

EXPLORING THE USE OF MOTHER TONGUE AS
THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 4: A
CASE STUDY OF FOUR SCHOOLS IN THE EAST
LONDON EDUCATION DISTRICT.

by

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INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 4: A CASE STUDY OF FOUR SCHOOLS
IN THE EAST LONDON EDUCATION DISTRICT.**

By

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Supervisor: Dr N. Pylman

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DECLARATION

I declare that: *Exploring the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4: A case study of four primary schools in the East London Education District* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This research has not been previously submitted for any degree at the University of Fort Hare or any other institution.

29 January 2016

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Phelisa Prudence Sakati

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Judith Nombuyiselo Sakati, who has been my mentor. Lots of thanks for her love, support, and guidance she has given me.

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Firstly, I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving me courage, strength and time to do this research. I shall remain grateful for all the grace that God has given me when I was busy with this research. Without Him, I would not have been where I am today.

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ACRONYMS

ANC	-	African National Congress
CALP	-	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
DACST	-	Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
DOE	-	Department of Education
EFAL	-	English First Additional Language
FAL	-	First Additional Language
LANGTAG	-	Language Task Group
LIEP	-	Language in Education Policy
LSM	-	Learning Support Material
MOI	-	Medium of Instruction
MT	-	Mother Tongue
MTE	-	Mother Tongue Education
MTI	-	Mother Tongue Instruction
NCS	-	National Curriculum Statement
SADOE	-	South African Department of Education
SASA	-	South African Schools Act
SGB	-	School Governing Bodies
PED	-	Provincial Education Department

ABSTRACT

The study explored the views of parents and educators on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. This was with the view to providing answers to the three research questions; namely: the advantages of mother tongue instruction, challenges on the introduction and implementation of mother tongue and strategies to promote mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. The study employed a case study design, comprising Grade 4 classes in four public primary schools in the East London Education District. Purposeful sampling was employed to select four Grade 4 class teachers (one per school), four Heads of Department and four parents. Semi-structured interviews, observation and documents were used in collecting data which was analysed. Findings revealed that parents and educators perceived mother tongue instruction as good in terms of improved learner performance, improved parent involvement in homework activities, preservation of culture and heritage, and improved teaching practices. However, lack of resources and specialized teacher training and the status of English as an international language of communication were viewed as major barriers for the implementation of mother tongue as the medium of instruction. The need for policy change in respect of the language for teaching and learning in Grade 4 is recommended.

Key words: Mother tongue, Medium of Instruction, Language in Education Policy, Educators, Parents, IsiXhosa, East London Education District.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND

According to Fakeye (2011) language and education are inseparable because the use of language as a medium of instruction in the teaching and learning situation goes a long way in determining the success achieved by learners. Bamgbose (2000), states that three- and - a half centuries of colonialism and apartheid have resulted in a language regime in which the valorization of Afrikaans and English came at the expense of indigenous African languages, which have been systematically excluded from the political and economic spheres. Pluddermann, Nomlomo and Jabe (2010) also state that this societal exclusion is reflected in their marginalization in education at both schools and teacher development levels. In South Africa, a large number of primary school learners come from communities where English is not used as the language of communication. Braam (2004) asserts that the deprivation of children from using their mother tongue as their primary learning resource will result in cultural alienation, a lack of self-confidence, and underachievement. Home language should be effectively implemented to the level where it can be used for teaching of all subjects and to enable learners to understand and learn with confidence in their home language (De Wet, 2002).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is the supreme law in South Africa and it protects, amongst other things, the sovereignty of the eleven official languages and promotes the equal recognition of all official languages (South Africa, 1996: Section 6 (2)). Language is a fundamental right in education and every learner has the right to receive education in an official language of his or her choice. (South

Africa, 1996: Section 29 (21). The promotion and equal status to all South Africa's official languages is therefore a basic consideration for every educational institution. The Language in Education Policy of 1997 promotes multilingualism and an additive approach to bilingualism, whereby an additional language is developed without replacing the first language. According to this policy, learners have the right to choose the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) and school governing bodies are the key partners in the pursuit of this goal. It also requires each school governing body to formulate its own school language policy.

The promotion and development of indigenous languages in the new South African democracy was initially underpinned by the National Language Project and the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI). However, Heugh (2006) states that the language policies ignore the necessity of strategies for implementation in practice. This mismatch between intention and implementation strategy was from the beginning subjected to immense assimilation pressure from English as the language of dominance and instruction in schools. The underlying principle of the policy is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s) and an additive approach to bilingualism should be seen as a normal orientation of our language-in- education policy (Department of Education, 2007). The language in education policy is conceived of as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. It is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one's own could be encouraged (LIEP, 1997).

Buthelezi (2009) states that English is the language of learning and teaching within schools and in higher education institutions. However, in our new democracy with all

the awareness about Language in Education Policy (LIEP), national debates challenge the elevated status of English in education (Alexander, 2002; Phaswana, (1998) and call for mother tongue teaching and language choice in schools. Several researchers (Webb, 2002; Mnisi & Leibowitz, 2000; Brooks & Westphal (2002) view the lack of political will in relation to the capacitation of school governing bodies as a contributing factor by African language speakers in their quest for quality English-medium education, in emulation to the elite. This tendency has resulted in the most debilitating school language practices to date for the majority of African language speakers, namely limiting mother tongue education (MTE) for a mere three years (Grades 1-3) before the premature transition to English as LOLT from Grade 4 and onwards.

