower level where even their speakers do not value them. There is also a concern that the reduction of academic language into English will lead to other languages losing their function (Desai, 2001; Smit, 2010). The effectiveness of English as a language of instruction also raises alarms as evidence points out challenges that students experience in English-medium universities (Kirkgöz, 2014). Desai (2001) observed a group of postgraduate students who could not explain the causes of day and night because they recounted what they had learned at school and he concluded that English remains unachievable for most learners, not only as a subject but also as a language of accessing knowledge. Desai (ibid) also notices that speakers usually have rich vocabularies to express themselves in

their home languages unlike in English; and, as an author, deduced that policy developers need to pay special attention to language policy.

There is a great need for school stakeholders to be mindful of the benefits provided by the mother tongue in the cognitive development of learners, which also paves the way for second language acquisition. With firm foundations in the mother tongue, then learners are able to acquire a second language, which is necessary for academic achievement. If the situation remains as it is currently, where learners learn in languages they do not have full grasp of, then it means schools as institutions of learning will always produce learners who do not have full cognitive development and learners who will forever struggle in their academic performance. Since a language is critical to learning, then learners must use a language they understand. Their preference of English (which is a second language to them) as LoLT and the continued poor proficiency levels only mean that language policy developers must develop strategies where school stakeholders are made to appreciate their own languages first, and be made aware of the benefits associated with them. This will yield to improved academic achievement because learners will learn in languages they understand, and they are going to value their mother tongue and chosen LoLT equally as these complement each other.

2.2.3 Analysis of the concept 'perceptions'

Context plays a pivotal role in shaping people's experiences and attitudes. Experiences result in certain behaviours and people end up with views that may sometimes not be objective. Ahen (2009) asserts that perceptions involve thinking processes because of information received from sensory systems regarding certain things or events and that perception is the root of thinking that invokes judgments or beliefs that influence human attitude. Fan, Williams, Corkin (2011) echo Bandura's words that what influences individual's attitudes and behaviour is not necessarily objective reality but the way one

perceives one's experiences. How people view situations becomes very important because those views translate to actions. Experiences shape people's perceptions. For example, most African states use colonial languages as languages of instruction because they link those languages to bread and butter issues. African language speakers look down upon their indigenous languages because they view indigenous languages as languages of low status. Historic events, such as apartheid in South Africa and religious and the colonial past of other countries placed a high premium on colonial languages, leaving African languages marginalised. Iyamu and Ogiegbaen (2007) found that parents and teachers do not subscribe to mother tongue instruction (in Njoroge and Gathigia, 2011).

Understanding the perceptions of individuals is paramount to addressing concerns that may exist. With LoLT issues at hand, it is of great importance to investigate the views of learners, teachers and parents. Tse, Shiu Kee Shum, Wah Ki, and Pui Ching Wong, 2001:9 (in Marungudzi, 2009) assert that it is vital to examine perspectives, for they reflect the real situation at school level and are likely to affect the successful implementation of the medium of instruction policy. It is also important to find out perceptions of learners as they are at the centre of the learning and teaching process (Njoroge and Gathigia, 2011). Research indicates that although learners experience academic challenges when learning in English as a second or first additional language, they still have a positive view of it (Barkhuizen, 2002; Dryers, 1999 in Njoroge and Gathigia, 2011). This positive attitude is a result of the way they view English.

2.2.4 Bilingual education in the classroom

Researchers have written widely about the vital role played by home languages in the cognitive development of learners. In addition, studies both locally and abroad indicate poor performance by learners receiving instruction in a second language. The phenomenon of poor performance by second language learners is a call for the

implementation of bilingual education where the use of home language as the LoLT occurs simultaneously with the second language. In schools, the choice of the LoLT rests with learners themselves; parents exercise the right to choose the LoLT on behalf of minor learners. It becomes the duty of SGBs to promote bilingualism and multilingualism, using more than one language as the LoLT (LiEP, 1997).

Owen- Smith (2012) argues that the use of one language as LoLT puts learners at a disadvantage. Plüddemann, Mati, and Mahlalela-Thusi (1998) observe that where learners use a second language as the LoLT, communication is very slow and classroom interaction becomes stunted. This is the reason for the call for the use of bilingual education where learners use two languages as LoLT. Owen- Smith (2012) differs from the belief that the use of English as the LoLT brings about acceptable proficiency levels, and argues that the use of English as the only LoLT has led to poor performance among second language learners in other subjects as well. Another argument brought forward is that indigenous languages often lack the terminology for Math and Science (Foley, 2008), but Owen-Smith (2012) differed saying that there is enough terminology developed for all grades, from Grade 1 to Grade 12. Therefore, bilingual education would be one of the solutions to low proficiency levels in English, as mother tongue learning will complement it in the cognitive development of learners.

There is a great need for bilingual education, especially for learners in the rural areas who learn in their second language. Bilingual education would be of great assistance to these learners from semi-urban and rural schools because studies show that these learners have poor English proficiency levels. In their study, Christoffels, Haan, Steenbergen, van den Wildenberg and Colzato (2014) and Benson (2005) found that bilingual education promotes cognitive flexibility. Christoffels et.al (2014) also observe that bilinguals are able to switch between languages whenever they feel like it because, it is believed, they have the cognitive control abilities to use more than one language systematically (Bialystock, Craik and Ryan, 2006; De Groot and Christoffels, 2006 Green, 1998 in Christoffels et.al 2014). After comparing two groups of bilingual Dutch high school students who followed bilingual and monolingual tracks, Christoffels et.al

(2014) conclude that bilingual participants outperformed monolingual participants. They link bilingual education to better control of cognitive skills.

Owen-Smith (2012) suggests the use of mother tongue as a resource where learners learn in a second language because learners think deeply in their own languages. Owen-Smith (2012) is also of the view that teachers must be equipped with proper methodology to support learners with bilingual education. Plüddemann et.al (1998) caution that, bilingual education is possible, where home language is not a marginalised language of low status. It becomes important then for school stakeholders to understand the benefits associated with home language in the academic development of learners. This eventually will change their attitudes toward indigenous languages and assist children academically. Once learners understand content and perform well, they will have the drive to move forward to their next success.

2.2.5 The role of motivation in English First Additional Language classrooms

Research positively links motivation to achievement (Masgoret and Gardner, 2003). Research also reveals that teachers, especially language teachers, play the most crucial role in motivating learners to learn a second language (Dornyei, 1994 and Tanaka, 2005 in Matsumoto, 2009). In a second language (L2) setting, teachers play a number of roles in order to reach out to every learner. These range from being an initiator, a facilitator, a mentor, an ideal model of the target language speaker DoE (2002). Teachers are also expected to employ a number of strategies to reach out to every learner because Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) claim that learners are motivated in a number of ways. However, learner factors such as the level of proficiency, attitude to the target language and to the teacher, reasons for learning the language, learner capabilities and the strategies employed in learning a second language are also important to consider (Matsumoto, 2009). This clearly indicates that a learner with help from the teacher has to set achievable goals while the teacher shapes the situation to

favour or allow meaningful learning to take place

Motivation refers to goal-directed behaviour (Heckhausen, 1991 in Masgoret and Gardner 2003:128). Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) claim motivation is dynamic depending on the circumstances at hand. They further argue that active regulation of motivation rests with the way individuals think, and how they mediate the relationship between them and the context. Learners' own thought about their motivation and learning plays a key role (Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2002: 314). They view a motivated individual as someone who puts more effort into the task, who pays attention to the finer details of the activity and who experiences reinforcement and joy from success, while failure brings disappointment. Motivated individuals also try different strategies to make achievement possible.

Masgoret and Gardner (2003) identify integrative and instrumental motivation. The former concerns itself with the reasons why the learner wants to identify with target language speakers, while the latter reflects the reasons why a learner would learn a language for attainment; for example, to get a job. In this study, English language is learned because parents and their children want to enter the job market (Masgoret and Gardner, *ibid*). They all understand that the English language is very important in pursuing their studies. This being the case, these learners should be instrumentally motivated but studies show poor performance in this area. This brings to the fore what Wilson and Peterson (2006) reveal, that teachers can try and do their best in teaching learners, but whether the student learns something or not depends on quite a number of factors. These factors include among others: motivation, instructional methods, interest, school and classroom environment and support from the parents. Motivational features such as self-efficacy, attribution, intrinsic motivation and task value come into play. These motivational beliefs are to a certain extent discussed below.

2.2.6 Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation as contributing factors in learning

There are two ways to trigger motivation in learners for example by the interest the learner has in a particular activity as well as by the influence of surrounding factors. Authors of motivation theories identify two types of motivation, and these are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation concerns itself with doing something for an external reward. For example, placing a prize for those learners who achieve full marks in an activity would encourage them make a greater effort to achieve full marks to get that prize. Raffini (1996) views intrinsic motivation as the choice of doing an activity without being forced or getting a reward and is triggered by the conquering spirit or desire one has. Pintrich and Schunk (2002), on the other hand, define intrinsic motivation as the motivation to engage in a task for its own sake, and to them, a high personal interest in a task is a defining feature of intrinsic motivation.

Individual interest reflects curiosity in a particular task or activity. It is positively associated with achievement, the deeper use of cognitive skills, as well as persistence in a task and increased attention (Hidi and Harakiewics, 2000; Schiefele, 1991 and Kraap, Hidi and Renninger, 1992 in Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2002). Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) insist that teachers must create and enhance situations that learners find interesting. They further insist on affording learners opportunities to work with topics they find interesting, so that they engage with them. In this way, they draw from, and develop different learning strategies. Bigge and Shermis (2004) identified four sources of intrinsic motivation: challenge, control, curiosity and fantasy.

Challenge is all about giving learners activities that have some difficulty as it is believed that easy tasks bore them and probably do not develop them mentally The DoE (2011) also emphasised that these tasks should be at the level of the learner. According to Bigge and Shermis (2004), curiosity suggests that teachers should always surprise their students in their lessons. They should sometimes include jokes and sometimes joke about something that some learner has done -this should not be offensive. Bigge and Shermis (ibid) are of the view that teachers need to allow learners to take control of their

learning. This means that the teacher should value learner input, which will make learners feel important. This will motivate them to work hard. For example, allowing learners to choose an activity, they will own it and this will make them put more effort into that activity. If a lesson is about report writing, then teachers must afford learners an opportunity to decide what they would like to investigate and what to write a report about. Then learners own the task and do their best.

The last source of motivation identified is fantasy. Bigge and Shermis (2004) suggest teachers should provide learners an opportunity where they could picture themselves doing something else. Teachers must be interested in what learners would do when confronted with certain situations. For example, considering the low matric pass rate in the Eastern Cape, the teacher might ask learners what they would do to address this problem if they were Minister of Education. This will make learners think deeply about issues surrounding the matric pass rate and they may come up with solutions that even teachers had not considered. Teachers should always afford learners opportunities to think about things that are meaningful to them.

2.2.7 Self- efficacy and academic achievement of learners

Self- efficacy concerns itself with the learners' capabilities to do the task (Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2002: 315). It refers to their views about their performance competences in a particular setting (Bandura, 1997 in Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2002). Self -efficacy is about learners' confidence in doing a particular activity or task and it depends on the context. Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) claim that self-efficacy has been linked to quite a number of attributes that lead to positive schooling outcomes. These include high levels of determination and perseverance in difficult tasks until they reach high levels of accomplishment and learning. Students who have positive self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to work harder and persist, and eventually to achieve at higher levels on given tasks because they believe they have the ability to do it. Linnenbrink and Pintrich

(ibid) suggest that teachers must help students develop positive self –efficacy beliefs that are fair, and caution them about the dangers of over-estimating and those of underestimating their self-efficacy.

For this to happen, teachers need to examine their own sense of efficacy first. When teachers lack confidence in their teaching efficacy, they can engage in behaviours that reinforce feelings of incompetence, and this is likely to pass on to learners (Eccles and Roeser, 2000:407). Teachers must create an environment that supports learners' general development. Learners develop a sense of worth or feel valued when their teachers have high expectations of them. They feel more connected to their teachers, and Eccles and Roeser (2008) claim that the feelings of emotional support play a critical role in the developmental context. Teachers must respect and care for their learners and their learning. This will not only build a quality relationship that is necessary for teaching and learning, but also will provide learners with intellectual scaffolding that will help them approach difficult tasks (Deci and Ryan, 2002; Goodenow. 1993; Midgeley et al 1989b; NRC, 2004 in Eccles and Roeser, 2008). This will encourage learners to take risks in the classroom, knowing that that they have their teacher's and peers' support.

When teachers develop their lessons, they should bear in mind the level of competency of their learners, as the Department of Education stresses that it is important especially for language teachers to provide activities proportional to the level of learners (DoE, 2012). Learning easy material will not be challenging enough to develop learners, and if the teacher presents material that is too demanding, learners become depressed and end up without acquiring new knowledge, so there must be proportionality. Wilson and Peterson (2006) suggest that teachers must think very hard about the purpose of their lessons, topics interesting to learners, areas that may pose some challenges and how to create an environment that is supportive of development of learners in the classroom. Content that provides meaningful exploration is critical (Finn, 1989; Jackson and Davis, 2000; NRC, 2004 in Eccles and Roeser, 2009). Teachers must design various tasks that will afford learners an opportunity to succeed. Experiences of success lead to positive reinforcement while failure leads to disappointment (Masgoret and Gardiner,

2003), meaning that teachers must always maintain and strengthen the feelings of success in their classrooms for learners to achieve at higher levels. Reid (2007) argues that success is an essential factor for motivation and meaningful learning. Motivation and meaningful learning can only take place where learners learn in languages they understand. Their only challenge would be the content, which they can overcome when learning in languages in which they have full grasp. When learners become aware of their abilities and achievements, they are able to sustain self-efficacy.

2.2.8 The value learners place on tasks

Expectations that individuals place on assignments translate to levels of performance. Expectations of success and values serve the function of energizing individuals to engage with a task, to seek out task challenges, to persist in particular tasks and choose certain tasks in their free time (Lau and Roeser, 2002:143). Eccles- Parsons and colleagues define expectancy of success as individuals' beliefs of how well they would perform in future tasks in a given domain (in Lau and Roeser, *ibid*). The previous experiences of failure or success contribute to what the learner may think of the current task. Value concerns itself with the individual's internal drive as well as the external factors in choosing and engaging in a task. Lau and Roeser (2002: 143) argue that subject matter and specific task values strongly relate to individuals' continuous obligation to an activity through what they adopted.

Pintrich, Roeser and De Groot (1994: 141) point out that the more value put on tasks, the higher the levels of motivation. Researchers identified four dimensions or components of task value: utility, interest, attainment and cost values (Pintrich et al, *ibid*). These dimensions highlight the importance of a learner's personal interest in the subject matter, their perceptions about the usefulness of what is being learned, how important the subject matter is in their future endeavours, and lastly the sacrifices they have to make. For example, they may choose studies instead of pleasure. Kitsantas (2008) maintains that task value is context specific, because a learner may perform well

in one subject and struggle in another subject in the very same class.

2.2.9 Causes of academic failure and of success

It is very important to analyse reasons for things to happen, for example, success or failure (Weiner, 1986). This way, learners try to find explanations of their experiences, whether of failure or success. They need to find out what caused the results. According to Weiner (1986), individuals attribute success or failure to internal as well as external factors, and these can be categorised into stability, locus and controllability. A learner may attribute failure to the non-existence of support from the teacher, but that may change if the learner decides to join a study group or perhaps revise the previous year's question papers when preparing for examinations. Sometimes a learner may attribute failure to internal factors such as lack of ability. Ability, talent or skills are factors that need to be present to attribute success because they are adaptive. Adaptive attributions are associated with higher expectations for success, enhanced academic self-efficacy and positive effect, while external factors hinder acquisition strategies, because they provide little or no reason for children to learn (Weiner, 1986: 317).

Learners should attribute failure to unstable, internal and controllable causes, because that will give them hope to change in the future. Attributions do not only relate to learners, they talk to teachers as well. Teachers should assess the situation, and find out why a particular student has succeeded or failed (Gardiner and Masgoret, 2003). The way teachers react after the learners' experiences of success or failure is very important. Feedback is always important (Graham (1994), because it helps both learners and teachers to identify areas of strength and those areas of concern (in Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2002). The DoE (2011) also recommends that language teachers should give high quality, regular and timely feedback so that learners are able to understand where to improve. Teachers need to analyse the situation, and work with students, helping them to develop the skills and strategies needed for success (Graham, 1994 in Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2002). Among others, these strategies include, self-regulated

learning, and its discussion follows below.

2.3 The value of Self- Regulated Learning when learning in a Second Language

It is important for learners to develop and employ strategies that will help them with the acquisition, keeping, and transferring of knowledge to another context. Employing learning strategies in learning the second language is very important, because language is a vehicle for interaction (DoE, 2011). Learning to use a language effectively, English in the case of this study empowers learners to be able to use it in different situations in their daily lives (DoE, 2012). Studies link self- regulated –learning strategies to academic achievement. For example, Pintrich and De Groot, 1990; Zimmerman and Martinez- Pons, 1986 (in Pintrich, Roeser and De Groot, 1994: 3) argue that learners who use cognitive strategies, such as elaboration and organising, engage in content at a deeper level of processing and are more likely to recall and be able to use it later. Self- regulated learning is one of the strategies that second language learners need to employ so that they are able to negotiate meaning and develop comprehension skills for other subjects as well.

Self-regulated learning concerns itself with metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral levels that the student shows through actively participating in their learning (Zimmerman in Kitsantas, Winsler and Huie, 2008). Wolters (2010) adds that self-regulated learning is about students' active engagement in managing their own academic functioning, and Pintrich (2004) believes that learners have the potential to manage their academic learning when they are active participants in it. Researchers also agree that self-regulation applies students who are independent, have adaptive attitudes and able to employ different strategies when learning. Kaylani (1996) argues that successful learners employ a combination of different learning strategies (in Root, 1999). This is in line with the aims of the Department National Curriculum Statement, which later changed to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), to produce learners

who can organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively. These learners are also expected to be able to collect, analyse and critically evaluate information (DoE, 20112).

The body of literature also reveals that SRL takes place through four phases: forethought, monitoring, control and reflection (Pintrich, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000). These refer to learners who show that they plan and set goals, who keep a record of their accomplishments. In addition, Pintrich (2000) and Zimmerman (2000) believe that learners who are self-regulated actively manage their learning. Lastly, these learners reflect on their learning and see what works for them in their learning and what does not. People around these learners also play a vital role in the progress and the consolidation of these strategies. These people include among others: parents, teachers and peers. When learners do not understand something, they approach the nearest people for answers. This is also in line with the zone of proximal development suggested by Vygotsky, where learners reach out to the nearest people for answers (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2000).