In addition to the LIEP, there is considerable policy support nationally and provincially for the addition of mother tongue based home language bilingual approach (Pludderman, 2009). The previous Revised National Curriculum Statement (DOE, 2002) goes some way in supporting the LIEP additive multilingualism, recommending that learners' home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible. According to Block (2013) research around the world has shown that it takes longer than three years to fully learn a language and the best option is for children to learn through a language they know well for the first six years. At the same time English can be introduced as a subject, and it can gradually be used as a co-teaching medium. Block (2013: 49) concedes that: "learners bring all they know to school in their home language, and they need to be able to use the strength to learn another language as well as other new knowledge and skills. Unless conditions are appropriate, it is very difficult to learn a foreign language well enough to learn through it".

According to Buthelezi (2009) a shift is needed in the attitudes of parents and teachers in order to develop and promote teaching in mother tongue languages at schools in South Africa. This includes parent perceptions that their children are given higher status if admitted to study at schools where the medium of instruction (MOI) is English. Limited resources and skilled teachers to teach mother tongue languages, poor attitudes among teachers who believe teaching mother tongue languages would lead to institutional racism; School Governing Bodies taking unilateral decision for English being the MOI in schools, and school principals encouraging parents to promote English as the language of learning and teaching to increase learner enrolment are major factors that contribute towards the flight from mother-tongue teaching (Buthelezi, 2009).

According to De Klerk (2002) mother tongue education (MTE) and bilingual education in South Africa bear the weight of history. De Klerk (2002) states that bilingual education is a contested term that has at least two meanings. The term originally meant the use of two languages as medium of instruction. Therefore it usually means the Language1 (L1) plus Language 2 (L2) as medium of instruction. However, in South Africa bilingual education is understood as mother tongue instruction throughout school, plus a second language taught as a subject to a high level of proficiency (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh & Wolf, 2006).

The first language - in - education policy (DOE, 1997) of the democratic, officially multilingual South Africa was conceived of as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa (Pluddemann, 2009). A wide spectrum of opinions exist as to the locally viable approaches towards multilingual education, ranging from arguments in favour of the cognitive benefits and cost-effectiveness of teaching through one medium (home

language) and learning additional language(s) as subjects, to those drawing on comparative international experience demonstrating that under appropriate conditions, most learners benefit cognitively and emotionally from bilingual education. Whichever route is followed, the underlying principle is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional languages.

Countries like Finland, South Korea and Japan using mother tongue as their MOI are ranking the highest in terms of education according to worldwide Education Rankings 2012 (Harushimana, 2014). It is against this background that the problem statement below was formulated.

1.1.1 Statement of the Problem

Most of the African language speaking learners in South Africa receives home language education for the first three years of schooling (Broom, 2004 & Nomlomo, 2006). The current educational practice in South African is that English is used as a medium of instruction (MOI) from Grade 4 onwards. The neglect of home language as a MOI is regarded as one of the primary causes for amongst other the poor results of South African schools, high dropout rates and general academic underachievement of learners who are exposed to instruction in an additional language (Foley, 2008).

At present most schools in the Eastern Cape switch to English as the language of learning and teaching after only three years of mother tongue education. This is confirmed by Muthwii (2004), who states that the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction is mostly implemented in the foundation phase in most schools, with the discontinuation thereof in the intermediate phase. The lack of fit

between the learner's home language and the school's language of teaching and learning is by now widely recognized as a key factor in continued poor performance in Grade 12 (Preasa, 2009). Research conducted by Taylor (2012) showed that most teachers in rural and urban areas cannot teach reading and pupils are not taught to read independently because most teachers do not know how to teach those skills. Block (2013) concurs when he states that many teachers do not know how to teach English as a subject, nor can they speak well enough to be effective role models of the language. He concedes that it is imperative that children interact with people who know their language. Wright (2013) asserts that the country's existing language dispensation brings with it a number of challenges for language education, particularly challenges for language teachers.

Wright (2013) concedes that there is doubt that the formative skills and habits of reading and writing are best tackled without the additional burden of having to do so in a 'foreign' language. He believes that children need to build confidence and expertise in home language literacy before beginning to transfer to another language. Secondly, he adds, it is also widely accepted that as many as six or seven years of learning may be required before an additional language is sufficiently familiar and internalized to be viable as a language of learning. It is against this problem statement that the following research questions were formulated.

1.1.2 Research Questions

1.1.2.1 Main Research Question

What are educators' and parents' views on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4?

1.1.2.2 Sub- Research Questions

1.1.2.2.1 What are the possible advantages of the mother tongue instruction?

1.1.2.2.2 How can educators and parents promote the use of mother in Grade4?

1.1.2.2.3 What challenges do educators and parents perceive with the introduction of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Grade 4?

1.1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore educators' and parents' views on the use of mother tongue education as the medium of instruction in Grade 4.

1.1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Determine educators and parents' views on the use of mother tongue instruction in Grade 4.
- Determine the possible advantages of mother tongue instruction in Grade 4
- Determine how mother tongue instruction can be promoted by educators and parents.
- Determine the possible challenges associated with the introduction of mother tongue instruction Grade 4.

1.1.5 Rationale of the Study

From my own observation as an educator, I have noticed that Grade 4 learners in particular find it difficult to use foreign language as the medium of instruction. They sometimes struggle to reason in a foreign language, and even if they find ideas they fail to elaborate them into correct language. When they are using mother tongue as

the medium of instruction, they are free to express themselves and they are enjoying the lessons.

This notion is supported by Block (2013) when saying that it takes longer than three years to fully learn a language and the best option is for children to learn through a language they know well for the first six years. At the same time English can be introduced as a subject, and it can gradually be used as a co-teaching medium. Block (2013:23) concedes that: “learners bring all they know to school in their home language, and they need to be able to use the strength to learn another language as well as other new knowledge and skills. Unless conditions are appropriate, it is very difficult to learn a foreign language well enough to learn through it”.

1.1.6 Significance of the Study

The study provided insights into the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in the intermediate phase and subsequent challenges to be experienced with the use thereof. It also aimed to assist policy makers, the Department of Education, School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies (SGBs) with the development of language policies. It also intended to provide insights on the importance and benefits of mother tongue instruction for classroom practice. Furthermore, using a vernacular as the medium of instruction might also improve the academic performance of learners, as learners will be taught in a language which they understand.

1.1.7 Delimitations of the Study

This study was conducted in two rural and two urban primary schools in the East London Education District. The study is limited to include four Grade 4 educators,

four Heads of Department, and four parents in the four primary schools where English is currently used as the medium of instruction.

1.1.8 Definition of Terms

1.1.8.1 Exploring

According to Foley (2008) to explore is to look at something or someone closely and in order to learn more about it or them and to identify problems. In this study the researcher explored the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Grade 4.

1.1.8.2 Mother Tongue

Mother tongue refers to the language first learned by a person, the native language or a parent language (Heugh, 2006). In this study mother tongue refers to isiXhosa as the mother tongue and the language which learners use to communicate at home.

1.1.8.3 Medium of Instruction (MOI)

According to Broom (2004) medium of instruction refers to the language used by teachers to teach the educational content in schools. In this study medium of instruction refers to the use of isiXhosa as the medium of instruction.

1.1.8.4 Grade 4

Grade 4 is also called Fourth grade; it is a term used to refer to a year of elementary education in some countries. The fourth grade is the fourth school year after the foundation phase. Learners are usually 9 or 10 years old in this grade and it is part of elementary school (Cummins, 2001).

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by the linguistic theory where language is seen as a resource. All languages are equal in their capacity to express human thought and feeling. All languages can further be developed to give meaningful expression to anything that the human society can produce or create (Alexander, 2007) Languages are a valuable resource to nation similarly to natural resources such as petroleum and minerals (Braam, 2004). It is particularly in the model of language planning where the concept of language as a resource is popularised. In the planning model of language there are choices to be made based for example on economic grounds, which implies the same situation as in the case of any other resources (Bamgbose, 2000).

Although language is viewed as a resource, it cannot be completely compared with the other resources. The economic and policy framework implies that the learner is free to make a choice concerning the use of language in education. This freedom of choice is however limited, because there are some restrictions when using language, for example, in the education system and in terms of access within the socio-cultural and political contexts (Alexander, 2007). An available language such as English as a MOI may not be the specific language that African language speaking learners need. This is because language involves attitudes and behaviour patterns which may not necessarily conform to an economic rationale which is usually postulated (Bamgbose, 2000).

1.2.2 The Language Policy in South Africa

At the end of the Apartheid era in 1994, the new government of South Africa transformed its language policy to promote the development and use of language within the society by officially recognizing 11 languages. By adopting the position of balancing the status of 11 languages, South Africa acted in line with the 1986 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Language Plan of Action for Africa which induced member states to recognize all languages within their boundaries (Khosa, 2012). Thus, it is recommended in South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) that everyone has the right to use the language of his or her choice and that each person also has the right to instruction in the language of his/her choice. This is subject to the provision of the equality of status and “parity of esteem” to all the 11 languages in South Africa (Alexander, 2003:28). However, the right to choose languages of one’s choice does not apply to the nine official languages (Indigenous African languages), but to English in opposition to Afrikaans. Hence, it is important to draw on the apartheid discourse that denied speakers of African languages the right to choose languages of their choice. It is true that the right to choose languages of education is entrusted to parents and the SGB of any particular school. However, the implementation of this right is guided by the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996).

Section 6(3) of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) emphasizes the use of any particular official language on the account of practicability, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the need and preferences of the population. However, this contradicts what is stipulated in the Language in Education Policy (Act 27 of 1997) whereby parents’ and learners’ choices of languages are superseded by the government’s material conditions of being practicable. Thus, even

where it is practicable, the language choice can be undermined as a result of inadequate resources.

1.2.3 Mother Tongue Instruction: An International Perspective

Historically, language policies were used to promote one official language at the expense of others. Today, many countries have adopted strategies of designing policies that are meant to protect and promote regional and ethnic languages whose vitality is threatened (Gordon, 2005). Language policies in Tanzania, Nigeria and Zimbabwe were also compared with the South African LIEP. (Act 27 of 1997). Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe were selected on the basis that they are all multilingual countries like South Africa. In 1965, Kiswahili was declared as the only language of instruction for the whole primary cycle while English is taught as a subject in Tanzania (Swilla, 2009). In Zimbabwe, a significant policy change was effected in 1987 (revised in 2004) for a child's home language to be used as the medium of instruction (Peresuh & Masuku, 2002). In Nigeria, young children are expected to learn through their mother tongue for at least six years and in Tanzania, mother tongue instruction extends up to seven years (Heugh, 2003). Heugh (2006) contends that at least nine to ten years of very good second language teaching is vital before learners are ready to use it as a medium of instruction.

Heugh (2006) further indicates that early-exit from first language instruction to second language instruction has never been productive in terms of reducing Black African learners' failure and dropout rates. In South Africa like Zimbabwe, children are currently learning through their mother tongue from Grade 1 to 3 (for only three years). This early transition, according to Heugh (2006) is not sufficient and leads to underachievement in schools. Fleisch (2008) also states that it is too demanding for

learners to adjust learning through a language they have scarcely mastered. Many countries have come to a point of realizing the effectiveness of children's home language as medium of instruction, especially during early learning. They are aware that most children who begin their education through their mother tongue are able to perform better than those who start school in a new language (Dutcher, 2003).