Time management is another characteristic of learners using self-regulated strategies. Time management reflects how effective the learners are in controlling their study time and the environment they are in, in accomplishing their academic goals (Pintrich et al., Roeser & de Groot 19934). They put themselves in an environment that fosters learning (Britton and Tesser, 1991; Tuckman, 2003 in Kitsantas et. al, 2008), for example an environment where there are fewer distractions. Self-regulated learners take charge of their own learning. Those learners who learn in a second language would employ strategies so that they can improve their proficiency levels in their LoLT to improve their academic achievement.

2.4 Constructivism in South African classrooms

Constructivism refers to a process by which human beings actively make sense of the

world around them (Wiske, 1998). Phillips (1995) adds that constructivism is the theory where individuals within social communities build knowledge, and that disciplines or bodies of knowledge are human constructions (in Kemp, n.d). Constructivism is an approach, which gives learners an opportunity to construct their own sense of what they learn by building connections or relationships between the ideas and facts taught (Borich and Tombari, 1997 in Killen, 2010).

What constructivism means in Education is that other school stakeholders must support and encourage learners in their learning. Teachers assume roles of being facilitators, where they guide learners who must be actively engaged in making meaning of the world around them. Teachers need to create an environment that will allow learners to manipulate objects, identify and solve problems, work with each other and demonstrate their understanding.

Constructivism is the cornerstone of the South African curriculum. One of the principles that the curriculum is based on is that of promoting a vigorous and critical approach to learning rather than providing learners with answers (DoE, 2012). It serves the purpose of arming learners with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for a responsible citizen to contribute to state affairs. Since learners have to develop a repertoire of skills as problem solvers, they need to be innovative (DoE, 2003). This is in line with the theory of constructivism. The Department of Education includes an Additional Language because it aims at enabling learners to use it and their imagination to find more about themselves and the world around them (DoE, 2012). In addition, English First Additional Language teachers are expected to expose learners to a wide variety of materials, and provide opportunities for learners to read and view for literacy information and pleasure (Doe, *ibid*). In this way, learners would increase their vocabulary, mostly needed for interaction with the text, the teacher and other learners as well.

2.5 Teaching perspective

Researchers agree that teachers need to use teaching techniques and perspectives that will accommodate every learner in the classroom in the process of constructing knowledge. Pratt (2002) suggests that teachers need to have 'a bag of mixed perspectives' in their process of helping learners discover and construct knowledge. This is because he believes there is no single approach that will cover every aspect of teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers need to balance their techniques depending on the content at hand. Among other learning approaches suitable for constructivist classrooms, is collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is an approach that requires learners to come together and discuss questions and problems given by the teacher (Boud and Feletti 1991 in Yin, Abdullah and Alazidiyeen, 2011). Gokhale (1995) views collaborative learning as an instruction method where learners from different performance levels can come together and work towards the same goal. Collaborative learning has many approaches that teachers can use in their classrooms. It is an approach that seeks to place the responsibility of learning entirely upon learners' shoulders, the teacher becomes a facilitator of knowledge, and it aims at fostering positive interdependence (Bruffee 1999 in Warren, 2010).

According to scholars, collaborative learning produces benefits that are necessary to develop critical thinking since learners become actively involved in their own learning. Critical thinking is one of the skills that the DoE (2011) aims to develop in learners, because it is demanded in the workplace. Through collaborative learning, social skills and competencies improve because learners assume leadership roles in their groups and learn how to communicate with others without offending them (Chuen, Majid, Rahman, Dahlan, and Atan, 2008). Learners must be afforded opportunities to solve problems together, research, share, and elaborate on knowledge, and to construct arguments together (Chuen et al, 2008: 131). Critical thinking enables learners to acquire skills like hypothesizing, collecting data, drawing conclusions and the ability to present reports (Yin, Abdullah and Alazidiyeen, 2011).

Collaborative learning affords learners opportunities to engage at a higher intellectual level and to become independent, because they become responsible for their own learning and for the learning of each other (Dooly, 2008; Warren, 2010). Since learners become hands-on in their learning through discussions aimed at problem solving, their interest increases, and they are able to retain knowledge for longer (Dooly, 2008). Currently, we live in a dynamic and technology-driven society content mastery alone is insufficient. Learners need competencies and transferable skills demanded by the work place to support content knowledge (Chuen, Majid, Rahman, Dahlan and Atan, 2008). The workplace needs people who are able to work in teams in the process of realising the mission of that particular institution. Wallis and Steptoe (2006) point out the concern that learners will not meet the global economy requirements because they are unable to think and work in teams (in Chuen et al, 2008).

2.6 Classroom practice

2.6.1 Learner – teacher interaction

In *The Teacher* (2000) as cited by Coetzee (2009), argued that an Education system is only as good as its teachers. To be good, teachers must be reflective, show empathy and be team players who persevere. Simon and Beard (1985: 81) argue that one of the main reasons for constant high learner failure rate is teachers who are either incompetent or lazy or lack the classroom management skills (Dispatch, 2001 in Coetzee, 2009). This means that the output, which is the learner performance in this case, and the behaviour of learners, reflects the work done by the teacher. The situation becomes more challenging when teaching occurs in English Second Language. Probyn (in Zenex, 2007:7) states that in many cases, teachers find it difficult to decide between teaching content and teaching language.

This is so because the bulk of South African teachers work in classrooms and in schools where English is officially the language of instruction, but it is neither home

language of teachers nor of learners (Setati, Adler, Reed, and Bapoo, 2002:1). If they focus on the content and use the learner's home language to make concepts understood, they are perhaps compromising their role in teaching English, and again if they focus on English, they may compromise the extent to which the content is understood (Zenex, 2007). Chaudron (1998) as cited in Ndamba (2008) shares the same sentiments that learners face challenges in decoding an activity presented to them in a second language as it needs them to have acquired certain linguistic competencies.

The question of English supremacy in South Africa is not easy to resolve, and it splits in difficult ways into classroom practice (Setati, et al., 2002:8). For the learners to understand content, teachers use a technique called code- switching. Code- switching is a phenomenon where the teacher and or learners move from their LoLT and use their home language as a source in the classroom (Setati and Adler, 2000; Mati, 2004) Code-switching can involve a word, a phrase, a sentence or sentences (Yousif, 2012: 50). Setati, et al., (2002) are also of the view that code switching is a pedagogical strategy that depends on the teachers' skills, the content of the lesson and what they perceive to be in the best interests of their learners. Learners need to interact with the teachers as well as among themselves, and this exploratory talk takes place in the learners' main language. Code- switching brings about meaningful communication (Setati, et al., 2002:11). Mati (2004) adds that code- switching is necessary as it supports classroom interaction because learners borrow from the language they understand better.

Where English is a LoLT, code- switching becomes unavoidable for non-English speaking learners, as most of them are not fluent in English. Setati et al. (2002) argue that code- switching in language practice could support classroom communication, whereas Broeder, Extra and Maartens (2008) argue that code- switching is harmful to the development of languages, English and isiXhosa in this case. Several authors have documented different reasons for why bilingual children code-switch and code-mix. Bilinguals use code- mixing because they lack enough vocabulary and skills to express themselves. They do not know each language completely (Heredia & Altarriba, 2011:

165). Heredia and Altarriba (ibid) further indicate that speakers use code- switching because they are reinforcing their relationships with those people they are communicating. Sometimes speakers use another language because they want to win the argument, while others do so because they wish to exclude other people from the conversation (Yousif, 2012). In the context of this study, code- switching takes place so that the speakers can understand one another. It brings about meaningful learning because both learners and teachers use the language they understand better. Therefore, in this case code- switching facilitates communication or interaction between teachers and learners and among learners themselves.

Studies have shown a link between learning in a second language and poor performance. Studies have also shown that in spite of challenges experienced when learning in a second language, parents and learners still prefer it. Other studies reveal that immersion programmes work better in the learning of second language. Mac Pherson (1992) suggests that the best way to learn a language is to receive support from speakers of that language, English in this case. Botes and Mji (2010) dispute MacPherson's idea mentioned above because they observed that English monolingual speakers explain in English and this does not help learners to learn English. Even in those schools that are less than a kilometer or a few kilometers from cities or towns, contact with English is entirely a classroom experience (Mati, 2004).

Learning in English is so challenging to rural learners that their teachers need to devise other means of imparting knowledge. In South Africa, many teachers of English to non-English speaking learners are not fluent speakers themselves (Mac Pherson, 1992:15) and this makes them reluctant to speak English in the classroom. This results in some teachers instructing learners in their home language or using code- switching (Novick, 2010). Mati (2004) who said teachers in most African schools in South Africa code-switch because their English proficiency is severely limited made a similar discovery. Nel and Muller (2010) agree with Mac Pherson (1992) who after a study of English proficiency levels of students who are practising teachers who also teach English Second Language learners. Nel and Muller (2010) also found that the pass rate

deteriorated for English Second language teachers who enrolled at the University of South Africa between the years 2006 and 2008. In 2006, the pass rate was 49.58%, and in 2007, it was 47.86%, while in 2008 it was 44.39%. Therefore, code-switching helps both teachers and learners. Teachers and learners use their mother tongue as a resource to compensate for the lack of proficiency in the second language.

2.6.2 Teaching technique

Teachers need to feel secure first in order to create an environment for learners to feel safe in their classrooms. The context in which teaching and learning is taking place is of great importance as it brings about active engagement (Doll, Spies, Le Clair, Kurien and Foley, 2010). In an environment where learners feel safe they become motivated and it encourages them to take risks (de los Dolores Cueva Zepeda, 2008). This makes students feel in control, and when they do so they take more responsibility for their learning (Larsen- Freeman, 2000 in de los Dolores Cueva Zepeda, *ibid*) and this yields better results. Teachers need to allow learners to make mistakes, unlike in the past. Mac Pherson (1992) argues that teachers become accustomed to learners who make mistakes. If teachers punish learners for making mistakes, this prevents them from trying. Thus, teachers have to realise that learning more often than not, is trial and error (Mac Pherson, *ibid*), and they must give learners a fair chance.

When conducting lessons, teachers must make sure that those lessons are learner – centered as required by Outcomes Based Education (OBE). Mac Pherson (1992) states that learners must be given the opportunity to read as much as possible. The emphasis should be more on grammar and reading than on listening and speaking (Piehl, 2011). The Department of Education (2011) clearly states that children need to have as much exposure to English as possible because it is their LoLT. For learners to use and understand the language better, their activities need to make use of relevant contexts so that they become fully involved in their learning.

This is in line with Rini (2001) who observes that learners should be provided with plenty of reading materials in the target language to read for pleasure. Rini (ibid) further says teachers need to consider their learners' comprehension levels. In addition, they should allow learners to choose their own texts and read them at their own pace. Most importantly, these books must be relevant to their lives (Rini, 2001). Cruz (2010) is also of the view that exposure to plenty of literature may improve language proficiency in the target language. He based his argument on the fact that learners would have a wider and closer look at the events and to the author where target language is used. Learners should be encouraged to read at an early age so that they developed a culture of reading. The power of reading and exposure to the target language plays a very critical role in second language acquisition and this later assists learners to cope with academic tasks.

In his work, Krashen (2013) found that for learners to develop competency in a language, they need comprehensible input in it. Rini (2001) agrees that exposure to material of a target language is very important in language acquisition. Encouraging learners to use the language in multiple places outside the classroom may help improve their understanding in that language (Nguyen and Kellogg, 2010 in Piehl, 2011). The role of a teacher changes from being an instructor to being a facilitator. Mac Pherson (1992) suggests that teachers should prepare activities and materials that allow learners to focus on the work they are doing. De Cueva Zepeda (2008) adds that the teacher's role is very important, as he/she must guide learning the language through meaningful and relevant activities. In this way, the role of teacher changes from being an instructor to be a facilitator. Teachers should vary their teaching techniques, from real life situations, dialogues and songs to story-telling (Mac Pherson, 1992). Teachers must possess a repertoire of strategies that make class control possible through active learning and participation since learners learn at different rates and in different ways (Ofudu, 2012).

2.7 Language in Education Policy (LiEP)

2.7.1 Policies in Education and Language

The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) gives all 11 languages equal status and parity of esteem, (Alexander, 2003), and the Constitution affords everyone an opportunity to obtain education in preferred official language(s), where possible. The current LiEP states from Grade 4 learners be taught through the medium of English, but this is gradually changing as the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, proclaimed in parliament that a new LiEP would be implemented from 2014, where all schools would offer African languages from Grade R (Davis, 2013). The LiEP and the Constitution promote multilingualism and the development of and respect for all languages in the country (DoE, 1997: 24).

The learning of more than one language should be a general practice in our schools (DoE, 1997) as this will improve the multilingualism of both the society and the individual. Celebrating language diversity is an approach adopted in Europe, where the Commission of the European Communities (2005) drafted a framework strategy for multilingualism. Multilingualism is the ability to communicate in several languages and is beneficial for individuals and for society at large (European Commission, 2009:6). In this realm, learners should maintain their mother tongue and be able to acquire an additional language.

The Department of Education (DoE) (1997) aimed at pursuing a language policy that supports general conceptual growth amongst learners, hence the establishment of additive multilingualism as an approach in language policy. It further states that the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in a public school must be (an) official language(s) (Alexander, 2003). The National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2002) declares the use of first additional language as the LoLT; its teaching should achieve levels of teaching that meet the nuclear levels essential for actual teaching across the curriculum. This proficiency includes the ability to use the language for communication purposes and the ability to respond to academic challenges (DoE, 2002). With the

above policies in place, providing the country's learners with a choice of learning in languages they prefer, research indicates English is still the preferred language of learning and teaching.

2.8 The Dominance of English in Education

Although the Language in Education Policy affords all 11 official languages parity of esteem and equal status, in practice, the state and the schools still give English a higher status as in the old paradigm (Alexander, 2003). Owen–Smith (2010) also noted the disregard of the right, enshrined in the Constitution that a learner should receive education in his/her preferred language(s). O'Connor and Geiger (2009) also claim partial realisation of language policy.

This, in essence causes schools to slide into monolingualism (English), and is in contrast with the LiEP's promotion of multilingualism. Broeder, Extra and Maartens (2008) express South Africa's slide into monolingualism where they claim that South Africa is fast developing into a monolingual country rather than a multilingual one. In South African schools, English is the obvious additional language of choice if the first language of a learner is not English, and this gives English the opportunity for expansion as a medium of communication. Modiba (in Haddad, 2008: 143) says English is still a dominant language in all public domains and claims that the Education sector does not reflect the multilingual nature of South Africa. Mati (2004) adds that in all government spheres, that is local, provincial and national government, English dominates. Mati (2004) went further to say that even the world of entertainment is English because most music and videos, as well as menus in fast food outlets, are in English. The equality of eleven spoken languages in South Africa remains largely on paper, as experiences on the ground do not reflect it. Other languages do not share the same prestige as English as far as people are concerned.

For most South Africa people, the language issue remains marginally important, as their

immediate concerns are directly material, insofar as they need jobs, houses, health and access to secondary and tertiary education for their children (Alexander, 2003). Prah (2007) also remarks on the desire to develop African languages but then again there is no implementation of this idea, it remains on paper only. Prah (2007) also claims people side-line African languages now more than they did before 1994. Similar studies around the continent also show that African countries choose colonial languages, so learning in a second language is not unique to South Africa. A study carried out by Campbell (1996) reveals that students prefer English as their LoLT even though they struggle to express themselves during conversations (in Ndamba, 2008). The Centre for Language Studies (1999) had similar findings about Malawian parents and learners who strongly prefer English as a medium of instruction (in Kamwendo, 2008). Most of the time, non-English speaking people do not attach economic or political gains to their languages. They view their languages as localised languages unlike English, which is a global language. They understand little about the cognitive gains that assist learners with academic performance.

2.9 The Role of Mother Tongue in Education

LiEP promotes inter-group communication and understanding of the languages across the country. For this to happen, Alexander (2003) suggests the promotion of mother tongue based bilingual education, and also the promotion of individual multilingualism rather than relying on only the lingua franca, as this will support additive bilingualism. Researchers have found that the home language is an appropriate language in the initial stages of schooling (Kotze, Smuts and Vermeulen in de Wet, 2002:119; Dryer and De Walt in Lemmer, Kamper and Mahlobo, 2003) show the importance of learning in the mother tongue. In addition, Wa-Mbaleka (2014) is of the view that mother tongue instruction is the best for learners because, among other things, it develops a solid foundation on which to acquire other languages because children have already developed strong mother tongue competencies. Wa-Mbaleka (ibid) further purports that

it helps learners develop a high level of self-esteem helps them to maximise their classroom participation and by so doing they learn more as they are actively involved in their own learning.

In the same vein, Ndamba (2008) also points out the value of mastering mother tongue for the acquisition of other languages. Mindful of the benefits associated with mother-tongue instruction, Matentjie (2010: 38) warns that choosing mother tongue instruction is not as straight forward as it might seem, especially for black learners who come from bi/ multilingual family context. In a South African context, Gauteng would experience bi/ multilingual family context, as it is the hub for multilingualism. Most African states share the same characteristics because studies reveal that each country has many languages spoken by its inhabitants. This means a review of LiEP is necessary so that it accommodates learners according to their needs, and adopts an approach that will put to an end to the gaps or tensions that seem to exist between policy and practice.

2.10 Challenges facing the development of African languages

Even though researchers have shown the importance of learning in the mother tongue, learning through the medium of African languages is still facing challenges. These challenges range from the attitudes of parents, the lack of resources to develop African languages as well as human resources that is, teachers who will help in teaching these languages because they need training (Foley, 2008, Wa-Mbaleka, 2014). The English language has gained dominance at the expense of African languages because people regard it as the language for upward mobility, something that other languages do not offer. In the same way, parents and children view their mother tongues as languages that will pose disadvantages for the employability as work places attach a high premium in English, both government spheres and private companies (Wa-Mbaleka, 2014).

Statistics show that there are very few English native speakers in South Africa and yet many people use it. Parents are taking their children to English medium schools

because they want them to be proficient in English. They view English as a language of power. They see upward mobility and advancement as coming through English language (Alexander, 2003; Prah 2007) to such an extent that even the so-called “Coloured people” in the Western Cape are tending towards speaking English. Tertiary institutions experience challenges in developing and maintaining African languages. De Klerk (2002) revealed that even at universities, the number of students enrolling in African languages is decreasing. This will later lead to fewer experts in African languages.