1.2.4 Mother Tongue Instruction in South Africa

Psychologically, mother tongue language is the system of meaningful signs that works automatically in mind of a child for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among members of the community to which a child belongs. Educationally, children learn more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium (Khosa, 2012).

Learning in the mother tongue provides a strong foundation for all other learning. Children who come to school with a strong foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. Oxenhorn (2009:17) states that, "a thorough first language course gets children off to a good start in education because the language provides a bridge between the child's home and the demands of the new environment of the school." Oxenhorn goes on to say that, at school children can say what they think if they are allowed to speak a language they know. They can express their own ideas and can be creative but if they have to learn a new language, they do not possess the vocabulary to express themselves. They cannot tell the teacher what they think because they do not possess the vocabulary to express themselves.

Ellis (2000) asserts that when children are well equipped mentally in their first language, they can transfer their skills and knowledge to a second language with

reasonable ease. Similarly Cummins (2001) states that conceptual knowledge developed in one language helps to make input in the other language comprehensible. This could mean that if a child already understands certain concepts in his/her own language, all he/she has to do is to acquire the label of those terms in English.

1.2.5 The Role of Parents in Relation to Mother Tongue Instruction

Mother tongue is still difficult to implement in South Africa due to: variety of mother tongues used among teachers and learners, lack of teacher training in the languages, as well as the lack of resources available to teach these languages (Carless, 2002). This situation is aggravated by parents who do not want their children to learn through the medium of indigenous languages because they believe that it will ruin their children's ability to speak English with fluency (Jankie, 2010). In contrast, Cummins (2001) maintains that mother tongue instruction helps develop not only the mother tongue but also children's abilities in other languages.

In addition to the difficulty in using mother tongue as the medium of instruction is that black African parents are afraid that their children will lose socio-economic mobility and access to higher ranking positions in society if they are taught in their home language (Nomlomo, 2006). This explains why many parents choose education for their children through the dominant language, English; unknowingly going against children's rights to education in a language they understand (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

The effects of favouring a dominant language (English) at the expense of indigenous African languages can have disastrous consequences for children and their families (Cummins, 2001). This could create communication gaps between generations

(grandparents with their grandchildren, and even parents with their offspring). For example, a child may be fluent in English, but only to realize that he/she cannot communicate using the language that he/she is used to and vice versa. Thus, mother tongue provides the basis for learning another language (Guvercin, 2011).

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Qualitative Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Mouton (2001) states that qualitative research takes place in a natural setting. Researchers have to build up a complex, holistic framework by analyzing narratives and observations (Cresswell, 2007). Leedy and Omrod (2001) broadly define qualitative research as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Hence De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2002) cited in (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, and Guest, & Namey, 2005) state that qualitative research provides illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues and are most useful for answering humanistic 'why?' and 'how?' questions. This indicates that qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Qualitative research is fundamental in this study as it focused on the experiences of human behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln 2000 & Patton 2002). The researcher adopted qualitative research which is used to better understand a phenomenon and gain new perspectives (Mecer & Dawes, 2008). The essence of using this qualitative approach is its naturalistic-studying of real people in natural settings rather than in artificial isolation (ibid).

1.3.2 Research Paradigm

The term paradigm is defined as a systematic set of beliefs and methods that provide a view of the nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Alexander (2007) points out that a paradigm is a theoretical model within which the research is being conducted, and organizes the researchers' view of reality (though they may not be aware of it). This is in line with Ellis (2000) claim that a research paradigm is a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers, which, adhered to by a group of researchers, it conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions.

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm, which is based on the notion that researchers use constructs such as culture, social context and language to build their view of the world and that social reality is shaped through social interactions as argued by Gibbons and Sanderson (2002). According to these researchers, it also provides opportunity for the voice, concerns and practices of research participants. Van Rensburg (2001) has noted that interpretive researchers reflect an interest in contextual meaning, rather than generalized rules hence instead of surveying large groups. In other words, researchers look for rich and detailed information of a qualitative nature through in-depth interviews, observations or interpretation of documents. The interpretive paradigm is relevant to this study because it focuses on mother tongue as MOI in building the learner's view of the world.

1.3.3 Research Design: Case Study

This study adopted a case study design. A case study is the detailed and thorough investigation of the case as noted by Bless (2004). According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) case studies help researchers connect the micro level or

the actions of individual people to the macro level or large scale social structures and processes. This means that a case study is the study of a phenomenon in its natural setting. The purpose of a case study is to probe deeply and analyze the phenomena used intensively to establish generalization about the wider population to which that unit belongs as argued by Cohen, Marion & Morrison (2001). A case study was used in this study because the researcher sought to explore the views of educators and parents on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Grade 4. The case in this study comprises of educators and parents of two rural and two township primary schools.

1.3.4 Sampling

According to Seaberg (2003), a sample is an element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study or a subset of measurement drawn from a population researchers are interested in. Sampling is made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the best possible source of information to answer the research questions. There are three most common sampling methods used in qualitative research: purposive sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling (Mack 2005).

In this study purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling which entails that participants being selected for a specific purpose and is mostly used in small samples of the total population of respondents who are likely to yield the required information (Neumann, 2003). Patton (2002) and Trochim & Donnelly (2006) define purposive sampling as the process of selecting samples that are rich with information needed for the research and are fit for the study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study (Cohen, 2007). This process of purposive sampling is based on

the assumption that the researcher is able to select elements which represent a typical sample from the appropriate target population (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Grade 4 teachers were regarded as information-rich participants for this study. For the purpose of this study, two rural and two urban primary schools were selected. The reason for choosing rural schools was because educators and learners are predominantly using isiXhosa as their language of communication. Two urban schools were selected because teachers and learners are using English as the MOI. Once the schools were selected, the Grade 4 classes and teachers were selected. The reason for selecting Grade 4 is that it is the entry level to the intermediate phase. Mother tongue is mostly implemented in the foundation phase and in most schools Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) is discontinued after Grade 3 (Muthwii, 2004). Home language should be effectively implemented up to the level where it can be used for teaching all subjects for learners to be able to understand and learn with confidence in their home language (De Wet, 2002). The shift from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction is seen as a primary cause for the learners' underachievement in school work (Foley, 2008). One School Management Team (SMT) member and one School Governing Body (SGB) member in each school were selected. The reason for selecting the SMT members was because of their overall responsibility to manage teaching and learning. The SGB members were selected because of their governing function and the formulation of school policy, in particular school language policies.

1.3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Creswell (2007) describes data collection as the steps that involve setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interviews, documents and visual materials and establishing the protocol for recording the information. The researcher collected data in the form of words rather than numbers through (1) recorded interviews, (2) observations and (3) documents (Khosa, 2012). The primary data sources included grade 4 educators in four primary schools in isiXhosa speaking communities in the East London Education District, four language head of Departments and four parents. The main data collecting techniques used in this research study were semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis.

1.3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Gibson (2007) sees the semi-structured one-on-one interviews as mode of obtaining information through direct interchange with an individual to gain knowledge the researcher seeks, while Eloff (2007) sees semi-structure interviews as a method commonly used in research to corroborate data emerging from other data sources. Although the open-ended questions produces data that is difficult to organize and code, they allow subjects to respond freely and express shades of opinion rather than forcing them to have pre-coded opinions

1.3.5.2 Observations

Observation is way of gathering data by watching behaviour, events, or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting (Cohen, 2007). On the other hand, observation is not to report on individuals' performance, but to find out what kinds of problems in general are being encountered (Phillistine, 2005). Hence Cohen, (2007)

noted that observation involves gathering live data from live situations. Mecer, (2008) points out that if the observer stays for relatively longer periods, people become less self-conscious and gradually start behaving naturally. The researcher therefore observed a lesson where learners were taught in IsiXhosa and also in English in four Grade 4 classrooms. This enabled the researcher to gather the necessary in-depth information for the study.

1.3.5.3 Documents

This is a way of extracting information from the written sources such as minutes of meetings, results' analyses, the schools' language policy and schedules. The main focus here is to concentrate on all written communication that may provide information on the subject of investigation. This is just a form of supportive evidence to the information which the researcher received from the respondents, especially the mark sheets, teachers' lesson plans, learners' workbooks and the schools' language policies. From these documents the researcher was able to pick up the challenges of implementing isiXhosa as the medium of instruction in Grade four. These documentary data are particularly a good source for qualitative case studies because they grounded an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated (Merriam, 2001).

1.3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is described by Gay (2006) as a systematic organization and synthesis of data that involves the application of one or more qualitative techniques. It therefore gives meaning to data collected during research in a way that permits the researcher to answer the research question. As noted by McMillan and Schumacher (2006), qualitative researchers integrate the operation of

capturing, collecting, organizing, analysis and interpreting data and call the entire process data analysis.

Thematic analysis was used in this study. Alexander (2003) describes thematic analysis as identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes data sets in 'rich' detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Broom, 2004). The researcher did this by identifying themes and the relationships between themes and putting them into categories.

1.3.7 Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness refers to the demonstration of integrity and competence in qualitative research by adherence to detail and accuracy to assure authenticity and soundness of the research (Twycross & Shields, 2005). The trustworthiness of the qualitative research methodology of this study relates to the planning implementation of the research design which was conducted in a logical and systematic manner to ensure the trustworthiness of procedures according to the criteria of credibility, dependability, authenticity and confirmability (Freeman, Demarras, Preissle, Routston & St Pierre: 2007).

1.3.8 Ethical Considerations

Collecting data from people raises ethical concerns about what is right or wrong, proper or improper and good or bad (Goddard & Melville, 2001). Therefore, the ethical considerations discussed below were adhered to in this study

1.3.8.1 Gaining Entry:

Appropriate channels of communication were used to negotiate entry into the schools

1.3.8.2 Participants' Right:

The participants were not coerced to participating and participated on their own free will. They were also informed that they could discontinue participating at any point in time.

1.3.8.3 Informed Consent:

Neuman (2003,) stated that nobody should ever be coerced into participating in a research because participation must always be voluntary. The general nature of the study, its goals and procedures were discussed with the participants. Consent forms that stated the purpose of the study seeking participants' consent to participate in the study were given out to participants.

1.3.8.4 Confidentiality:

The researcher ensured participant confidentiality; she further assured participants that information made public will neither include the name of the respondent, nor making it possible for the information to be linked with a particular respondent.

1.3.8.5 Protection from Harm:

Dane (1990) claimed that an ethical obligation rests with the researcher to protect subjects, within reasonable limits, from any form of physical discomfort that may occur during the research work. As far as reasonably possible the researcher ensured that no harm came to the respondents with regards to the research instruments or the data. Questionnaires or interview guides bore no names.