Prah (2007: 9) observed that Africans have developed a view that promoting African languages is a strategy to uphold the apartheid policy of keeping Africans at the lower levels in social stratification. This has made Africans look down on their own languages because these languages are localised and they are domesticated, and learners do not know the benefits that are associated with the development and promotion of African languages. Robinson, (1996) as cited in Ndamba (2008), adds that development of African languages is facing a challenge because particular communities use these languages and have emotional attributes linked to village solidarity and personal loyalty. While on the other hand, English is characterised by its economic advantage in the global world (Ndamba, 2008).

Motshabi (2006) voiced a concern that very few Africans stand against the English domination, while the Constitution affords every official language equal status. Motshabi (ibid) further accuses the government of being “hell bent on promoting English above all other languages, despite the fact that this inconveniences the majority as English is not their first language.” (in Prah, 2007). Mati (2004) confirms this, pointing out that English is the language most used in all spheres of government. Prah (2007) states that even when it comes to print media, 90% of it are in English and Afrikaans, English taking the lead. This caters for people who understand these languages, and the implication is possibly that they are the only ones who deserve to know what is happening around them. Politicians in their rallies address masses in English, the language in which most followers perhaps have limited proficiency, and Prah (2007) says the message cannot

get across to these masses effectively in that case. People's attitudes are not the only challenge in developing and promoting African languages, resources pose a challenge.

Davis (2013) stated that Mveli revealed that in 2006, in the Western Cape, the former model C schools wanted to introduce African languages but the government failed to provide them with support. In a study in Tanzania, Campbell (1996) comes to the conclusion that students chose colonial languages over their mother tongues even when afforded the opportunity to learn in their mother tongues because they do not attach any value in doing so (in Ndamba, 2008). Parents need to come to an understanding of the benefits of learning in the mother tongue in order to be in a better position to help their children academically.

Prah (2007) alleges that South Africa is producing a generation with a lost identity where African children can hardly read and write in their mother tongue. They even pronounce names in African languages incorrectly. Miti (1995) made similar findings when arguing that in Zambia, bilingual education led to the production of thousands of children with low proficiency levels in both their mother tongue and in English (in Ndamba, 2008). Benson (2005) differed from this view as she documented advantages of bilingualism where it allows learners to be able to speak, read and write another language other than their mother tongue. Benson (ibid) further notes that bilingualism affords learners an opportunity to interact meaningfully during classroom interaction because they use the language they understand.

The development of African languages remains poor, their standard written forms remain archaic, limited and context bound, and out of touch with the scientific world (Matentjie, 2010: 40). Therefore, language effected as LoLT needs to be modernised, regularised, codified and elaborated (Foley, 2008). Mackey argues that a language that lacks a written form cannot be empowered (in Foley, 2008). Furthermore, Foley (ibid) says for schools to use African languages, the government needs to write policy documents like CAPS in those languages, as it is no use teaching African languages in a curriculum written in English. Resources pose a challenge in printing textbooks written in African languages, Foley (ibid), further points out that the above challenges seem

impossible to address.

Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, mandated a new language policy effected in 2014 where all schools would offer African languages starting from Grade R. She indicated that the Department has already piloted some schools in each province to implement this new language policy. Mweli (2013) cited by (Davis, 2013) added that this pilot project has already taken place in the Eastern Cape where the introduction of isiXhosa as the Language of Learning and Teaching up to Grade 6 has been implemented in 74 schools. When responding to the question about resources, it became clear that the finances to employ teachers are not available, because posts for those teachers have not been budgeted for (Davis, 2013).

The lack of resources to develop indigenous languages is not unique to the South African context. The Botswana government also experienced the lack of resources to develop indigenous languages and could not implement the recommendations made by the Kedikilwe Commission on Education after its reviewing the entire education system (Hays, 2005). Minister Motshekga further indicated that the challenge weighed heavily on the quality of instruction in South Africa, considering the lack of resources needed to develop minority language curricula (Hays, 2005). Now, South Africa faces a situation where there is poor performance in the LoLT, and the lack of resources to develop and promote the African languages necessary for second language acquisition, English FAL in this case.

2.11 Language and learning

There is a critical relationship between children's acquisition of language and their learning (Zenex, 2007). Vygotsky (in Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002: 70) claims that "Language is not just a system of words to communicate with, but the carrier of our thoughts, our feelings, our cultural and soul goods, our values, our meaning-giving, our attitudes and our relationships." Benson (2005) concurs that language is fundamental

for understanding and communication in the classroom. In addition, Kamper, Mahlobo and Lemmer (2003) postulate that English language proficiency is central to learning, which means that in order for the learners to perform better in their studies, they must understand the language through which they are learning. There is compelling evidence from research that children beginning schooling learn more readily if initial teaching and learning occurred in their first or home language (Foley, 2008). Hence, the Department of Education in Language Policy promotes learning in the home language in the Foundation Phase (DoE, 1997). This is because learners learn better through the language they understand. Before learners receive education in English, they need to internalise their learning through their mother tongue.

Williams (2011) concurs by saying, “Students’ ability to internalize and manipulate concepts in their mother tongue is the foundation for all successful learning.” William (ibid) puts it bluntly by saying, “Your language is how upon you learn”, and Owen-Smith (2010) argues that any child who cannot use a language s/he is familiar with (usually the home language) is disadvantaged, and unlikely to perform to his/ her best ability. She adds that depriving a child of the opportunity to learn in its home language does not only undermine that child’s self-confidence, but it also leads to repeated experiences of under-achievement. Matentjie (2010), and O’Connor and Geiger (2009) agree with Owen- Smith that when a learner struggles academically, his or her self- esteem, as well as his/her confidence, is negatively affected. The philosophy behind this policy is that learners require a firm foundation in their home language in order to establish the skills necessary to engage with further learning (Zenex, 2007).

De Wet (2002) agrees that it is important for children to learn to think in their home language up to CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) level. He further argues that learners are more successful in acquiring the second language if they have already mastered strategies for negotiating meaning in print in their home language (119). Matentjie (ibid 2010: 42) emphasises the importance of CALP through the mother tongue. Matentjie (ibid) stresses that speaking and listening only is never enough to make the decision for mother tongue instruction, because even those learners at the

foundation level need to demonstrate higher-order cognitive functioning, and failure to operate at this level manifests in learning difficulties. In their project, Spaull, van der Berg, Wills, Gustafsson and Kotzè (2016) found that learners from the Foundation Phase cannot read for meaning, and these learners will have long-lasting difficulties in their schooling because they have not mastered the language. Cummins (1999) asserts that academic language is difficult even in L1 since it is more abstract and de-contextualised, especially from Grade 3 (Modiba in Haddad, 2008). Therefore, a solid foundation in the mother tongue is required, so that learners can learn a second language with less difficulty.

Although research advocates for the use of mother tongue in the early grades (foundation phase), William (2011) argues that in South African schools, there is the danger that home language instruction is neglected even in grades 1-3, and Owen-Smith (2010) says Motshekga also recommended that the English language should be introduced even earlier, alongside the Home Language. This came after the task team, commissioned in 2009 to review the curriculum, indicated that the transition period was another critical area that needed consideration. This is understandable because literature also indicates that learning a second language at an early age has cognitive benefits. Badea (2009) supports this when saying that children who start to learn the second language before the age of eleven do not encounter as many problems as young adults do.

De Wet (2002) further purports that although home language education is a sound policy, the majority of South Africans prefer English, not their home language, as LoLT. They put several reasons for the choice of English as LoLT. They perceive English as a language of politics, economy and trade (de Wet, 2002; Makhanya, 2011) and it secures access to economic resources (Zenex, 2007). It is the language of power (Alexander, 2003) as non-English speakers feel that without English, there is no power and they view their languages as worthless (Owen-Smith, 2010). Desai (2001) is also of the view that language policy affords citizens of the country an opportunity to participate in the world of politics, education and economy, but also believes that it can deny that

opportunity as well. Also, the lack of learning material in mother tongues is seen as a challenge in using mother tongue as the LoLT (de Wet, 2002: Foley, 2008).

Learners, who lack exposure to English due to their poor backgrounds, may experience some challenges in acquiring communication skills in English (Mzokwana, 2008; Zenex, 2007). The DoE (2011) also revealed that even at Grade 10 level, learners have not acquired accepted English proficiency levels, because they still struggle in expressing themselves in their Additional language, English in this case. In order for learners to improve their language proficiency, they must be provided with opportunities for effective learning; writing, listening, reading and speaking activities (Mzokwana, 2008). Uys, der Walt, van der Berg and Botha (2007:69) point out that all teachers have a stake in effective literacy. Teachers should take into cognisance that it is not easy to change from one language to another. With regard to this, De Wet (2002:119) says, “Learning and changing over to a second language is a traumatic experience.” Most South African learners learn in a second language.

2.12 Effects of English as Medium of instruction on learner performance

Language is the means through which learning takes place in a school. The DoE (2011: 8) says language is a device through which learners exchange ideas with peers and teachers, and engage with academic texts. Simasiku (in Mzokwana, 2008: 7) states that one of the major functions of language is its use for learning, for putting new ideas into words, for testing one's thinking, which all needs to be done to bring about new understanding. In this way, language is central to learning. English is the language used in rural schools as a medium of instruction. This means that learners are compelled to learn all subjects in English except their mother tongue, is isiXhosa in many schools in the Eastern Cape. Assessment also takes place in English.

For all rural learners, English is a second language and may pose problems of comprehension in certain subjects (Mzokwana, 2008), The DoE (2005) confirmed this

when revealing that learners achieved only 35 % where they had to evaluate and communicate their findings in Natural Science (Klapwijk, 2012). Learners are compelled to learn in the medium of English irrespective of their background and culture. McKenzie and Walker (2013) observed that learners from rural areas suffer the most if LoLT is English. In order for learners to master the language, they need to use it in their everyday life. The NECC (in Mzokwana, 2008: 13) concurs by saying, “Children should have active contact with the medium of instruction not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom so that they learn to use it with ease.” Further, Curtis (in Mzokwana, 2008: 13) argues that, “It is not possible to develop language competence in any other way than by actually speaking, listening, reading and writing.”

In South Africa, the challenge of the medium of instruction challenges learners from primary to tertiary levels (Mchazime, 2001: 115). Amuzu (in Mchazime, 2001:115) reported that, “Many South African high school learners leave high school unprepared for further education because competence in English is very low and their general reading ability is rudimentary.” In the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) undertaken in 2006, many South Africans scored a significantly low mean score, but learners whose home language was English were the most successful by a significant margin (Novick, 2010). In addition, the DoE (2005) declared that 60 % of learners scored at “Not Achieved” level in the LoLT tasks during the last Intermediate Phase Systematic Evaluation (IPSE). Learners managed to obtain 31% for Reading and Viewing, and another 31% for open-ended questions (Klapwijk, 2012).

Lack of proficiency in the language of instruction has detrimental effects on the students’ ability to deal with content (Zakaria & Aziz, 2011: 44). Novick (2010) attributes poor English competence to lack of teaching materials and resources for educators. This means that learners do not have material to read in English. Another contributing factor to their lack of competence is their limited English proficiency. Learners are deprived chances of demonstrating their understanding of the content and meaningful interaction is stunted (Pluddemann, Mati, Mahlalela-Thusi, 1998 & Pflepsen, 2011). This clearly illustrates that there is a need to address the question of LoLT properly if this

country is to see English Second Language learners' performance improving.

In subjects like Math and Science, learners perform poorly because of their low English proficiency (Zakaria & Aziz, 2011; Mji & Makgato, 2006). In the four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) of language proficiency, the toughest skill identified by learners in Malaysia is writing (Zakaria & Aziz, 2011). Their research showed that English as a medium of instruction in learning mathematics had an impact on students' performance. English hindered learners from getting good marks in Mathematics (Zakaria and Aziz, *ibid*). Ollerhead and Oosthuizen (2005) reported similar findings where South African Third International Mathematics and Science Repeat Studies revealed that learners achieved low marks because they were not fluent in English. This was evident as they struggled to answer and communicate their ideas clearly (Ollerhead and Oosthuizen, *ibid*). Klapwijk (2012) affirms this referring to the DoE (2005) finding that in the IPSE, learners scored 31% in the questions that demanded higher order of thinking. Prinsloo and Taylor (2005) rated language proficiency as the second highest factor after poverty that affects learner performance (Ferreira, 2011). Ollerhead and Oosthuizen (2005: 60) assert that it is clear that language contributes to the poor subject knowledge of both teachers and pupils in South Africa.

2.13 Learner background

2.13.1 Parental involvement in the choice of English as MOI

South African schools have moved towards decentralisation and more power devolved to School Governing Bodies (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176). This has culminated in the formation of SGBs. The function of the SGBs amongst others is developing the mission statement of the school and developing the language policy within the parameters of the South African Schools Act (SASA) 1996. The introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) created opportunities for greater parental involvement in public education in both primary and secondary school (Mestry & Grobler, 2007: 176). Even

though parents are afforded the opportunity to be involved in their children's education, in most cases, South African parents do not participate meaningfully and this becomes evident in their non-attendance in parental meetings (Mestry & Grobler ,ibid). Some of the reasons for the parents' inactive role in their children's academic progress include their claims lack of knowledge about OBE, so they do not know how to help their children. Other contributing factors for parents' passiveness are; feelings of inferiority, the lack of communication between the school and parents and the, lack of knowledge as to how schools function (Mbokodi and Msila, 2004). The fact that teachers are qualified to handle the schooling situation is also a contributing factor (Heystek and Louw, 1999 in Coetzee, 2009).

Research evidence indicates that parental involvement in their children's education is crucial because it helps with improved learner performance and improved behaviour Mbokodi and Msila (2004), hence Macbeth (1989), Arcaro (1995) Maeroff (1998), and the Sunday Times 2001 urge parents to be active participants who show an interest in their children's academic progress (Coetzee, 2009). Home – school relationships incorporate all the direct and indirect interaction that occurs between students' families and their schools, including face-to-face interactions between families and teachers, as well as intentional and unintentional communications that occur between home and school (Doll et al, 2010: 4). According to McKenna and Williams (1998), parental involvement in government and advocacy is essential for true partnerships in education. In education, parental involvement entails their assistance with high scholastic achievement, their offering guidance and the provision of resources to school related tasks (Mahlobo in Madileng, 2007: 42).

Parents have to create an atmosphere that allows children to learn. Read Right (2001) suggests that parents can contribute in the following ways: finding their children's strengths and encouraging them to develop those strengths. Parents must motivate their children by assisting them in setting realistic goals as well as guiding them in their studies, and also by following up on their performance and providing assistance where there is a need for special attention (Coetzee, 2009). Ellis (2007) suggests that parents

should play an active role by monitoring their children's curricular activities. They should model attitudes conducive to successful language learning. Madileng (2007) points out that the education of parents also plays an important role in the education of their children as they can then assist in their children's learning. This means that children of educated parents benefit because their parents understand better about education. Burstful, Gardner & Smythe have found a positive relationship between parental encouragement and achievement (in Ellis, 2007). When there is parental encouragement, learners progress more quickly (Madileng, 2007) because these parents are able to provide reading materials (such as newspapers, books and magazines) for their children (Mestry & Grobler, 2007).

When it comes to LoLT, parental involvement seems to take a different turn. Literature indicates that they prefer to expose their children to English by sending their children to crèches prior to the commencement of formal schooling (de Klerk, 2002). Parents feel that their children's use of and understanding of English is compromised if they are sent to schools with no prior English learning (de Klerk, *ibid*). Most parents view English as an international language, and they think that English will prepare their children for the modern world and help them to communicate with other groups. In addition, they think that English will open doors for their children, as it is the language mostly used in the workplace. Learners write examinations in English and De Klerk (2002) argues that English has prestige; hence, parents want exposure of their children to it as soon as possible. So parents have not moved beyond the apartheid language ideology where English language enjoyed superiority, at the expense of African languages.

Rehman, Khan, Tariq and Taslem (2010:178) assert that education plays a critical role in the socio-economic development of a country and makes individuals confident, aware and active. Thus, parents should equip their children with the best possible educational environment. In Pakistan, this has made parents send their children to private schools (Rehman et al, 2010) - parents with more advanced occupations mainly do this. Bourdieu (2000) argues that those children born at a higher socio – economic background will be likely to accumulate more cultural capital as it is linked with amount

of time needed for acquisition (Farrell, 2012). Devine- Eller (2005) defines cultural capital as things people have including both material and embodied cultural capitals. Cultural capital refers to the collection of symbolic elements skills, tastes, mannerism, clothing and other things that one acquires through being part of a particular social class. This includes sharing similar forms of cultural capital like going to a particular school where they create a sense of identity and group position (Networks of Capital, undated). This means that children start their schooling differently positioned for the journey ahead, and the social class the child belongs to, determines their schooling. A child who is coming from backgrounds where parents are literate will come to school better positioned because they provided with the necessary support and the materials needed to equip them for schooling.

In West Africa during the colonial period, community attitudes were developed and everything pertaining to Europeans was regarded as excellent and worth imitating, whereas local was regarded as inferior (Ndamba, 2008: 178). This is also true in South Africa as Setati (2005) observed that Africans still resist mother tongue education in favour of English, which they view as a language of knowledge. In Zimbabwe, parents reveal negative attitudes towards African languages and they pass this on to their children (Ndamba, 2008). This is evident in Zimbabwe as someone with an English Honours degree is regarded to have obtained a prestigious degree, whereas a Shona degree had less status (Ndamba, *ibid*).