1.3.8.6 Achieving Anonymity:

Gay and Airasian (2003) stated that harm could occur in research through revelation of the identity of participants. The participants were made aware of that the study would, by no means reveal their identities, nor link responses with participants' identities, unless they give permission for that. The researcher assured the

respondents of anonymity, the names of the respondents do not appear on the research instruments or the data.

1.3.8.7 Maintaining Professionalism:

The researcher endeavored at all times throughout the study to maintain professionalism.

1.4 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1:

This is an introductory chapter that gives the background to the study; statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, rationale, definitions of terms and scope of the study.

Chapter 2:

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and related literature review on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

Chapter 3:

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study; the research paradigm, research design, population and sampling, data collection instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4:

Chapter four comprises of a detailed presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected through semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. The discussion of data collected is preceded by information on the contexts of the four schools, and the biographical information of the respondents in relation to gender, qualifications and teaching experience. This is followed by a thematic discussion and interpretation of the interviews conducted.

Chapter 5:

Chapter five summarized and concludes the study. Recommendations and suggestions for further studies on the gaps that were identified by the researcher are tabulated in this chapter.

1.5 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the introduction of the study as well as a brief on the language in education policy in the country. A broad background of the topic is given and the problem statement contextualized to inform and to explain to readers what prompted an investigation into the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. It also includes the rationale for the study, the research questions, delimitation of the study as well as definition of key concepts used. Finally, it presents the structural breakdown of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a literature review, and it is twofold. It first locates the study within its theoretical framework and context, and secondly, it locates the study within national and international literature on the use of mother tongue as the language of teaching and learning (LOLT). (1) A historical background of the language policy in South Africa is provided, (2) an overview of the linguistic theory which serves to enhance the understanding of language, and (3) key components and dimensions of mother tongue as a medium of instruction is also provided. Thus, using mother tongue as medium of instruction to most learners is something that cannot be avoided. As a result of this, the literature review will look (4) the stand of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Grade 4. It will also explore issues of the South African Language Policy in Education and how it affects mother tongue speakers in South Africa.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1996, the African National Congress (ANC) government introduced a new Language in Education Policy (South Africa, 1996). The Language in Education Policy (LIEP) in terms of section 3(4) of the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996) stipulates that the right to choose a language of learning is vested in the individual (Sigcau, 2004). The new government declared eleven official languages for South Africa embedded in a democratic Constitution. Although this language policy foregrounds and promotes the greater use of African languages, the ministry and departments of education did not follow through on their intentions and have established instead, an earlier transition to English as MOI (Heugh, 2006).

According to Heugh (2006) the majority(78%) of African learners who use an African language as home language, change to English as a medium of instruction in schools after three years of home language education. Ironically, English and Afrikaans speaking learners continue to enjoy home language as a medium of education as they did during the colonial and apartheid eras. The situation with regard to the issue of language use in education, causes the gap to widen in relation to education achievement and development (Heugh, 2006).

For IsiXhosa speaking learners, even if they prefer to be taught in their own language, the language in education policy of 2007 does not allow them to do so. There is no public school which uses mother tongue as the MOI from Grade 4 to Grade 12. As a result of this policy, learners whose home language is English or Afrikaans enjoy a clear advantage to the African learners whose home language is not used as a MOI. In contradiction, there are few IsiXhosa learners who achieve satisfactory results with a university exemption (Matiwane, 2010). The IsiXhosa learners manage to obtain school leaving certificates which do not meet the academic requirements for admission to most universities in South Africa. A problem facing IsiXhosa learners is that from Grade 4 the medium of instruction changes from home language to English as a medium of instruction.

From the researcher's own experience many learners are not competent enough in an additional MOI. To aggravate this, some teachers also experience challenges relating to proficiency in English as a medium of instruction. It is obvious that education cannot be equitable or non-discriminatory when the medium of instruction is a language that neither the teachers nor the learners can use sufficiently in a teaching and learning context (Sigcau, 2004).

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LINGUISTIC THEORY

The aim of this theoretical framework is to contribute to the understanding of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4, based on the linguistic theory where the language is seen as a resource. The concept of language as resource entails how speakers use or do not use languages as resources in everyday life and how the usage is beneficial or detrimental to social, political and economic development. The question is no more on what socio-linguists specializing on African languages can do for these languages, but what these languages can do for the resourcefulness of MOI in order to promote socio-economic development, democracy and the eradication of poverty (Wolff, 2006). The vision statement for promoting multilingualism of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) is outlined in its corporate goal of supporting the linguistic diversity of the country as a resource for empowering all South Africans in the country's social, political and economic life. This statement highlights the importance of the implementation of mother tongue as medium of instruction in the South African education system (Wolff, 2006).

According to Alexander (2007) all languages are equal in their capacity to express human thought and feeling. All languages can further be developed to give meaningful expression to anything that the human society can produce or create (Alexander, 2007). Languages are a valuable resource to the nation in the same way as natural resources such as petroleum and minerals (Braam, 2004). It is particularly in the model of language planning where the concept of language as a resource is popularised. In the planning model of a language there are choices to be made based for example on economic grounds, which implies the same situation as in the case of any other resources (Bamgbose, 2000). Although language is viewed as a

resource, it cannot be completely compared with the other resources. The economic and policy framework implies that the learner is free to make a choice concerning the use of language in education. This freedom of choice is however limited, because there are some restrictions when using a language, for example in the education system and in terms of access within the socio-cultural and political contexts (Alexander, 2007). The available language such as English as a MOI may not be the specific language that African language speaking learners need. This is because language involves attitudes and behaviour patterns which may not necessarily conform to an economic rationale which is usually postulated (Bamgbose, 2000).

South Africa is characterised by having a diverse group of languages, which are resources that should be developed like any other economic resource (Banda, 2000). The aspirations of developing the diverse languages in South Africa were considered by the Language in Education Policy, as well as the Language Task Group (LANGTAG) Report (Beukes, 2004). The South African Constitution further gives recognition to the notion of language as valuable resource: Recognising the historically diminished and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages (South Africa, 1996).

These views and policies not only promote the diversity of languages as national resources in education, but they also encourage the specific protection of the language rights of South African citizens (Braam, 2004). The proactive ideal within this paradigm of languages as resources seeks to provide language services that will enhance the status of indigenous languages. These aspirations and directives are consistent with the resource paradigm that intends to reinforce the establishment of a truly democratic society (Braam, 2004).

It is possible to refer to languages as resources in a dictionary sense that refers to a valuable asset for both the community and the individual. An approach and perspective that value languages as resources do not see multilingualism as a problem, but as an enrichment of the socio-cultural life of the community (Bamgbose, 1998). Acquiring more than one language becomes something to be envied and sought after rather than being seen as a stumbling block (Bamgbose, 1998). In this sense multilingualism is comparable to the energy sector where the introduction of innovative technologies involves more sustainable resources such as the sun, wind and water. Along the same lines, the language sector provides rich potential for innovative and sustainable language initiatives. Even in the narrow terms of a cost benefit analysis for industrial production sites, language skills and proficiency is a factor to reckon with (Wolff, 2006).

It is important to emphasise the positive characteristics of language proficiency experiences as forcefully as possible, because until the colonial experience of central administration through an imported official language, nothing was more natural than for Africans to speak several different languages and to learn the language of a neighbouring group wherever out-group interaction so demands (Bamgbose, 1998). English as one of the world's most dominant languages means that many native speakers of English are monolingual and can afford to be so. South Africans cannot afford continuing with the myth that monolingualism is something good and multilingualism is the opposite. Instead, bilingualism as a minimum language requirement is to be promoted while it is to be emphasised that multilingualism opens up opportunities for optimal socio-cultural development (Bamgbose, 1998). Based on the above, it becomes clear that all language should enjoy equal status.

2.4 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

The language policy for schools is guided by principles derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996) and the South African Schools Act (SASA) (RSA, 1996). The former Department of Education adopted the Language in Education Policy (LIEP) in 1997, and further clarified this policy in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of 2002.

2.4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

The Constitution (RSA, 1996:1-6) deals with the subject of language in a variety of interrelated ways. The foundation provisions of the Constitution note 11 official languages of the Republic of South Africa as being Sepedi, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. However, although section 6(2) of the foundations provisions prioritises the need to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages as a form of redress, section 6 (4) restrains this provision by stating that “without detracting from the provisions of subsection (2), all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably.” The latter clause has important implications for the determination of language policy in schools – particularly in the context of recent debates on the status of English as a medium of instruction in schools.

Section 29 (2) of the South African Constitution is unequivocal about the right of all to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice in public education institutions. However, the exercising of this right is fettered by the state’s ability to provide for this right only in a context where such education is reasonably practicable. The Bill of Rights does, however, point to principles that should be considered in order to ensure effective access to, and effective implementation of

this right, namely the need for equity, redress and practicability. The Bill of Rights also compels the state to consider all reasonable education alternatives to promote the exercising of this right, including the establishment of single medium institutions. In effect, although the Constitution affords learners the right to learn in the language(s) of their choice, this right is tempered by the state's ability to practically provide for its implementation.

2.4.2 The South African Schools Act (SASA)

Section 6 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (RSA, 1996) prescribes several preconditions in relation to the determination of language policy in public schools. Of great importance for this report is the power that the Act confers on School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to determine the language policy of a school, albeit subject to the Constitution, SASA and any applicable provincial law. Indeed, the interpretation of this section of SASA has been the object of significant legal contestation, as is evidenced by the number of court cases pertaining to this matter. Of further significance is SASA's holistic and inclusive approach to language policy, which has resulted in the inclusion of a clause that stipulates that a recognised Sign Language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at a public school (p.6). It is therefore now common knowledge that, in the context of education, one speaks of 12 official languages, as opposed to the 11 stipulated in the Constitution.

2.4.3 The Language in Education Policy (LIEP)

The underlying principle of the Language in Education Policy (LIEP) is to maintain the use of home language as the MOI (especially in the early years of learning), while providing access to an additional language(s). The LIEP has the following stipulations:

All learners shall be offered at least one approved language as a subject in Grades 1 and 2; from Grade 3 onwards, all learners shall be offered their MOI and at least one additional approved language as a subject; and all language subjects shall receive equitable time and resource allocation. This policy further states that learners must choose their LOLT upon application for admission in a particular school. Where a school uses the LOLT chosen by the learner, and where there is a place available in the relevant grade, the school must admit the learner. Where no school in a school district offers the desired language as a medium of instruction, the learner may request the Provincial Education Department (PED) to make provision for instruction in his/her chosen language. The Provincial Education Department must make copies of the request and make it available to all schools in the relevant school district. The Provincial Education Department must keep a register of requests by learners in teaching in a language or medium that cannot be accommodated by schools.

It is reasonably practical to provide education in a particular MOI if at least 40 learners in Grades 1 to 6 or 35 learners in Grades 7 to 12 request it in a particular school.

In essence, the MOI provided by a school depends to a large extent on the choices made by learners (or parents) in selecting their MOI. The LIEP read together with SASA, which confers certain rights on School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in determining the language policy of a school, places the emphasis on choice, rather than strong state intervention, as a basis for determining the policy pertaining to the MOI in schools. In view of this, the LIEP attempts to promote both the use of learners' home languages in schools, as well as ensure that learners acquire an additional language of communication to facilitate the bridging of race, language and regional divides, while encouraging respect for others languages.