2.14 Conclusion

In South Africa, there is a language policy in education, which clearly states that all languages must have equal status. However, to date (2016), English still has prominence over other languages and it is widely used in all schools. However, non-English speaking teachers struggle to teach through the medium of the English language, as they themselves are not fluent in it. This poses a great challenge to the

education system as it has a negative effect on learners' performance. Notably, for learners to do better in their studies, they need to have developed discourse competence in the language of instruction so that they can think and express themselves adequately. Learners need to receive education and assessed in bi-lingual instruction. Both English and learners' mother tongues are valuable because the acquisition of the second language depends mostly on the firm foundations of the first language.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology introduced in Chapter 1. This seeks to elucidate the perceptions of school stakeholders towards the use of English as the LoLT in Grade 9 Social Sciences. This study is located in the interpretivist paradigm in that it allows the researcher to find out more about peoples' experiences at a deeper level. This chapter discusses the qualitative approach that guided the choice of data-collecting tools. The researcher deliberates on semi- structured interviews and observations as data-collecting tools. The researcher debates the reasons for choosing case studies as a research design. Lastly, the researcher discusses the limitations of the study, trustworthiness and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Paradigm

3.2.1 Interpretivist Paradigm

For this study, the researcher chose the interpretivist paradigm because it is inductive in nature (Barbie and Mouton, 2015), and it favours qualitative approaches that provide rich reports to fully understand the context (Willis, 2007 in Thanh 1 and Thanh 2, 2015). Interpretivism concerns itself with understanding the context, experiences and perceptions of the participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Scotland, 2012; Barbie and Mouton, 2015; Thanh1 and Thanh 2, 2015). Since the researcher aims at finding out the perceptions of school stakeholders with regard to the use of English as the LoLT for teaching Social Sciences to Grade 9 rural learners, this paradigm provides a better chance for the researcher to understand the world of the participants. Many authors observe that in this paradigm the researcher becomes subjective. It is difficult to remain objective when discussing issues rather than working with numbers (Cohen et. al, 2007; Scotland, 2012; Barbie and Mouton, 2015). Barbie and Mouton (2015) believe

the best way to understand the situation through deep involvement in it. This means that the researcher becomes an instrument of the research. It is challenging a qualitative researcher to remain objective as he or she is directly involved in the context and the interacting with participants (de Vos, Strydom, Fouchè and Delport, 2011). This makes it possible for the researcher to make meaning of the phenomenon under study, through interaction with individual participants.

With the interpretivist paradigm, multiple realities exist as many people see reality, and interpret events differently, leaving multiple perspectives of an incident (Mack, 2010:8). This paradigm is also a naturalistic or constructivist view, because Scotland (2012) believes individuals construct reality construct through social interaction. Therefore, this paradigm fits well with the research problem at hand, because all the parties involved, that is, parents, teachers and learners have different views about learning in English. This paradigm allows the researcher the opportunity to find out more about peoples' experiences about the use of English as the LoLT in rural schools. The Interpretivist paradigm allows for a qualitative approach where data-collecting tools provide an opportunity for in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The next section discusses the qualitative methodology and methods used for collecting data in this study.

3.3 Research Approach

3.3.1 Qualitative research approach

The researcher used a qualitative research approach because of in-depth knowledge gained through it. Willis (2007) confirms this when saying that qualitative approaches usually provide a researcher with the rich reports needed to understand the phenomenon. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to choose data-collecting tools that bring out about more information for the researcher to understand the phenomenon under study. Creswell (2009) asserts that qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups attach to social and

human problems (Thanh1 and Thanh2, 2015). Semi- structured interviews and observations as qualitative data-collecting tools provide a researcher with the opportunity to engage more with participants and to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. Participants are able to tell of their experiences and they offer suggestions where it is appropriate. The researcher leaves the research sites with a better understanding of how school stakeholders, view the use of English as the LoLT.

3.4 Research design

3.4.1 Case Study Design

The researcher chose the case study design for this study because there was a need to understand the perceptions of school stakeholders about the use of the current LoLT especially in rural areas. As Yin (2009) says, the use of case studies arises from the need to understand a particular phenomenon. The use of multiple data-collecting methods provides a holistic view of events and the researcher ends up with a story (Onatu, 2013; Barbie and Mouton, 2015). In this study, the researcher uses semi-structured interviews and observations as data-collecting tools. The researcher deems the case study suitable for this project because it affords her an opportunity to share the participants' experiences (Cohen et. al, 2007; Onatu, 2013). The case study is used because the researcher wants to witness events unfold. For instance, the researcher is interested in understanding the language of interaction in the rural classroom and the case study allows the researcher to observe teachers and learners interacting during Social Sciences lessons.

3.5 Research Methods

3.5.1 Data-collecting tools

This section focuses on data-collecting tools used by the researcher. The researcher chose semi- structured interviews and observations as data-collecting tools. Interviews involve gathering information by the interviewer asking the participant pre -arranged questions (Cohen et. al. 2007; Barbie and Mouton, 2015; De Vos et al, 2011). The researcher creates an atmosphere of friendliness where participants feel comfortable in telling their stories. The researcher sees it important to use a language that participants understand so that they understand questions and are able to provide answers. The researcher recorded interviews with the permission of the participants, and carries out observations to find out what language used by both teachers and learners during Social Sciences lessons in Grade 9. Below is the discussion of two data-collecting tools, semi- structured interviews and observations.

3.5.2 Semi- structured interviews

In this study, the researcher uses semi- structured interviews because they are flexible (de Vos et al, 2011). Semi-structured interviews provide both the researcher and the participants with an opportunity to venture deeply into the topic under study as the researcher asks follow-up questions on issues that emerge during the interview. In addition, the participant gives a fuller picture by explaining his/her views. The researcher allowed participants more talking time on the topic under investigation for the full understanding of the participants, world via stories they tell. Barbie and Mouton (2015) view interviews as a very important data-collecting tool. In the event of ambiguous responses, the interviewer may rely on the gestures and tone used. Cohen et al (2007) add that interviews allow the use of ‘sensory channels’. De Vos et al (2011) suggest that semi-structured interviews are proper to use, especially when issues under

investigation are controversial or personal but it is important to avoid sensitive questions. The issue under study requires participants to explain their views about the current LoLT. With permission from participants, the researcher uses a recorder during interviews. Barbie and Mouton (2015) view the recording of responses as very important because the process provides the researcher with exact answers as they are given.

Semi- structured interviews fit this study because the researcher wants to understand the perceptions of school stakeholders with regard to the use of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). The researcher interviewed eighteen participants on a one-on- one basis. Nine of them are Grade 9 learners, three are Social Sciences teachers, and six are parents from the School Governing Body. With the permission of the participants, the researcher uses a recorder. The researcher uses isiXhosa during interview sessions because the participants chose the isiXhosa language. IsiXhosa is the mother tongue of all the participants in this study and they claimed to understand it better than other spoken languages. Barbie and Mouton (2015) emphasise the ability to speak the language of the participants as very important. The researcher later transcribed recorded interviews for data analysis discussed in the next chapter.

3.5.3 Observations

Observations afford the researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from 'live' situations as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). The researcher observes the language used by teachers when teaching and when asking questions of their Grade 9 learners. The researcher also has the opportunity to listen to the language learners use when responding to the teachers and when interacting among themselves. De Vos et al (2011) describe participant observations as a process of studying natural and everyday occurrences in a particular society. In this study, observations provide an opportunity for the researcher to experience the 'live' world of the participants. Schurink (1998) argues that it becomes easier for the researcher to understand the world of the participants when immersed in it (De Vos et al, 2011).

3.6 Scope of the study

The scope of the study refers to the parameters under which the study is conducted (Simons and Goes, 2013). This study investigates the perceptions of school stakeholders about the Language of Learning and Teaching in rural schools of the King William's Town district. The main focal point was the oral historic component, which requires learners to debate issues and conduct interviews in Grade 9 Social Sciences. The researcher wanted to find out the language experiences of Grade 9 learners during the Social Sciences lessons.

3.7 Sampling strategy

The researcher chose learners, parents and teachers from rural schools to find out their views about the use of English as the LoLT in teaching Grade 9 Social Sciences. Sampling simply means participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of data needed for the study (Niewenhuise in Maree, 2007; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison; 2007). Niewenhuise (in Maree, 2007; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison; 2007) further state that sampling decisions are not restricted to the selection of participants but also involve the setting, incidents, events and activities to be included for data collection. With this study, the researcher uses schools from rural areas as sites for the collection of data.

3.7.1 Sample size

In this research the researcher uses a small sample size because Borg and Gall (in Cohen et al (2007) advise that sample size has to begin with an estimation of the smallest number of cases in the smallest subgroup of the sample. Therefore, a small sample size is more appropriate for this research. For the purpose of this study, the

researcher uses three rural schools with eighteen participants. From each school the researcher used a Social Sciences Grade 9 teacher with three learners and two parents who are on the School Governing Body (SGB).

3.8 Pilot interviews

Initially, a pilot interview schedule was tested on another sample similar to the one identified for the study. The principal granted permission to pilot interviews and observations. The researcher used one school and approached a Grade 9 Social Sciences teacher. Three learners and two parents participated. The sole purpose of the pilot interviews was to check whether there were questions that needed rephrase. Piloting data-collecting tools is important in order to identify potential problem areas in the data collection tools: semi-structured interviews and observation schedule. Pilot, Beck, Hungler and Baker define pilot studies as the trial version of research instruments to ensure that the material developed does work, and they help the researcher to identify areas of concern beforehand (in Simon, 2011).

Even though the interview schedule was in English, respondents preferred to use isiXhosa, their home language, during interviews.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the research

The researcher preferred a qualitative approach to analyse the data, and ensured trustworthiness in terms of this paradigm as suggested by Healy and Perry (2000) in Golafshani (2003). Trustworthiness in qualitative research is determined in four dimensions, which are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 in Golafshani, 2003). According to these researchers, credibility refers to the true picture of the phenomenon under study reflected.

Transferability concerns itself with issues of generalisability, where the findings of a study are applicable in another setting. This study is not generalisable because the researcher used school stakeholders from rural areas. School stakeholders from semi-urban or urban areas may hold other views, not reflected in this study. Dependability means conducting future research on the study in the same context, with similar methods used, with same participants and obtaining similar results. Lastly, the researchers also discuss confirmability to ensure trustworthiness. Confirmability is about ensuring that the findings are the results of experiences and ideas of informants rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004:602). Therefore using triangulation as means of data collection would assist in the process of confirming if the data collected reflected ideas and experiences that emerged from the research or not.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Before the study took place, the researcher observed ethical issues by following standards and principles set to conduct research (De Vos et al, 2011). These principles protect both the researcher and the respondents so that there is no physical and/or emotional harm done during research. There was mutual understanding between the researcher and respondents so that they understood the purpose of the study. The researcher issued consent forms to learners who participated in this study. Participants contributed in this study on their free will; no one forced or enticed into participating.

3.10.1 Informed Consent

Since the research took place in schools, the Department of Education granted permission. The researcher negotiated entry into the schools with school principals and informed them about the purpose of the research. The researcher briefed teachers,

learners and parents involved in this study so that they understood the objective of the research. This study used learners who were minors, so the researcher asked for consent from parents and guardians of those learners who participated. The researcher also obtained consent from learners themselves. Thus, all the participants in this study participated willingly, knowing the purpose of the research.

3.10.2 Anonymity

The researcher guaranteed participants that their identity and the identity of the research sites would remain anonymous. The researcher used letters of the alphabet to identify schools and numbers to identify respondents. In this way, participants remained unknown.

3.10.3 Confidentiality

The researcher ensured that the information received would never be publicly associated to any participant.

3.11 Qualitative data analysis approach

This study used a qualitative research paradigm, thematic analysis to analyse data. Common trends and themes were categorised under the same section or sub-section. Then discussions carried out in each theme in order to come to conclusions about those themes.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and analyse data collected through interviews and observations as mentioned in the previous chapter. The main research question is about the perceptions of parents, teachers and learners towards the use of the LoLT in Grade 9 Social Sciences. Specific research questions focused on the views of learners, teachers and parents about the use of English as LoLT in teaching Social Sciences (S.S). Some of the aspects interrogated here were advantages and disadvantages of teaching of S. S in English.

The researcher used three schools as sites for this study. These schools are in the rural areas of the King William's Town District in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. All participants were from the schools mentioned above and used English as their Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT); and English is their second language. The participants were comprised of nine learners, three teachers and six parents, which meant there were three learners, one teacher and two parents from each school. In total, the researcher interviewed 18 participants.

Schools	Levels	Location	Home language	LoLT
School A	Secondary	Rural	IsiXhosa	English
School B	Secondary	Rural	IsiXhosa	English
School C	Secondary	Rural	IsiXhosa	English

Table 4. 1: Research sites

Table 4.1 shows that the schools used in the research were secondary level schools. The researcher used three secondary schools because she targeted Social Sciences in

the ninth Grade. These schools are located in rural areas where all learners are isiXhosa speakers who use English as the LoLT. For ethical reasons, schools' names remained anonymous and the researcher labelled them using letters from the alphabet.

4.2 Data presentation: Themes and sub-themes from the data

4.2.1 Learner participants

Respondents	Gender	Grade	Home Language	Preferred LoLT	Schools
Learner 1	Male	9	IsiXhosa	English	School A
Learner 2	Female	9	IsiXhosa	English	School A
Learner 3	Male	9	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	School A
Learner 4	Male	9	IsiXhosa	English	School B
Learner 5	Male	9	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	School B
Learner 6	Female	9	IsiXhosa	English and isiXhosa	School B
Learner 7	Male	9	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	School C
Learner 8	Female	9	IsiXhosa	English	School C
Learner 9	Female	9	IsiXhosa	English	School C

Table 4. 2: Profile of learner participants

Table 4.2 above shows profiles of nine learners who took part in this study. For ethical reasons, they are identified using numbers from one (1) to nine (9). This is indicated in Table 4.2 This study used both males and females, all from Grade 9. The learners are

from different schools and their home language is isiXhosa. Even though they are all from rural areas, and they share the same home language they prefer a different LoLT.

4.3 Preferred language of teaching

4.3.1 English as preferred LoLT

Most learners preferred English as LoLT because textbooks are in English and, in addition, examinations conducted in English. Other reasons included policy issues and the learners' desire to improve their English proficiency levels. In terms of the Language in Education Policy, English is the Language of Learning and Teaching in South Africa. However, 33% preferred to be taught in isiXhosa because it is the language that they understand better and which had been mostly used during their schooling. Lastly, 11% would like to receive education in both English and isiXhosa. Their reasons were that English is the lingua franca and the LoLT, while isiXhosa is their mother tongue which every child should know.

The majority of learners, 56%, preferred to receive education in English even though it was not their mother tongue. This is what they had to say:

“English is a language that every learner in this country has to learn and understand.”

“I would like to be taught in English because English is what is written in our books, besides we must listen to English and examinations are written in English.”

Learners also indicated the need to know English because it is the lingua franca. One learner said:

“I choose to be taught in English because I will be able to speak to people who do not speak my language.”

Another learner believes that if learners receive instruction in English without switching to another language then they will be able to speak English fluently. She had this to share:

“I prefer to be taught in English so that I can be able to speak English fluently without switching to another language.”

Other learners indicated that their choice of English is because certain concepts were more difficult to understand in their mother tongue than in English. This learner said:

“I prefer to be taught in English because isiXhosa language has difficult words.”

Learners who prefer English as the LoLT reinforced their point and concurred with the Department of Education in maintaining English as the LoLT. They believe that even learners who do not understand English will not understand any more when taught in their mother tongue. They believe more exposure to English; will improve their proficiency levels will become. A learner argued that:

“No, being taught in mother tongue will not make things better. This will make things more badly. They will not grasp even more. The Department of Education must keep on prescribing English as LoLT and those learners who do not understand will eventually catch up.”

4.3.2 Mother tongue (isiXhosa) preference

At least 33 % of the learners interviewed preferred to receive instruction in isiXhosa and stated that isiXhosa is the only language with which they are familiar. They indicated that in their homes they used their mother tongue since in that way they would all speak the same language. Those who preferred to instruction in isiXhosa revealed:

“I choose isiXhosa because I have been taught in it ever since I started schooling. English has been used very little.”

“I would like to be taught in isiXhosa because it is the language that I understand better.”

They indicated that learning in a language that they understand better improves their chances of performing better academically. They had this to share:

“It would be wonderful being taught Social Sciences in my mother tongue because I would be using my language which I understand better than English.”

“IsiXhosa would be appropriate for because it is my language.”

“I think isiXhosa would be appropriate because it is easy to understand since it is our home language.”

One learner, who formerly attended a former model C- school, could see his peers struggling with using English. He understood that their mother tongue was probably the language they had mostly used. He had mixed feelings about the use of mother tongue in teaching. In as much as it would be an advantage to receive education in a language they understood, they would also have trouble during examinations as these take place in English. He had this to share:

“The only language they ever heard in their lives is isiXhosa. They only use English in their books. So it will be good if they are taught in the language that they understand even though it will make things difficult because examinations are in English not in isiXhosa.”

4.3.3 Bilingual instruction

11% of learners preferred both languages to be used as Languages of Learning and Teaching. They gave these reasons for their preference:

“I would love to be taught through both (isiXhosa and English) because isiXhosa is my language while English is a language that every learner has to learn and

understands so that when you go to schools where English is highly spoken then you will not be left out.”

4.4 Benefits derived from learning Social Sciences in English

The majority of learner participants (88%) said they enjoyed learning Social Sciences in English. Some of the reasons they cited were gaining an increased vocabulary and greater fluency in English and being able to deal with other subjects since they are done in English language. They shared these reasons:

“I enjoy being taught in English because I gain vocabulary in this language.”

“It helps me to understand English concepts better, to be able to communicate in English language fluently and to be able to respond to questions asked in English.”

“I enjoy being taught Social Sciences in English because English is the language that I understand better.”

All (100%) learners claimed to gain an increased vocabulary, improvement of communication skills, which improved their proficiency levels in the English language:

“Learning through English language helps to know English better, and to be able to communicate with people who do not speak your language.”

“I will understand English better and be able to communicate with people who do not know my language.”

“Learning through English helps us to develop our vocabulary which also helps us in other subjects.”

Learners also reported that English would help them to access different career opportunities and serve different racial groups as they said:

“If you have learned English you will be able to follow any profession and be able to help different racial groups that come to your practice.”

On the other hand, another learner is of the view that the government does not want to spend money for printing books in the eleven different languages that spoken in South Africa. So using a common language as the LoLT is economical for the state, because there will be no need to employ people to translate material from English to other languages. This is what this learner shared:

“I think maybe the government does not want to waste money in making materials for eleven different languages spoken in South Africa. Also if you have learned English you will be able to follow any profession and be able to help different racial groups that come to your practice.”

4.5 Language(s) of teaching S. S

4.5.1 English as the sole language for teaching

All learners in school B reported that their teacher uses English only when teaching.

4.5.2 Code-switching as a tool in the classroom

33% of learners in school A claimed that their teacher used English only, whereas 67% said that he used both English and isiXhosa when teaching Social Sciences. This is what they said:

“He teaches in isiXhosa but also uses English.”

“He uses isiXhosa but mixes it with English.”

One learner in the same class, who formerly attended an ex-Model C school, reported that their teacher used both English and isiXhosa when teaching. The teacher does this by switching from English to isiXhosa when explaining certain concepts. He indicated that there was minimal use of the mother tongue (isiXhosa), and he had this to say:

“The teacher uses both English and isiXhosa, but adds just a bit of isiXhosa because we have to understand the content in English, because we sit for examinations written in English, we can’t write exams in isiXhosa.”

In School A, it emerged that the teacher used code-switching as a strategy for teaching and learning so that learners could have better understanding of the content since they received it in their second language. Code-switching entails switching by the teacher and or by learners between the LoLT and learners’ main language (Setati and Adler, 2000:244). 67% of learners from School A agreed that their teacher used code-switching as a strategy of mediating learning in their classroom. This is in line with what Setati and Adler (ibid) observed that code-switching is a practice where learners use their main languages as a resource. They reported thus:

“He teaches in isiXhosa but also uses English.”

“He uses isiXhosa, he mixes it with English.”

“The teacher uses both isiXhosa and English, but adds a bit of isiXhosa because we have to understand the content in English.”

4.5.3 Mixed learner responses

In school C, different responses emerged from all learners interviewed. It was evident that they do not have the same view as to which language the teacher mainly uses when teaching Social Sciences. From learners interviewed, 33% said their teacher used English, the other 33% reported that the teacher used isiXhosa, whilst the remaining 33% said he used both English and isiXhosa. This is what they said:

“He uses English.”

“He uses isiXhosa.”

The other 33% reported that their teacher taught in both English and isiXhosa. They had this to say:

“He uses isiXhosa, he mixes it with English.”

4.5.4 Language of classroom interaction

Again, most learner participants (78%) reported that they used their mother tongue (isiXhosa) mostly as means of sharing information when confronted with English text or in dealing with any other activity in their classroom:

“We use isiXhosa all the way because we do not want to struggle. If we use English, we will be choosing a difficult way of doing things. We want to speak the language that we all understand.”

Another learner indicated that their teacher allowed them to use their mother tongue during their interactions since they all understood the language and the teacher wanted them to understand the content. She said:

“I think the teacher uses isiXhosa because he wants all of us to understand as some do not understand English.”

The remaining 22 % of participants indicated that even though they used both English and isiXhosa the latter was dominant during classroom interaction. They still preferred to use their mother tongue because they understood it better. He went on to say that if they used English as a language during classroom interaction, it would mean they were choosing a language through which it would be difficult for them to share ideas. He had this to share:

“I would love to be taught through both (isiXhosa and English) because isiXhosa is my language while English is a language that every learner has to learn and understands so that when you go to schools where English is highly spoken then you will not be left out.”

4.6 Learner experiences when learning Social Sciences in English

4.6.1 Perceived disadvantages when learning Social Sciences in English

The majority, 89%, of learners reported that they perceived disadvantages in learning S.S through the medium of English. They reported that learning in the medium of English blocked them from grasping the content well, which also made it difficult for them to respond properly to questions based on the lesson. They thought that gaps in information occurred when they had to translate what the teacher said in English. They also claimed that the lack of proficiency in English affected negatively on other subjects/learning areas at school. One learner argued:

“It is not good being taught in a language that you do not understand because you will not know what the teacher says.”

Another learner added:

“Other learners do not understand English, so when the Social Sciences teacher speak English it is hard for them to understand what the teacher is saying and leads to failure.”

These learners further reported that they were dissatisfied in the Social Sciences class and they linked their dissatisfaction to the teachers' delivery of content in the classroom. They said that sometimes they did not understand what the teacher asked. At times, the teacher proceeded without explaining well and sometimes even if he did explain, there were still unclear areas. This is what they shared:

“Sometimes I do not understand questions posed in English and that makes me unhappy.”

“I do not enjoy when the teacher proceeds without explaining concepts that I do not understand.”

Learners also indicated that learning through a language that they did not understand increased their chances of failing and repeating the grade. Learners also said that when learning through English they experienced difficulties in reading and most of the time they found it very difficult when they had to express themselves properly. Most of all, there was lack of understanding between the teacher and learners because sometimes learners did not understand what the teacher said. This is what they reported:

“Other learners do not understand English so they will not know what the teacher said.”

“Some learners fail other subjects because they do not understand English.”

“We do not perform well in Social Sciences.” “The teacher has to explain for me several times because I do not understand certain things in English.”

11 % of learner participants raised an opposing view to that of other learners. They said that even though they noticed their peers struggling in learning in English, still their mother tongue was not as simple as they would like to think because it had difficult concepts. They said:

“Maybe being taught in isiXhosa would work but I am not sure. I wish these languages could be mixed so that you are able to remember what you were taught in your mother tongue.”

4.6.2 An appropriate LoLT for learners

Most learner participants (67%) view English as an appropriate language for learning and teaching. Their reasons were mainly about their future endeavours. Learners are aware that for them to access different career opportunities they need to obtain acceptable English proficiency levels. One of the learners had this to share:

“I think English is an appropriate language because it prepares you for different

professions.”

Learners also viewed English as an appropriate language for teaching. They claimed that knowing English was a great advantage because people speak and use it worldwide. The fact that English is the lingua franca (the language of communication) made them opt for it as they wanted to be able to communicate with other people who did not understand their mother tongue. One learner reported that:

“English is an appropriate language for teaching because there are very few people who do not understand it worldwide.”

Since learners receive instruction of other subjects in English and assessed in it, they thought English was appropriate and not their mother tongue. Therefore, using English was beneficial in many ways. A learner claimed that:

“English is an appropriate language for teaching because it will help in learning other subjects.”

The fewest learner participants interviewed (22%) viewed isiXhosa as an appropriate language. They had this to say:

“IsiXhosa would be appropriate for me because it is my language.”

“I think isiXhosa would be appropriate because it is easy to understand since it is our home language.”

11% of learners believe that they should be taught in both English and isiXhosa so that those learners who did not understand English could benefit from being taught in isiXhosa. This is what they shared:

“English and isiXhosa must be used because there are those who do not understand English so they must be taught in a language that they understand.”

4.7 Strategies to assist in learning S.S. in the LoLT

Learners are aware of the challenges they experience when learning in English. It is not their wish to stop learning in it as such they suggested ways in which they can help to learn S. S in English. They proposed attendance of early morning classes. Others hoped to improve their English proficiency levels by reading a lot. They suggested different texts that they can use. 44% of learners believe if teachers assist by providing translations for difficult words, at least there will be improvement in literacy levels.

These are their suggestions:

“Learners must be given novels to read right through. They must be given every material that is written in English like newspapers.”

“Learners should be assisted by giving those materials like short stories, newspapers and novels to read.”

“They can help themselves by reading many English books, stories and newspaper articles.”

33% of learners suggested supplementary classes for English and other subjects taught in English. They were under the impression that when provided with more time to read their books and more exposure to the English language then their English proficiency levels would improve. This is what they said:

“The only way of getting learners to understand English is to make them attend extra classes for English.”

“Learners must have morning classes for all the subjects.

“Open extra lessons for them.”

Learners raised translation of concepts used in S.S into their mother tongue as a suggestion to help. At least 11% of learners suggested that the teacher needed to provide them with a list of history concepts that translated into their language. Other

learners suggested that those learners should have their own classroom where they would receive instruction in their mother tongue. Below is what they said:

“A teacher must give learners a translation of words written in isiXhosa and English. In the classroom teachers should also translate what is written in English into isiXhosa.”

“Learners who do not understand English should have their own classroom where they could be taught in isiXhosa the language they understand.”

12% of learner participants suggested that they must be provided with more activities in English so that they could practice and improve their proficiency levels. Learners suggested that teachers should go the extra mile and approach those in authority to provide books for learners to read. They shared:

“Those who do not understand English must try and communicate in it. They should practice it more often as they say ‘Practice makes perfect’.”

“Teachers must ask those in authority like the Department of Education and from the institutions of Higher Education so that they can be given old books.”

4.8 Teacher participants

Respondents	Schools	Teaching subject	Years of experience	Highest Qualification	Home Language	Preferred LoLT
Teacher 1	A	Social Sciences	23	ACE in Education Management	IsiXhosa	English
Teacher 2	B	Social Sciences	27	B. Ed Honours	IsiXhosa	English
Teacher 3	C	Social Sciences	20	Secondary Teachers Diploma	IsiXhosa	English

Table 4. 3: Teacher profile

Table 4.3 above shows the profile of teachers who participated in this research. For teachers to remain anonymous, numbers are allocated to them to enable the researcher identify them. The researcher used letters A to C to identify schools. The table also reflects the subject taught by each teacher at the time of this research. It also reflects years of teaching experience as well as the highest qualifications of each teacher. Lastly, the table shows that the teachers' home language is IsiXhosa and they all preferred English as the LoLT.

4.9 Preferred Language of Teaching

All the teachers (100%) who participated in this study preferred English as LoLT. They claimed to enjoy teaching Social Sciences (S. S) in English because they loved the current LoLT. Different responses as to why they preferred English as LoLT emerged. They reported that classroom teaching was about exploring the world with learners through textbooks and other resources available. Learners got to know the world around them better and this was an opportunity that was best obtained in formal education and in English. One of the teachers reported enjoying sharing with learners important historic incidents documented in English;

"I would say I enjoy looking at the world and bringing it into the classroom in English, because Social Sciences is about the environment and the past."

Another one of the three teachers mentioned that he loved unpacking the outside world via the medium of English. It brought joy to him when bringing the world they lived in to the learners in English. This is what he said:

"I love English so I enjoy teaching Social Sciences through it."

The third reported that learners who showed a better understanding of the content when taught in English brought about his satisfaction. In addition, the policy requirements forced them to use English as it was the only LoLT and the LTSM is in English as well. This is what they shared:

“When using English they understand better because the textbooks that we are using are written in English, so I cannot use another language because they will not understand the content.”

4.10 Language of teaching Social Sciences

Very few teacher participants, only one, reported that he used only English when teaching. It was also evident that their learners used both their main language and English from the following words:

“Sometimes they perform better in written activities and sometimes interact in English.”

Some teachers who claimed to use only English in their classrooms when teaching said they adhered to the policy, requiring teachers to use the medium of English. In addition, the LTSM is in English. A teacher claimed:

“I use English because the government policies require us to use English, and also textbooks are written in English that is why I use English.”

4.11 Language of classroom interaction

The majority (67%) of teachers interviewed, reported using both English and the learners’ mother tongue in the classroom, being mindful of the requirements set in the Language in Education Policy. They indicated this was due to challenges they met when teaching Social Sciences in English. They observed that most of the time their learners struggled to respond to questions posed to them in English. Sometimes learners did not perform well in written tests. Learners found it difficult to express themselves in English. This might mean two things among many others. It could be either that learners did not understand what the teacher had said, or that learners might

have understood the question but were unable to respond using English. One teacher said:

“I teach in English but mix with isiXhosa as a way of explaining to these kids, because they do not have a good command of English. So when you want to explain and give examples I use their mother tongue.”

Another teacher added:

“You teach in English then translate into isiXhosa because these learners have a barrier in English language. You will find out that if you use English only during the lesson, you are leaving them behind.”

These teachers reported that their learners used their mother tongue as a language for classroom interaction. They have noticed that learners were comfortable using their mother tongue when asked questions in English, as they responded in their mother tongue. They also observed that learners communicated freely, when allowed to use their mother tongue. This is what they indicated that:

“Their interaction will be in isiXhosa even if you are asking questions in English. If you want them to interact you will have to move to isiXhosa and once you speak English they just sit in corners. You can see that they know but they do not want to speak, they are afraid to speak this language.”

“Some of these learners do not want to even try speaking English because they fear that others will laugh at them if they are not using the language correctly.”

Teachers also reported that their learners kept quiet even if they knew the answer, because they were afraid of making mistakes. They also reported that learners laughed at each other when making mistakes. One teacher shared:

“Some of these learners do not want to even try speaking English because they fear that others will laugh at them if they are not using the language correctly.”

4.12 LoLT and learners' language experiences

All teacher participants (100%) interviewed regarded the English language as a barrier. They pointed out that learners moved from the LoLT to their mother tongue when responding to the teacher. Teachers also noticed that if they used English principally when teaching, learners ended up not grasping the content properly because of their low proficiency levels. They had this to say:

“Yes it is a barrier because when you ask them questions in English they respond in isiXhosa. You cannot stress more on English because they will not understand the content.”

“We are dealing with kids who do not have a good command of English.”

” Yes I think it is a barrier. “

All the teacher participants reported that they experienced a challenge and a conflict of interests between upholding the Language in Education Policy and teaching learners in their mother tongue. This posed a challenge for them as they used the learners' mother tongue while assessing in English. They shared their experiences below:

”We are supposed to teach in English, and this is a supposition because we are dealing with kids who do not have a good command of English language, you have to move to Xhosa otherwise we are supposed to teach in English.”

“Yes, English is in the Language Policy that we must use it but we are having a problem because for the teacher to move together with learners the teacher has to speak isiXhosa.”

“When they are using their own language they are free because they understand it better than English. “

Learner low proficiency levels in English made it difficult for them to respond to the teacher. They found it difficult to express themselves especially in front of a group that laughed at them. The lack of vocabulary in spoken activities translated to poor

performance in written activities. One teacher reported that:

“Some learners do not want to even try speaking English because they fear because others will laugh at them if they are not using the language correct.”

Another teacher added,

“Some of the learners do not want to even try speaking in English because they fear that others will laugh at them if they are not using the language correctly.”

4.13 Perceived appropriate LoLT for learners

Most (67%) of teachers are of the view that the mother tongue was the best language of instruction. This was due to the responses learners provided when they responded in isiXhosa when asked questions in English because they do not have good command in English. Teachers have observed that learners do not perform as expected in Social Sciences and in other subjects taught in English. Teachers also highlighted the stress their learners suffer when faced with English tests and examinations. Learners had to understand English before decoding the task itself. Even when learners had to share ideas in the classroom, they struggled and this translated to their written activities as well. From the above, it would seem that learning in ones' mother tongue is a better option than the current LoLT. One teacher who had this to say:

“I should think if this could be done in their mother tongue they will perform better than they are performing in English because they are comfortable in their language. When you are teaching they usually drift into Xhosa. Maybe when things are done in Xhosa they will they will perform better.”

Another teacher added:

“I should think they will perform excellent because if they are taught in their mother tongue they will have no problem. When they are taught in English they

have to interpret that into isiXhosa and then to English. When they are taught in isiXhosa and textbooks also written in isiXhosa they will have no problem of interpreting the language because they know their mother tongue very well. “

One of the three teachers was not sure if mother tongue instruction would work because she had had conversations with isiXhosa teachers and they had pointed out the poor performance of their learners in isiXhosa. She had this to share:

“I cannot say that they would perform better if they were taught in isiXhosa, because even Xhosa teachers are complaining about poor performance by these learners in isiXhosa.”

4.14 Strategies to assist in learning S. S using English

The researcher asked teachers how they assisted those learners who were experiencing difficulties in learning in English. Two of the three reported that they use the learners' main language so that they understand the content. Teachers also indicated that they ask learners to use dictionaries for those concepts that they do not understand.

They had this to report:

“I use textbook method so that they hear the content in English and then translate it into the language that they understand which isiXhosa is.”

“I ask them to bring dictionaries from home and whenever they have a word that they don't understand they will look it up from their dictionaries. Luckily, now they have got textbooks so at home they can study and they must use their pencils and write down meanings of those words that are difficult for them. They can also ask from their parents and siblings so that I do not have to explain everything to them.”

Only one teacher of the three interviewed reported difficulty in assisting learners because of the large number of learners who experienced challenges in English. He had this to share:

“The problem with remedial work or intervention programmes is the number of learners that we deal with. The majority (90 %) of learners in our classrooms are not very good in English, so it becomes difficult really, because you have the content and syllabus to cover. Now you are unable to move forward, so it becomes difficult to look at remedial work.”

4.15 Parent participants

Respondents	Gender	Home language	Preferred LoLT	Highest Qualification
Parent 1	Female	IsiXhosa	English	Standard 8
Parent 2	Female	IsiXhosa	English	Standard 8
Parent 3	Female	IsiXhosa	English	Standard 6
Parent 4	Female	IsiXhosa	English	Standard 10
Parent 5	Female	IsiXhosa	English	Standard 6
Parent 6	Male	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	Standard 6

Table 4. 4: Parent profile

Table 4.4 shows the profile of the parents who participated in this research. For reasons of ethics and anonymity, the researcher used numbers to identify them. The table also reflects their gender, representing both males and females participants in this study.

The table also indicates that the participants are all isiXhosa speakers. However, they differ in their choice of LoLT. An overwhelming majority of parents preferred English as the LoLT while only one parent preferred isiXhosa as the LoLT. They differ in their levels of education but all of them had attended high school.

4.16 Preferred Language(s) of Learning and Teaching

4.16.1 English as preferred LoLT

Most parent participants (83%) chose English as their preferred LoLT. 86 % of the parents provided their reasons for choosing English as the LoLT. These reasons concerned the future of their children. These parents reported that English provided better chances of admission to tertiary institutions. By the time, their children graduated from high school they should know English as they use it even at tertiary level. Those parents still believed that English was the language of employment so their children needed to understand it to get jobs. Interviewed parents said government and other sectors conduct interviews in English, therefore their children needed to understand this language to get jobs. They also felt that isiXhosa is u upon in the workplace. In addition, they pointed out the status enjoyed by the English language as they say it was used widely.

4.16.2 Mother tongue as the preferred LoLT

Only one of the parents would like his/her children receive instruction in their mother tongue. He/she is of the view that learners would be able to understand everything when taught in their own language. This parent also believes there would be very few chances of the children repeating Grades. One parent had this to share:

“I prefer isiXhosa because if my child can be taught in isiXhosa he will understand everything because it is his language and also he will not fail.”

4.17 Benefits of learning Social Sciences in English

Many parents who participated in this study viewed learning in English as an advantage. They observed that English is widely used in government offices where they hoped their children would work. They had also noticed that their children's textbooks and examinations were in English language. Parents also understood that in the workplace, there are different race groups who speak different languages and this makes understanding English of paramount importance for communication purposes. This is what they reported:

"I would like my child to be taught in English because our home language is undermined in the offices. Many things are in English and many books are in it. Moreover, when my child arrives in the offices looking for employment, he will not be able to understand what is required. So when he has learned English he will be able to fit in in the workplace."

Another parent added:

"I want English because it opens doors for him in places like colleges."

One parent motivated:

"It is English because my child will go for interviews which are normally conducted in English as sometimes there are white people, so he will lose the opportunity of getting a job because he does not understand English."

Parents who preferred English also commented on the inability of their children to speak their mother tongue fluently and the fact that they always switched to another language during conversations. They said that this negatively affected their language abilities because they ended up not speaking isiXhosa fluently. Parents also observed that their children struggled in writing their mother tongue and they feared that their children might not pass the examinations. A parent had this to share:

"Our children do not understand isiXhosa as if it is not their language. They

cannot speak it fluently because in the middle of the speech the insert English word which I do not understand why. I worry when my child is going to write isiXhosa test and I end up sitting him down and read with him.”

Another parent added:

“Oh children of this generation have difficulty even in isiXhosa so I cannot say it is better. They struggle when writing isiXhosa as if it is not their language. They have this habit of shortening the words, and this does not develop them in any way.”

4.18 English as LoLT and learners’ language experiences

A third of the parents noticed that children had trouble in learning in English. They reported that sometimes children did not understand what the teacher said, and that at times, they were afraid to ask because they did not want other learners to think they are slow. They also pointed out that sometimes teachers did not explain the content clearly to learners.

Another issue raised by parents was English terminology. They were of the view that English language terms that were difficult for their children to understand might perhaps be better in their own language. Gaps in information might lead to failing the grade. They also observed that their children found it difficult to cope with education at the tertiary level when English becomes more advanced. One of the parents had this to share:

“Most children fail and repeat Grade because they do not understand English; they do not understand what is said to them. Sometimes what they learn is not clear enough so this makes them fail. They become scared to ask when they do not understand fearing that others would think that they are slow learners. You

will also find out that sometimes teachers do not explain well to children.”

Other parents observed the following:

“The challenge that they are faced with is the difficulty in learning in English because they fail.”

“There are English concepts which are difficult for our children which may be easy in their language. That is the challenge that I think they are faced with in learning in English.”

“The challenge is being taught in a language that they do not understand which fails them.”

One parent stated:

“Children are experiencing some difficulties in English. The syllabus has changed and the latest English that they learn at school is posing some challenges to them. They experience more difficulties when they get to tertiary institutions because English becomes deeper.”

4.19 Appropriate LoLT for learners

The majority of parents (67%) viewed English as a language helping their children to perform well at school. They believed children understood English because they learn and write examinations in it. Parents observed that children enjoyed watching television that used English most of the time. In addition, their end of term progress reports indicated that their children were performing well. This led them to believe that English was assisting children in performing well in their studies since they used textbooks written in it. They had this to share:

“Yes English does help my children in their performance. They end up performing well in English because it is the most language that is used on television which

they like most, and most subjects are done in it at school and their question papers are in English.”

“Children perform well because when I look at their reports at the end of the term I found that they do well because they even learn other subjects in it and do well so that is why I encourage English.”

“I do not think there are any challenges because English is helping them to pass and is mostly used in schools.”

33 % of the parents interviewed perceived challenges in the learning of Social Sciences in English, hence their support for teaching S.S in isiXhosa. They were also of the view that their children would appreciate their history when taught in their mother tongue, and that would help them academically. They were of the view that learning in one’s own language is better. Here are their responses:

“They would perform better because it is their language.”

“Things would be easy for them if they are taught in isiXhosa.”

“I think they will do well because isiXhosa is their language.”

One parent thought:

“Now that they are struggling in English I think it would help being taught in mother tongue so that when a learner gets information in English it is easy to understand.”

4.20 Classroom observations

During observations in a Social Sciences lesson in school, the researcher noticed that teacher 1 used both English and isiXhosa when teaching. They used English when the teacher read straight from the textbook. He explained the text in isiXhosa. He again

used English when pronouncing an English word then asked for explanation of that particular concept in isiXhosa. Mostly, learners listened to their teacher and responded in isiXhosa. There was very limited use of English by learners when interacting with their teacher. Learners in this school used only isiXhosa when interacting among themselves.

In school B, the languages used during Social Sciences lessons were English when the teacher was teaching and isiXhosa when she explained to learners. They did most of their explanations in isiXhosa. Very few learners responded to the teacher during this lesson, most of them kept quiet. Those who were able to respond did so in isiXhosa. Most of the time learners responded with one word answers.

The last school observed was school C where again the teacher used both English and isiXhosa. The teacher read straight from the textbook in English and switched to isiXhosa when explaining. He asked questions in English and repeated the same questions in isiXhosa. Learners, like their teacher, responded in both English and isiXhosa. Most learners used isiXhosa when responding to the teacher. They responded in English when reading answers straight from their activity books or sometimes from their textbooks. As in other schools, in school C learners used isiXhosa when interacting with each other.

4.21 Conclusion

From the data collected, it is evident that most learners from rural schools experience some challenges in learning in English, which is their current LoLT. Most learner and teacher participants reported challenges experienced when learners were required to use the English language to express themselves during classroom interaction. It also became evident that learners experience challenges even during assessments- some learners reported having seen their peers scoring low mean marks in the Social Sciences. Most participants linked learner poor academic performance to learning in

English; although some viewed, English as the language that was assisting learners in their schooling.

They viewed English as a barrier to learning; but most participants still believed it was the most appropriate Language of Learning and Teaching. Benefits that come from understanding English strengthened reasons for their choice. They cited access to higher education and job opportunities, which were accessible through having knowledge of English.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the key findings that emerged from the data collected for this study. Chapter 1 discussed research questions. Chapter 2 reviewed literature. Chapter 3, discussed method and methodology for the study. Chapter 3 also described data-collecting instruments, and ethics for data collection. Chapter 4 presented and interpreted data, where themes and subthemes emerged. The present chapter discusses themes and cross- reference them with respect to those findings that emerged from the literature review.

5.2 Themes from the data

5.2.1 Preferred languages of learning

This question centres on the choice of the Language of Learning and Teaching, and that choice rests with parents and their children as per the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) which gives parents (School Governing Bodies) the right to choose the LoLT (Plüddemann, Mbunde-Shale & Wababa, 2005).

Different choices prevailed when it came to the preferred LoLT. Some participants believed in receiving education through the medium of English because of the perceived English benefits. Some were unequivocally clear that they would like to receive education in the medium of isiXhosa, which is their mother tongue or home language. These learners claim to understand isiXhosa better compared to English. Some learners went further to say teachers have mostly used isiXhosa throughout their schooling with the result that isiXhosa is the only language they understand well. There were also those learners who preferred to receive instruction in both isiXhosa and English citing the important role played by each language in their lives. Therefore, their

experiences about the use of English and isiXhosa languages have shaped their perceptions about those languages as Ahen (2009) asserts that perception is the root of thinking that invokes judgments that influence people's attitudes. The following section discusses different preferences on the choice of LoLT.

5.2.1.1 English Preferred Language of Learning and Teaching

Participants strongly showed their preferred LoLT, and 72 % of them all made it clear that English was their preferred LoLT. This study shows that parents advocate for the use of English by their children. They pointed out perceived benefits associated with understanding English. This was emphasised by most participants, as they firmly believed that job opportunities, further studies and career opportunities are only accessible through the understanding of English language. They are in agreement with Taylor and Coetzee (2013) when they say that children need to be fluent in English to achieve academic success and labour market success. Desai (2001) differs with this view though, saying English persist to be unachievable to most learners, not only as a subject, but also as a language through which they access information. Therefore, most learners will miss the opportunity of fulfilling their dreams through English because many of them have poor proficiency levels, which they grew up with in their schooling career as (Spaull, van der Berg, Wills, Gustafson and Kotzè, 2016) observed.

The stance taken by learners in choosing English although they struggled to communicate in it, accentuates the idea of English hegemony over other languages. In this study, participants who chose English as the LoLT outnumbered those who preferred their mother tongue. Learners do not only struggle in communication, they are also not fluent in the language in general. This became evident during classroom observations where learners used isiXhosa when interacting with the teachers, and among themselves. Some learners revealed that their peers did not participate because they did not understand English. They claimed to perform poorly in controlled tests.

Teachers and some parents alluded to learners struggling in learning in English but they still preferred it.

Challenges reported in this study are in agreement with Mzokwana (2008), Novick (2010) and Klapwijk (2012) when they argued, that for rural learners English might be problematic for comprehending certain subjects. Most of the participants are aware of the challenges experienced by learners when using English as the LoLT, but the benefits of learning English outweighed those challenges, hence their choice. Similar to this study, Ndamba (2008) also found students and parents preferred English in spite of the challenges they faced when learning in it.

The researcher also noticed that while many (72 %) of all participants preferred English as the LoLT, but they did not choose it when asked to indicate the language to be used for interviews. All the participants preferred to use isiXhosa. Teachers were comfortable with using English when teaching as they indicated their love of bringing the world into the classroom through its medium. It must be noted that while some teachers appreciated using English as the LoLT, others felt duty-bound to use it. In addition, teachers showed either passion or obligation in using English, while parents and learners viewed it as a ticket to greener pastures and this is in contrary to what is happening in the classroom because participants reported poor performance.

There were also learners who preferred learning in English because they were under the impression that their mother tongue was difficult. Difference between the isiXhosa learnt at school and the isiXhosa used at home may have led to such perceptions. Some isiXhosa terminology in isiXhosa books is not the same as terminology used at home for daily conversations, so this could be the reason why some participants viewed English as simpler compared with their mother tongue.

This study reveals that English was still the preferred language, compared with the other official languages spoken in South Africa. This finding is similar to studies conducted by Broeder, Extra and Maartens (2008), Ndamba (2008) and Kamwendo

(2008) where parents and learners chose English to be LoLT even though it was not their mother tongue and did not have good command in it.

5.2.1.2 IsiXhosa as a preferred language

22% of participants in this study preferred isiXhosa to be their LoLT. The participants who preferred isiXhosa to be the LoLT were of the view that they would understand the content better when delivered in their mother tongue. They are in agreement with Kotzè (2001), Smuts, (2000), De Witt, Lessing and Dicker (1998) as cited in de Wet (2002: 119) that home language is the most appropriate medium for imparting the skills of reading and writing. They also believed that there were some difficulties with English as learners struggled when required to speak, unlike in their mother tongue of which they had good command. Difficulties experienced when learning in a second language were not unique to present learner participants. Mackenzie and Walker (2013) observed that children from rural areas found it difficult to learn at school due to the LoLT, as it was not used at home. In the same vein, Pluddemann, Mati and Mahlalela- Thusi (1998) and Pflapsen (2011) concluded that it was impossible for people to interact meaningfully and demonstrate understanding in a language that they did not understand. Therefore, the use of mother tongue allowed most learners to participate during class discussions and to be able to respond to questions.

The present study also revealed that many participants are of the view that learners progressed at school better when taught in their mother tongue. This view is in line with what literature says about the use of mother tongue instruction, that it has cognitive benefits that assist learners academically (Ball, 2010 in Pflapsen 2011; Wa-Mbaleka, 2014; Ndamba 2008). Also with mother tongue instruction, a learner comes across formal texts using the same language used at home and which she/he is fluent in, their prior knowledge served as a building block to understand the text better. In addition, because language skills are transferable, Pflapsen (2011); Rini (2001) Dryer and de Wet in Lemmer, Kamper and Mahlobo (2003) view the mother tongue as the foundation

for the learning of other languages. Williams (2011) also agrees that a student's ability to internalise and manipulate concepts in their mother tongue is the foundation for all successful learning. This shows that the mother tongue becomes the foundation for the thinking process in learning.

In this study one of the learners reported that he listened to the teacher and then translated what the teacher said into isiXhosa and then back to English. De Wet (2002) also found that learners acquire a second language with ease if they have already mastered strategies for negotiating written materials in their home language. However, thoughtfulness is crucial because transfer of language skills does not automatically take place but needs a teacher who and has an understanding of the role of mother tongue in second language acquisition. Teachers need to ensure that learners are able to use their mother tongue to negotiate meaning so that they can transfer it to the second language.

Through observations and interviews with participants, teachers indicated that learners were more comfortable with using their mother tongue or home language for interaction. Learners interacted in their mother tongue especially when they were conversing with their peers and when responding to their teachers. Learners in this study showed they had acquired enough vocabulary in the mother tongue and they used it for meaningful interaction in the classroom. Pflepsen (2011) agrees that learners read faster if they speak the language of instruction because of the well-developed vocabulary, they already have and which is essential for academic purposes. This clearly shows the pivotal role played by the LoLT in the performance of a learner. Again, learners must receive education in the languages, which they have good command.

Learners used English new concepts because there was no alternative in their mother tongue. The use of English for certain concepts is similar to what Mati (2004) discovered in Cape Town where learners responded to their teachers in isiXhosa except for those English concepts that were reflected in the questions. In some instances,

learners would not answer questions although they might have known the answers because of their inability to express themselves in English. In these situations, the use of the home language was useful. Kotze, Smuts and Vermeulen in de Wet (2002) concur that the use of mother tongue instruction is the best way to ensure that learners understand the concepts. Pflepsen (2011) also adds that mother tongue-based education is beneficial to children especially during the critical period of learning a language, and gaining new concepts because it is during that time that children pick up language most easily.

5.2.1.3 Bilingual instruction as a choice for LoLT

6% of participants in this study were of the view that both languages (English and isiXhosa) should be used concurrently. Apparently, learners chose isiXhosa because it was their home language and understood it better, and English because of its economic status. Learners in this study preferred additive bilingualism, which according to Borich and Tombari (1997), is associated with academic, linguistic and academic development. They viewed these languages as adding value to their education and their lives beyond schooling. When learners attach value on a particular task, they tend to focus all their energies in completing it (Lau and Roeser (2002). Echoing Lambert's words, Ndamba (2008:172) says bilingualism arises from a situation where the society attributes positive values to both languages.

De Wet (2002) asserts that it is important for children to learn and to think in their home language up to CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency) level. Due to the vitality of language in learning, Benson (2005) advocates for bilingual education and claims pedagogical benefits it provides. Vygotsky (in Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002:70) also stresses that a language is not just a system of words to communicate with, but also the way people make meaning of the world around them, and are able to convey their thoughts, attitudes, values and create relationships and culture. This clearly emphasises the importance of language especially LoLT in the classroom where learners interact and are assessed through it.

The participants, obviously were able to think and articulate their thoughts well in their mother tongue, hence they were comfortable using it and were keen to learn English as they suggested ways to improve their English literacy. Kamper, Mahlobo and Lemmer (2003) postulate that English (which is the current LoLT) language proficiency is central to learning, which means that for the learners to perform better in their studies, they must understand the language through which they are learning. This is similar to what other learners said, English was very important in education as all other subjects were taught in it. Teachers also noticed that even when asking questions in English, as required by the policy, most of the time learners responded in isiXhosa. They only use English when responding to written texts, because it was the language policy and are compelled to use it. The researcher also noticed the use of isiXhosa during classroom interaction and sometimes learners respond in English when there was no alternative word in isiXhosa.

However, the implementation of bilingual instruction would encounter many challenges as research shows that people often tend to undermine languages that are not associated with economic freedom. Low-status languages do not have the power to be elevated to high-status languages, as they do not have economic power (LANGTAG, 1996; Heugh, 1995 in Plüddemann, Mati and Mahlalela- Thusi, 1998). People need to change their attitudes towards the mother tongue and to start appreciating the academic benefits that it brings to the educational development of a child Plüddemann et al (1998). While learning in both languages simultaneously seems to bring about improved academic results, it can also be detrimental. In Zambia, where bilingual instruction started from the earliest grade, it resulted in the undesirable situation where children could not read in either English or their mother tongue (Mati, 1995 in Ndamba, 2008). This indicates that learners need to receive instruction in second language once they have developed literacy skills and have mastered linguistic skills in their mother tongue.

5.2.2 Language of teaching Social Sciences

5.2.2.1 Participants' views on the language used for teaching S.S

The question about the language used when teaching S. S. was for learners and teachers, because it is mainly classroom based. Similarities and differences about the language of teaching emerged from the data collected. In this study, 42% of the participants, both learners and teachers combined, were of the view that the language used for teaching S. S is English. 33% indicated that English was mostly used with a minimal amount of isiXhosa. A further 17 % of participants indicated that isiXhosa was mostly used with the occasional use of English while 8 % of learners claimed the use of only isiXhosa in the teaching of S. S.

From the data collected, similar views emerged between one learner and one teacher. This learner had attended an ex Model-C school so he was proficient in English. They (the learner and the teacher) agreed that the language used in the classroom was English and that also used isiXhosa for explaining certain concepts. Two learners from the same school had different views of the above-mentioned learner and his teacher. They said their teacher used isiXhosa and English. The researcher visited this classroom with the aim of finding out the language used by both the teacher and learners during their interaction. The teacher used English and isiXhosa almost equally even though isiXhosa was dominant in his delivery of the subject matter. The teacher read from the textbook and the notes he had prepared and explained in isiXhosa. It is possible that the learner who attended an ex Model –C school understands the teacher equally whether he used English or isiXhosa when teaching. Raminez and Kuhl (2016:3) believe each language develops on its own in bilingual children, as is the case with their language exposure.

Again, there are learners who agreed that their teacher used English in the classroom, but their teacher's response differed from the learners' as she said she used both English and isiXhosa. During classroom visits, the researcher noticed that the teacher read from the textbook in English and explained in isiXhosa, which is contrary to what

learners reported during one-on-one interview sessions. In this sample, there were also learners from the same school who gave different responses from one another. One learner concurred with the teacher that he used English while another thought that the teacher used isiXhosa and the third was of the view that he used both English and isiXhosa. During the classroom visit, the researcher observed that the teacher used English mostly. He switched to isiXhosa when explaining particular concepts. Learners responded in English because they were answering questions from their homework. However, when they spoke to one another they used isiXhosa.

From the above it became evident that the language of teaching Social Sciences in the rural classroom was the learners' mother tongue, isiXhosa. This use of mother tongue is almost unavoidable because in this area both the teacher and learners shared the same mother tongue. What the teacher from school B did was similar to what Mati (2004) experienced in his study in Cape Town. He noticed that teachers used English when reading from the textbook; learners used isiXhosa to discuss the story or to respond to the teacher. A learner participants in this study told that his preference of isiXhosa as the LoLT was because it was the dominant language in their classroom. Mati (2004), like Edley (in Pluddemann, Mbunde-Shale, and Wababa, 2005), found that in African primary schools, mother tongue was used as the main LoLT throughout the schooling despite the LiEP's transition to English from Grade 4.

5.2.2.2 Language of classroom interaction

In this study, both teachers and learners used isiXhosa as the language of interaction instead of the LoLT, English. Responses from 89% of learners and 67% of teachers showed that isiXhosa was the language in the classroom during interaction, while 11 % and 33% of teachers reported the use of both English and isiXhosa as languages used for classroom interaction. Most teachers and learners had similar reasons for using isiXhosa as the language for classroom interaction. Teachers understood the plight of learners who did not understand English, so they used isiXhosa because it was easier for them to contribute during the lesson. Two teachers, who confirmed what learners

said about the language of interaction, also noticed that learners found it difficult to speak English, so they end up using isiXhosa, the language they all understand. One parent confirmed that this practice of code-switching had been around for a long time because even during her school days, teachers read from the textbook and explained in isiXhosa in order for them to understand. Code-switching is the use of more than one language to another language (Obiamalu, 2008; Setati & Adler, 2000; Yousif, 2012; Mareva & Mapako, 2012; Rose & Dulm, 2006; Mati, 2004).

Participants in this study are in line with Heredia and Altarriba (2001) when saying code-switching indicates a lack of proficiency in either language spoken, so bilinguals compensate by using both languages. Setati (2002) agrees with the current sample that the technique of code-switching brings about meaningful communication between the teacher and the learners in the classroom. It also brings better understanding to learners because they use it as a resource to mediate learning. Voster (2008) also shares the same sentiments, that code-switching is an important strategy to help learners who are taught through English as LoLT in coping with the content, especially where learners show different proficiency levels.

While code-switching is viewed as a technique that helps learners to understand the content better, Broeder, Extra and Maartens (2008) have a different view in that they believe that it hampers the development of both languages used. Mati (2004: 14) clearly states that code-switching disadvantages children because they lack access to the possibility of normal and academic development in both mother tongue and second language. Teachers use code-switching with the knowledge of the language policy, which requires them to teach in English as the Language of Learning and Teaching. However, realities on the ground (in the classroom) compel them to deviate from the policy.

It is important to note that some teachers use their mother tongue to conceal their insecurity in communicating solely in English (Mati 2004). Nel and Muller (2010) and Nel and Swanepoel (2010) discovered deteriorating pass rates of English Second Language student teachers (who are practising teachers) enrolled with UNISA between the years

2006 and 2008. From this, one may assume that teachers may use code-switching due to limited English proficiency.

Learner participants in this study were fluent in isiXhosa but they reported challenges when required to interact in English. They are unable to express themselves in English because they lack the vocabulary to do so. Badea (2009), Rini (2001) and DoE (2001) documented similar experiences where learners who were extremely fluent in their mother tongue experienced great challenges when learning a second or third language. It is evident that learners in this study do not have sufficient fluency in English for them to have the vocabulary or language skills necessary for them to use English appropriately, hence the use of isiXhosa during interactions. In this way, their lack of vocabulary and grammatical competence in English limits them during classroom interactions. Therefore, learner participants in this study showed two things with regard to the languages used in the classroom. Firstly, they showed the important role played by mother tongue in their education and secondly, their underdeveloped language proficiency in English, the current LoLT.

The use of English language for classroom interaction was very limited. This posed a challenge, as according to DoE (2011) the history part in social science required learners to be able to investigate historical issues. For learners to conduct the investigations, they need to conduct interviews in English. With limited use of English language, invariably, the learners would struggle with the task of conducting interviews.

5.2.3 English LoLT and learner experiences

5.2.3.1 (Low) English proficiency levels

This study, similar to other studies conducted earlier, reveals that learners from the rural areas have low English proficiency levels. Learners and teachers shared the same sentiments about difficulties experienced by learners when required to respond to questions orally and in written activities. Most learners do not respond to teachers'

questions, nor do they participate actively in the classroom using English. Teachers say that this is due to learners' lack of proficiency in English language. In addition, this study found lack of exposure to the English language as a contributing factor to low proficiency levels. Their mother tongue was almost the only language they had ever used.

In his study, Ngidi (2007) found that children from rural areas encounter English language at school, because at home there were no television sets or newspapers to increase their vocabulary. This hampered their proficiency in the language. Additional to this, their schools did not have libraries to promote learners' exposure to various books. Ngidi (2007) sees this as a disadvantage. Moreover, there were no book-reading clubs in their societies where they would be able to borrow books and read to increase their vocabulary. In their policy brief, McKenzie and Walker (2013) observed that learners from rural areas were the hardest hit when English is LoLT. To them, English was only a school experience as they only encountered it at school. It is important to note that learners from this sample showed different levels of English proficiency levels. There were learners who claimed to understand English better than their mother tongue, while others clearly showed that it was difficult for them.

Learners from this sample mainly came from homes with low cultural capital related to their social class where there was a lack of exposure to English material. Mzokwana (2008); Zenex (2007) argue that learners who are not exposed to English due to their poor backgrounds, may experience some challenges in acquiring communication skills in English. Further, Hoadley (2006) says working class children enter school with a community code, which does not prepare them for schooling where maybe parents read those stories. These learners do not have support system at home to help them with academic needs. Learners from the working class come to school with a restricted code, which does not assist them in learning through the medium of a second language. Mostly learners in these schools come from families who are not very educated and do not have the ability to assist them. They share similar views with Mestry and Grobler (2007) as they observed that parents do not participate in the schooling of their children

even when provided an opportunity to do so.

One participant confirmed this when he reported they were from backgrounds where no one was able to assist them with homework because their parents were illiterate. This learner concurs with Madileng (2007) that when there is parental encouragement, learners progress more quickly because these parents are able to provide reading materials (such as newspapers, books and magazines) for their children (in Mestry & Grobler, 2007). Studies also show that parents are more likely to have a positive contribution to their children's education if they learn in their mother tongue (Benson, 2002 in Ball 2010). Learners in this study suggested that the teachers provided materials such as newspapers and short stories. This suggests that they did not have access to these materials at home.

Harry and Klingner (2007: 20) argue strongly that children who come to school without preparation and without continuing support from family members, who can reinforce the goals of schooling, face expectations that they do not have the ability to fulfil. During classroom observations, learners showed little or no confidence in using LoLT when interacting with peers, and when responding to the teachers' questions. Welmar and Jordaan (2013) concur by pointing out that sometimes learners may know the answers but their proficiency level in English makes it difficult for them to express themselves during classroom interaction and so they keep quiet. This is illustrative of the learners' drop in confidence, which invariably has adverse effects on their self-esteem.

In order to enable better communication in the classroom, teachers in this study opted to use both English and the learners' home language. This shows that teachers were aware of their learners' shortcomings, and to a certain extent, they were alleviating them. In doing so, these teachers were deviating from the language policy, which clearly states the use of English (as a LoLT) across the curriculum. If teachers strictly followed the policy by teaching through the medium of English, most learners would not understand the content. Teachers in this study shared similar experiences as they reported learners sometimes knew the answers to questions but, because they had to speak in English, they ended up keeping quiet. Learners did not know how to express

themselves.

Teaching in a second language causes learning barriers to learners and this study illustrates this. Learners reported that they would like explanation of some concepts to in their mother tongue. It is interesting to point out that, in this study, some learners understood English better than their classmates did. They observed other learners struggling when they had to respond to questions in English. Although learners struggled in using English, they still wanted instruction in it because of its global status. This makes learners blind to their struggle in the language. Dunston and Frescura (2011) clarify this when they say that students do not see that they struggle with the English language (in Stephen et.al. 2013).

It is crucial to understand that if learners are proficient in English, this should translate to a good understanding of content subjects and improve the learner's pass rate. Amos and Quinn (1997) (in Stephen et. al.,2013) state that on the other hand, poor English proficiency translates to weak understanding of subject matter which results to failure. Therefore, teachers have a huge role to play to ensure that learners have a better grasp of the language. The DoE (2012) expects English First Additional Language teachers to expose learners to a wide variety of materials and to provide opportunities for learners to read and view material, both for literacy information and for pleasure. For this to happen, there should be proper planning on the part of teachers, as literacy involves the intellectual processes of understanding the text written - in a second language, in this case (McKenzie and Walker, 2013).

5.2.3.2 Poor Learner Performance

This study identified lack of exposure and access to the English language especially by learners from rural areas, as a contributing factor leading to poor literacy levels. Most participants understood the plight of learners with regard to learning in English. They pointed out that learners were failing and repeating grades because they receive

instruction in a language they did not understand. It also emerged teachers assess learners on content they did not understand. This emerged when one learner participant said she sometimes let the teacher continue with the lesson even if she did not understand the content. Teachers also sometimes continued with the lesson without making sure everyone understood.

The above phenomenon is very common. McKenzie and Walker (2013) also found that learners failed examinations because they could not read and understand instructions, and Katms (1997) argues that reading without comprehension is worthless (Khaki, 2014). Learners from rural districts do not speak English and lack exposure to it at home and this limited exposure impacts negatively on their academic performance. Hoff (2005), MacLaughlin (1998) and Owens (2008) share the same view that language competency is central to learning (in Meirim, Jordaan, Kallenback and Jijhumal, 2010). Taylor and Vinjievold (1999) went further to say, even though the majority of schools have opted for English as their LoLT and for assessment purposes, these learners have little, and sometimes no, contact with and access to English. The research indicates that it is almost impossible for learners to progress in their studies when learning in a language they hardly understand. Further, studies show a very low level of understanding where the language of instruction and curriculum is not their mother tongue (McKenzie & Walker, 2013).

Low proficiency levels in English seem to affect other school subjects as well. In this study, teachers reveal that learners do not perform in Social Sciences and in other subjects because they lack English proficiency. This is in line with the findings of Zenex (2007) where Mathematics teachers pronounced the difficulties they were faced with in their classrooms. These ranged from language to content knowledge. Research evidence points to poor English skills among both teachers and learners that impact negatively on Mathematics and Science (Zenex, 2007). The present study shows that learners are faced with a huge burden in figuring out and mastering the content of tasks written in a language that needs linguistic competencies they hardly possess (Setati & Adler, 2000; Ndamba, 2008). McKenzie and Walker (2013) add that this situation leads

to poor quality in education and low literacy outcomes. While research regards successful teaching of Mathematics and Science as contributing towards economic sustainability, studies show that school leavers lack the basic literacy skills that would afford them access to the science and technology fields (Zenex Foundation, 2007).

Many studies (TIMMS, 1999; TIMMS, 2003; PIRLS, 2006; SAQMEC, 2007) of literacy and numeracy have been undertaken and they all point to one thing: the lack of these skills in South Africa. Evidently, the poor proficiency in numeracy and literacy at high school has an effect at tertiary education level. Stephen, Welmarn and Jordaan (2013) and McKenzie and Walker (2013) reported poor proficiency levels in tertiary institutions, especially by black learners. Students at universities do not operate at optimal levels because of language barriers (Barker, 1988, Vinke and Jordaan, 1993 in Stephen, et. al, 2013). For learners to succeed they need to employ a variety of study skills. Kaylani (1996) concurs that successful learners employ a combination of different learning strategies. Most learners from rural areas are not equipped with these learning strategies as a result they struggle academically.

Simkins and Paterson (2005) observed a similar situation, and concluded that there is a link between poor Mathematics attainment and language skills in South Africa (Muller, n.d). Free State teachers linked the high failure rate of the Grade 12 learners to poor English proficiency (Smith, 1999 in de Wet, 2002). Pluddemann, Mati and Mahlalela-Thusi (1998) are also of the view that learning in a LoLT that is a second language negatively affects learners academically. Teachers, parents and other stakeholders need to join forces and assist learners so that their English proficiency levels are improved. With improved proficiency, there is a high likelihood of the improved literacy levels vital to the academic development of learners.

5.2.4 Self-confidence and self- esteem when learning in a second language/ First Additional Language

In this study, issues of self- esteem and self- confidence emerged. Learners mentioned that they were afraid to speak English and would rather keep quiet, because they knew they would make mistakes and others would laugh at them. Teachers indicated learners' fears of speaking in a second language when they said learners were nervous to express themselves during classroom interactions. It also came out that sometimes teachers could see learners knew the answers to questions asked, but did not have enough self- confidence to speak up and make mistakes in front of others. One parent alluded to this when he said sometimes learners were reluctant to indicate to the teachers they did not understand, in case others would think of them as slow learners. Therefore, they let the teacher continue. This meant they ended up assessed on content they did not fully understand, in addition to a language they had not fully grasped.

A learner with an English background is under the impression that his peers did not want to struggle by using a language they did not understand even though they learnt in it. It also became clear that learners and their teachers cared about each other because they used a language that everybody understood.

Arnold and Brown (1999) in Rubio (2007) are in agreement with learner participants here when they say, learners may be anxious in speaking in the second or foreign language because they may not be expressing themselves properly This is illustrative of lowered self-confidence in learners, which invariably has an adverse effect on their self-esteem. Stephen and Hemerka (2009) also pointed out that low self-esteem makes learners keep quiet in the classroom - this is a worldwide phenomenon. Campbell (1996) wrote of a study in Tanzania with similar findings, where a respondent reported that other learners kept quiet in class because they did not want to embarrass themselves by speaking a language they did not understand (Ndamba, 2008).

Learning through the medium of a second language seems to affect learners' self-

confidence and self-esteem negatively. Self- confidence and self-esteem involve judgments about oneself. Among other factors, identified Mruk (1999) that may affect the development of self- esteem are; parental warmth, expectations, respect and classroom atmosphere (in Rubio, 2007). Teachers need to create an atmosphere that encourages learners to take risks and be responsible for their own learning as Rubio (ibid) says; speaking a foreign language involves taking risks. When learners know that their backs are covered, they willingly take risks and that shows positive self-confidence and high self-esteem. On the other hand, it becomes difficult for learners to maximize their performance in language learning if the teacher does not provide the support necessary for learners to achieve competencies. Teachers need to be aware of the vital role they are supposed to play in assisting learners when learning in second language.

Low self- esteem results in insecurities, fear and other negative feelings (Rubio, 2007), so it is very important for teachers always to maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and teaching especially in classrooms where learners learn through a second language. Everybody who is involved in the development of a learner in the process of language learning has an important role to play.

5.2.5 Strategies to assist learners improve English proficiency

Learners in this study believed their proficiency levels in English language would improve once they receive plenty of reading material in this language. In some schools visited, LTSM seemed to be a challenge. One learner who suggested that they need textbooks to study on their own raised this issue. They suggested teachers should approach the Department of Education and tertiary institutions for books. Learner participants in this study suggested materials such as short story books, novels and newspapers. They share same views with authors such as Mc Pherson (1992), Cruz (2010), Piehl (2011) and the DoE (2011) who emphasise exposure to materials in English language so that learners improve their vocabulary and reading skills. Learners in this study chose English and were willing to learn and improve their English skills

because it is the global language.

Learner participants proposed getting access to reading material meant for leisure. It becomes important to note that Mestry and Grobler (2007) echoing Madileng (2007) also believe providing materials that are not prescribed at school so that learners can familiarize themselves with English, only when parents assist by buying magazine and newspapers. Therefore, in this way learners would experience English language even at home. The learner sample in this study is also in agreement with Rini (2013) when advising that parents should give learners an opportunity to make their own choices about their reading material and it must be for leisure.

Krashen (2013) also stresses comprehensible input. However, Hatch (1978) and Long (1996) challenge this theory. They argue that comprehensible input alone is not enough to develop a language (Menez, 2013). They emphasise the output as well, stressing the importance of practising what a child learned. They take it further than acquisition, which may take place informally, to actively learning. They maintain that post-reading activities play a vital role in allowing learners to identify what they do not know and what they do know (Rini, 2013; Hatch, 1978 and Long, 1996 in Menez, 2013). In this way, learners move from basic interpersonal communication skills to the cognitive academic language proficiency skills necessary for their classroom interactions and academic performance in general. Teachers have a duty to teach and model reading to learners so that they develop readings skill. For learners to be able to learn in a second language they must have acquired grammatical competence so that there can be a meaningful interaction in the classroom. Grammatical competence is the proper use and knowledge of parts of words (Hall, Smith and Wicakson, 2011). This is something that seems to be lacking in many rural classrooms.

5.2.6 The role of teachers and the wider society in learning

For learners to learn English as a second language better, teachers should model the use of English in their classrooms so that their learners can take the cue from them. Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) identified peers and adults as key role players in modelling. Modelling is very important in teaching, as learners tend to mimic their teachers. Therefore, if a teacher starts to switch to the mother tongue, learners will follow suit, as they will be following their model, the teacher. Researchers believe modelling is an important means of acquiring literacy skills, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour (Zimmerman and Rosenthal, 1978 in Zimmerman, 1990; Schunk and Zimmerman (2007)). This research emphasises the great importance of teachers as models in their classrooms.

Pflepsen (2011) also emphasises the importance of the role played by the learners' immediate world, as it is where they observe others and imitate them. Therefore, it takes a wider society for learners to develop language skills because of the interaction with other people. As Menez (2013) says, language learning is a socially mediated process. Therefore, for a learner to develop proficiency in a language, the teacher, peers and parents, must use that language as well. Furthermore, Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) observed that with modelling, learners store the learnt information in their memory, cognitively organise, and rehearse it and then with production translate modelled events into actual behaviours. If learner input is in both the mother tongue and English, so will be the retention and production because this is what observed from the models. In this study, teachers and peers engaged in a similar behaviour of using isiXhosa where they should use English so they are not assisting learners in learning English. However, this is inconsistent with Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding according to which teachers, parents and peers need to assist a learner until such time that the learner can progress on her own.

5.2.7 Summary

The data presented in this chapter reveal that learners from rural areas have trouble in using the Language of Learning and Teaching. However, it emerged from the data that most respondents still prefer the current LoLT even though they could see that some learners were struggling. Participants brought forward different reasons for choosing English as LoLT. The participants were concerned about future endeavours like attending college, career opportunities, and the fact that English is the *lingua franca*, which, were some of these reasons. The challenge comes when both teachers and learners have to use English in the classroom. Teachers have to do a double job because they teach in English and then translate to the language that learners understand. Teachers use home language as a resource in their classrooms so that they can reach those learners who have low English proficiency. Communication flows very smoothly when using the learners' home language with the result that learners from rural areas are comfortable in using it instead of English. This could be the reason why some respondents preferred isiXhosa to be their LoLT.

Even though many participants preferred English as the LoLT, learners still perform poorly in Social Sciences and other subjects or learning areas. Participants link poor performance to the LoLT, which is a second language. Receiving education in a language that is not your own also hampers one's self- confidence and self-esteem. Teachers revealed this when they said learners were afraid to speak in class and make mistakes. Learners found it difficult to make mistakes when they felt insecure. In addition, good performance leave learners motivated while failure leads to demotivation. Therefore, teachers need to try to keep their learners motivated. The researcher noted that teachers are comfortable with using English as they indicated that they valued bringing the world into the classroom through it, so for this could be the reason they preferred using it. In addition, teachers felt compelled to use English because that is what the policy required of them. Textbooks and assessments are in English.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focusses on the key elements of the study and summarises the findings discussed in Chapter 5. It provides the conclusion and recommendations to remedy the current situation. This study also highlights issues of further research. Lastly, it deals with reflections on what the researcher might have done better when undertaking this project and the limitations of the study.

6.2 Summary of the key elements of this study

This study investigates the perceptions of learners, teachers and of parents with regard to the use of English as the LoLT in teaching Social Sciences in Grade 9 in the rural areas. Respondents expressed different views on the use of English language as LoLT. Below is a summary of the key elements that emerged during data analysis.

- Language of classroom interaction;
- Preferred language of teaching;
- Benefits derived from learning through the medium of English;
- Challenges experienced by learners from rural areas when learning through the medium of English;
- The role of the mother tongue in learning for learners in rural areas;
- Availability and the role of resources to teach in rural areas; and
- Remedial action needed by teachers in assisting struggling learners.

The researcher intended to discover the views of learners, teachers and of parents about the use of English as the LoLT. The researcher also wanted to find the advantages and disadvantages of using of English as the LoLT. A Qualitative approach made it possible for identifying and using interviews and observations as tools for collecting data.

Semi-structured interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to interact with respondents at a deeper level. The researcher held interviews a one-on-one basis with participants. The researcher ended up understanding that even though English was the Language of Learning and Teaching and that assessment took place in it, it was not the only language used in the classrooms. In general, some learners, teachers and some parents were of the opinion that learning in the English language posed a problem but they chose it anyway.

Both learners and teachers revealed strategies they employed in the classroom in order to understand the content of the lesson. One learner said he listened to what the teacher said in English then translated it into isiXhosa and again changed it to English for an answer. A parent indicated that her children did not cope with English in tertiary institutions. She said English became more difficult for children and that is why they failed. It was also evident that some parents were under the impression that learners failed and repeated grades because they were taught in a language they did not understand.

There were some parents however, who believed that learning in the second language as was the case, empowered the learners to deal with other learning areas taught in English. These parents were of the opinion that their children performed better in English than in isiXhosa (their mother tongue).

Summary of the findings

6.3.1 Language used in the classroom

It is a fact that although most African black schools choose English as their LoLT. Most teaching takes place in the learners and teachers' main languages (Mati, 2004; Edley in Plüddemann, Mbunde-Shale, Wababa, 2005). This is especially so when a teacher and the learners share the same language. This study reveals similar findings to a study carried by Mati (2004). In these, teachers and learners shared the same mother tongue. This made it easy for them to abandon English, which was the LoLT, and use their main language because both learners and teachers understood it better. It also became evident that the two languages in the classrooms and that isiXhosa dominated. The researcher noticed that isiXhosa was used the mostly by both teachers and learners.

An abnormality emerged in school A when a learner who had once attended English medium schools and had better English language proficiency than his peers, claimed that their teacher used English when teaching and isiXhosa as a means of explaining a few concepts. What he said was different from two other learners from the same school in the same class as they reported that their teacher used isiXhosa. The researcher wondered whether this particular learner was protecting the teacher because he was the only one who reported the teacher to be using English while his peers reported otherwise. Alternatively, maybe the learner understands the teacher well as he has a command both English and isiXhosa because during classroom observations, the researcher noticed that the teacher used the English language only when using the textbook for notes and for asking questions, which he later explained in isiXhosa.

6.3.2 Policy versus practice

Teachers know that they have to follow the policy by teaching through the medium of English. Sometimes teachers claim to follow the policy but end up revealing challenges they are faced with which make them deviate from the policy. Mostly, teachers follow the policy when they use textbooks but when they explain, they move from policy to their main languages. The researcher observed teachers using textbooks written in English in their classrooms. They asked questions in English and then explained the same question in isiXhosa.

Teachers allowed their learners plenty of time to respond to questions. Sometimes they gave learners clues when they saw that learners really did not know how to respond. . When learners responded they mostly did so in isiXhosa, and spoke very quietly as if they were not sure about their answers. There was a group of learners from the sample, who were actively involved in the lesson but interacted in isiXhosa. They only provided answers in English for concepts. The researcher noticed that teachers understood their learners' struggle in understanding the current LoLT and the lack the vocabulary to express themselves in it. This must have been the reason they also used isiXhosa to explain both the text and the questions. Therefore, English as the LoLT poses challenges to learners in the rural schools even though they prefer it over their mother tongue.

6.3.3 Preferred language of teaching

Different views on the preferred language of teaching emerged. Learners, teachers and parents had different views on this issue. Some participants preferred English to their mother tongue because of the benefits associated with it. Benefits derived from learning the English language weighed more than the challenges they experienced and their low proficiency levels in it. Some respondents chose isiXhosa because they were under the

impression that they would understand the content better when taught in the language they understood better. Other participants wanted the use of both languages for learning and teaching. They argued that they needed to know English because it was the language of wider communication and knowing it would help them to fit in the global world. At the same time, isiXhosa was their language and they understood it better so those who struggled in English should receive instruction in isiXhosa. Many respondents did not view isiXhosa as a language of power. They did not see it as a language that could assist them in building their careers. Most respondents observed that English was the language used in government offices, in the media and in schools.

6.3.4 The challenges experienced when learning through a second language

Researchers have written extensively about the challenges experienced by learners who learn in a Second Language, in this case, English First Additional Language. Respondents in this study shared the same sentiments. Even though they preferred English as their LoLT, they understood fully that many learners experienced problems in learning through this language. Learners saw their peers struggling in responding to the questions asked by the teacher. Sometimes learners recorded very low mean scores after writing S. S. tests. It was clear that learning Social Sciences in English was not easy. The use of English as the LoLT seemed to affect performance in other subjects as well. Teachers alluded to this when they pointed out that learners did not perform well and that this affected other subjects taught in English.

English is the LoLT that teachers must include it in their lessons. Teachers seemed to think that all English teaching rested with English language teachers. One S. S. teacher made an appeal for language teachers to lay more stress on grammar so that learners would be able to express themselves in Social Sciences classes, for example. This should not be the case because when learners using incorrect grammar responded to S. S. teachers, those teachers should be there to show them how the English

language works.

6.3.5 Strategies to assist learners in learning Social Sciences in the LoLT

They raised lack of exposure to materials written in English one of the challenging issues. Learners were of the view that for their vocabulary to increase and their English proficiency to improve, they needed plenty of reading material. They suggested a variety of material such as prescribed by the Department of Education. They believed that learning should also be about enjoyment, so reading short stories, novels and newspapers and magazines should be encouraged. One learner even suggested that tertiary institutions should donate books to schools.

6.3.6 Remedial action taken to assist learners

Teachers normally received feedback after an activity during the process of teaching and learning. This made it possible for teachers to identify their learners' strengths and weaknesses. It was evident from the study that teachers did not do remedial work. One teacher shared that it was difficult to assist learners and to pay individual attention to them because of the large numbers in the class. Teachers indicated that many of their learners did not have a good command of English and it was not easy to help them.

Pace setters that are followed by the Department also put pressure on teachers who could not emphasise the content of their subject until learners understood because there is always a quarter of the work to be moderated at the district level. A teacher pointed out that, he followed the pace setter which prescribes which activity should be done and when it should be done. The last teacher interviewed claimed to help learners by asking them to bring dictionaries and by asking them to seek assistance at home.

Responses provided above seem to suggest that teachers' progress with learners who have gaps of knowledge because they chase deadlines for the Departmental

moderation. Another challenge is that curriculum documents, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) reviewed to become the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS), are in English. Foley (2008) argues that if learners receive instruction in African languages, so should be the policy documents (National Curriculum Statement (NCS)/ CAPS), as it is no use teaching African languages in a curriculum written in English. Thirdly, all Social Sciences textbooks are in English. There is clearly a lack of learning material in the mother tongue and that is a challenge in using mother tongue as the LoLT (de Wet, 2002: Foley, 2008).

The idea of using isiXhosa the LoLT may not be practicable if the three points raised above are not considered. The Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) is also a huge factor because the state would need to invest time and money in having it written in isiXhosa and the other South African indigenous languages. However, the starting point should be that curriculum documents like CAPS should be in isiXhosa. Then publishers may take a tune from the policy documents.

6.3.7 Language in Education Policy makers

Language policy makers need to look deeply into the language needs of learners, especially those from rural areas where learning takes place in a language that is not theirs. Developing a Language in Education Policy should not cater for ideal situations but should address important issues on the ground. For example, they must investigate the challenges that are experienced by teachers and learners in teaching in the second language. Then, they should compile a report that will assist in developing a Language in Education policy that caters for a wider range of backgrounds. Learning in more than one language should be a general practice in our schools (DoE, 1997) as this would improve multilingualism of both the society and the individual.

6.3.8 Reskilling of Foundation Phase and English language teachers

The Department of Education must offer English teachers an opportunity to study an Advanced Certificate in Education specializing in English language teaching. By so doing, teachers would be equipped with English methodology skills so that they would be able to assist learners in class. Teachers would then be able to assist learners in acquiring reading skills, which form the basis of all learning. Learners would read for meaning and improve their academic performance. If learners received the best English language instruction from the foundation phase, they would be able to use it across the curriculum.

Reading is indispensable in learning. Teachers must instill a love of reading in their learners. English language teachers should encourage learners to read a variety of materials for them to develop their vocabulary. In this way, learners would develop the comprehension skills needed across the curriculum.

6.4 Conclusion

It transpired from this study that many respondents favoured English as the LoLT. It was also evident that learners were struggling to learn through the medium of English, and most respondents were aware of that fact. Teachers were in a dilemma because they wanted their learners to understand English but they could not teach using English because their learners lack proficiency. Code-switching is the only way that helped teachers and learners to mediate content. Lastly, learners believed that if they receive plenty of English reading materials then their proficiency levels would improve. The DoE shares the sentiment as it focusses on more exposure to reading materials in the First Additional Language.

6.5 Recommendations

The objectives of this study were to find the views of learners, teachers and parents about the use of English as LoLT. Most respondents preferred English, the language they struggled using. It is therefore, recommended that both English and isiXhosa be used officially as LoLT. Introducing bilingualism especially in rural schools where learners learn in a language different to their mother tongue would assist a great deal. Bilingualism is the development of writing, reading and speaking in two languages (Salinas-Gonzalez, Arreguin-Anderson and Allanis, 2015). Dworin (2003b) defines bi-literacy as children's competencies in two languages developed at the same time but with varying degrees (Reyers, 2006). Many previous studies clearly show that learners use their mother tongue as a vehicle to understand content taught in English. The DoBE needs to make use of the mother tongue and English as LoLT officially because teachers and learners use both languages for learning.

6.6 Issues for further research

The Department of Education envisages learners who are able to identify and solve problems using creative and critical thinking. Studies conducted by PIRLS, TIMMS and ANA reveal poor literacy levels, which apparently affect other subjects like Mathematics and Science. Studies have reported that Grade 9 South African learners perform three years below their grade level when compared with learners of the same grade in other African countries in the SADC region. Researchers need to consider:

- How teachers in Grade 4 develop comprehension skills in learners from rural areas who learn English as the First Additional Language?
- Promotion of reading skills among non-English speakers who learn in the medium of English in Grade 4

6.7 Reflections

This research was conducted in schools located in the rural areas and maybe if the researcher had gone the extra mile and researched in semi-urban and in urban schools, a deeper understanding of the perceptions on English as the LoLT would have emerged.

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Appendix A: Letter requesting to conduct research

11 Dove Drive
West Drive
King William's Town
5600
28 July, 2014

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: Research Request

I am a student at the University of Fort Hare under the supervision of Ms. P. Maxakato. I write this letter requesting permission to research in your school.

My study is about finding out perceptions of parents, teachers and learners with regards to the use of English as LoLT in Grade 9 Social Science. The researcher will seek consent from parents and assent forms will be provided to participants who are under age. I will be conducting interviews with parents, teachers and learners. These interviews for learners and teachers will be taking place during break times and will take approximately forty five minutes each participant, and parents will be visited after school. Observations will also be taking place. One of the aspects that will be observed is the language that is used by both the teacher and learners during the lesson.

I hope this letter will be highly considered.

Yours faithfully

N. Soya

078 384 6259

ngesiba.soya@gmail.com

Appendix B: District Director Letter

45 Eales Street, King William's Town, 5600, Private Bag X74445, KWT, 5600
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Email: nomvume.plaatjie@edu.ecprov.gov.za

Ms N. Soya

11 Dove Drive

King William's Town

Dear Madam

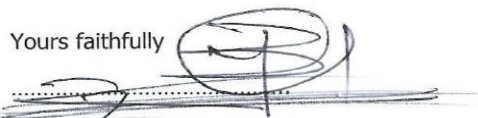
APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research in schools of your choice in the King William's Town District for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements for Masters in Education at the University of Fort Hare, Faculty of Education.

Please be informed that permission is only granted provided that school activities are not disrupted.

We wish you well in your endeavors.

Yours faithfully



F.C. SOKUTU – DISTRICT DIRECTOR

building blocks for growth



Ikamva eliqaqambileyo!

Appendix C: Informed consent letter

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding perceptions of parents, teachers and of learners towards the use of English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

.....
Signature of participant

Date:.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....
Signature of participant

Date:.....

Appendix D: Interview questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

LEARNER QUESTIONS

1. Which language does your teacher use when teaching Social Science in your class?
2. Which language would you prefer to be taught in?
3. Which language do you mostly use when discussing text in the classroom?
4. What do you enjoy most about being taught Social Science in English language?
5. What is it that you do not enjoy about being taught Social Science in English?
6. Do you think you would understand Social Science better if it was taught in your mother tongue?
7. Do you think that there are advantages of using English at school? If yes what are those advantages?
8. What do you think are the advantages of learning Social Science through English Language?
9. As a learner which language do you think is appropriate to be used when teaching? And why do you think so?
10. How do you think you can be helped?

TEACHER QUESTIONS

1. Which language do you use when teaching Social Science?
2. Why do you prefer to use this language?
3. Is the language that you use in line with the Language Policy in Education?
4. What do you enjoy about teaching Social Science in your preferred language?
5. Does the language that you use enable learners to understand and interact with you and among themselves in the classroom?
6. How do your learners cope when they have to interpret a historic text using English?

7. Are your learners able to discuss past events using English?
8. Learners should be examined in English: How do you think they will perform if they were taught in their home language? What informs this answer?
9. Do you regard language as barrier in teaching Social Science?
10. What do you think should be done to minimize the barrier?
11. Which language do you think your learners prefer?
12. How do you assist the learners when they do not understand the language?

PARENT QUESTIONS

1. Which language do you want your children to be taught in?
2. Why do you choose this language?
3. Do you think the language that is used to teach your child has any effects on His or her their pass rate?
4. How do you think she/ he would perform if they were taught in isiXhosa?
5. Do you think children would appreciate Social Science the same way they would if they were taught in the mother tongue?
6. What challenges do you think your child is faced with when learning Social Science in English?

Interviews

1. Which language does you teacher use when teaching Social Science in your class?

Learner 1

The teacher uses both (English and isiXhosa, but adds just a bit of isiXhosa) because we have to understand the content in English because we sit for examinations written in English, we can't write exams in isiXhosa.

2. Which language would you prefer to be taught in?

Learner 1

I would like to be taught in (English) because if we are taught in isiXhosa what is written in English from our books, so the teacher should not bother himself translating for us because we must listen to English and write examinations in English.

3. Which language do you mostly use when discussing text in the classroom?

Learner 1

We use isiXhosa all the way because we do not want to struggle. If we use English we will be choosing the difficult way of doing things. We want to speak the language that we understand. We look at a text written in English and then discuss in isiXhosa.

4. What do you enjoy most about being taught Social Science in English language?

Learner 1

I enjoy being taught Social Science in English because I understand English language. I translate what the teacher says into isiXhosa that is how I retain knowledge; I translate English to my language.

5. What is it that you do not enjoy about being taught Social Science in English?

Learner 1

There is nothing that I do not enjoy about being taught Social Science in English.

6. Do you think you would understand Social Science better if it was taught in your mother tongue?

Learner 1

Yes because the only language there ever heard is isiXhosa in their lives. They only come into contact with English in their books. So it would be good if they are taught in a language that they understand even though it would also make things difficult because examinations are conducted in English language not in isiXhosa.

7. Do you think that there are advantages of using English at school? If yes what are those advantages?

Learner 1

I think maybe the government does not want to waste money in making materials for eleven different languages spoken in South Africa. Also if you have learned English you will be able to follow any profession and be able to help different racial groups that come to your practice.

8. What do you think are the disadvantages of learning Social Science through English Language?

Learner 1

It is not good being taught in a language that you do not understand because you will not know what the teacher says.

9. Which language do you think is appropriate to be used when teaching? And why do you think so?

Learner 1

I think English is an appropriate language because it prepares you for different professions.

10. How do you think you can be helped?

Learner 1

Learners must be given novels to read right through. They must be given every material that is written in English like newspapers. Teachers must ask for assistance from those in authority like the Department of Education and from the institutions of higher learning so that they can be given old books that they no longer use in their libraries.

Appendix E: Proof from the editor

Sue Matthis

Tel: 043 7267187

B A (Hons)

Cell: 0837817646

e-mail:suematthis@gmail.com

94A Chamberlain Rd

Vincent

East London 5247

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves as confirmation Nongesiba Soya submitted her master's thesis to me for proofreading and language editing.

S E Matthis

17 January 2017

Appendix F. Letter to the school requesting access for research.

11 Dove Drive
West Bank
King Williams Town
5600

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Request for research

I write this letter to request permission to conduct research. I am interested in finding out the views of learners, teachers and parents about the use of English language in the teaching of Social Sciences in grade 9. I am going to need the Social Science teacher, two parents from the S.G.B and three teachers.

I hope this letter will be highly considered

Yours faithfully

Soya. N (Ms)

078 384 6259

ngesiba.soya@gmail.com

Appendix G: Letter from the school



WS SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
P. O. B-0X 55 BISHO 5605 TEL: 082 4828 537

To whom it may concern

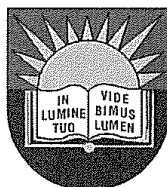
This serves to confirm that Ms Nongesiba
Soga conducted interviews on the use of LGBT in
Social Science. She was able to do her work with the
help of Grade 9 learners, Social Science teacher and
parents from the SGB.

Yours faithfully

Helen BS (princ)



Appendix H: Ethical Clearance Certificate



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: MAX011SSOY01

Project title: **Perception of parents, teachers and learners towards the use of English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).**

Nature of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Nongesiba Soya

Supervisor: Ms P maxakato

Co-supervisor: N/A

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

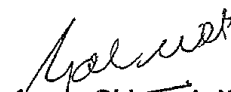
Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely


Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

20 August 2014