Acknowledging that language possesses power-conferring properties (Egbo, 2001), Brock-Utne (2005) proposes that policy-makers should be devoted to the strengthening of the African languages as medium of instruction (MOI), given that the African child's learning problem is related to linguistics. It is proposed that learners should experience the chosen language by hearing the language or observing it being used in their everyday lives. It should be teachable, and should enable learners to react to learning experiences covertly and overtly. Learners should use such language to think logically, to conceptualise in that language and afford them the opportunity to examine critically what others say and enable them to express and elaborate their point of view (Mchazime, 2001). This suggests that ex-colonial languages have no relation to the learners' everyday experiences and increases the difficulty of constructing the meaning of concepts. This, therefore, contributes to the failure of modern science and technology in the African continent (Wildsmith-Cromarty & Gordan, 2009). Failure to cater for the above issues amounts to instructions being given in a language that is not normally used in the African child's immediate environment; a language which neither the learner nor the teacher understands and uses well enough (Brock-Utne, 2005). This problem is not specifically confined to South Africa. Din Yan (2003,) refers to problems experienced by Chinese learners taught in English. This raises questions on the efficacy of language policies which may inadvertently result in learners who do not reach the necessary level of English proficiency and consequently drop out of school. On the other hand, language policies in South Africa focusing essentially on emancipation of the masses (i.e. using indigenous language as MOI) may lead to global isolation in view of the importance of English language skills for successful local and international careers (University of Witwatersrand, 2003). Trappes-Lomax (1990)

points out that if society's goal of educating the youth is to be achieved, an appropriate MOI which does not discriminate against any particular group of the youth must be chosen. Even if there is not something officially called a language policy, a policy exists in as much as the linguistic status quo becomes policy implicitly, as in South Africa, where English once enjoyed, and now continues to enjoy dominance.

Herriman and Burnaby (1996) argue that the arbitrariness of this situation indeed provides grounds for the argument that policy should be specified. The official language of a country can also engender fears about access to the standard language among speakers of community and indigenous languages. The official language with inherent rights may cause status problems for competing languages and inequalities. Languages that are afforded higher status than others provide greater social power status (Mchazime, 2001). In view of this, it is proposed that such a language should be accepted by all and is suitable for its assigned role and is of such functional importance as worth the effort of acquiring (Trappes-Lomax, 1990), and fulfilling the functions of communion, expression, conceptualisation and communication (Mchazime, 2001).

2.5 MOTHER TONGUE AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2006) have defined the concept of mother tongue on the basis of four criteria. The first criterion is origin, and refers to the language one learned first. The second criterion is identification, which is defined at two levels; namely: Internal identification which is the language one identifies with; and external identification being the language by which one is identified as a native speaker by others. Competence is the third criterion, and relates to the language one knows

best. Function is the last criterion and refers to the language one uses the most (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2006).

The value of the language of a nation, as a spiritual inheritance lies in the fact that it is transmitted from generation to generation as the basis of thought and action (Mkwizu, 2003). Roy-Campbell (2001) suggests that the language helps to shape the intellectual insight, including broadening and deepening feelings; the importance of using mother tongue as medium of instruction cannot be overestimated. If learners are to master cognitively complex concepts, they can do this most easily by learning them in languages with which they are familiar. The mother tongue educator has a responsibility to clearly bring to the learner the possibilities and demands of the language, to help the learner through exercises to gain command over the language, be it through the spoken word or the written word (Davids, 1998). Learners who learn through their mother tongue are at an advantage compared to those who learn through the first additional language (FAL) (Macnamara, 2003). Emphasis on mother tongue dictates an education which relates it to languages of intercommunication at various levels and thus imparts education relevant to the societal needs. Replacement of mother tongue by another language such as a foreign language deprives many learners of their subsistence (Pattanayak, 2004). Chaudron (1998) holds that in a situation where the learner learns through a language other than the mother tongue, he/she faces problems associated with the following principles of learning:

- Firstly, the learner has to make sense of the instructional tasks, which are presented in the first additional language.
- Secondly, he/she has to attain linguistic competence that is required for effective learning to take place; and

- Finally, he/she has to master the content itself.

A poor grasp of FAL results in a feeling of incompetence and loss of confidence on the part of the learner (Roy-Campbell, 1996). In the context of benefits of mother tongue as the medium of education, Cummins' (2000) views on Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) are relevant. CALP requires sound literacy skills and a broad vocabulary in mother tongue in order to facilitate subject-matter mastery, concept development and skills in formal oral and written expression in the FAL. In fact, first language acquisition must develop strongly in the early years to achieve success in cognitive functioning.

On the other hand, Varkuti (2002); Mackey and Susan (2005) highlight that the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary school can lead to lower proficiency in national and/or international languages which are often the languages of instruction in higher education. This suggests that the non-availability of the developed written forms of the MT languages militates against the language being the medium of instruction. Though mother tongue can be used effectively between a learner and a teacher, it can however not be functional if undeveloped in an academic or scholarly context. This therefore suggests that when a language lacks a well-established written form, it cannot be empowered which in turn jeopardizes the potential status of such a language (Khosa, 2012).

In view of this, mother tongue instruction does not guarantee ongoing academic success beyond primary school and can reduce attainment in higher education (Cummins, 2002). In such cases, Peal and Lambert (1962) quoted in Matiwane (2010) promote bilingual education as they claimed that a bilingual learner has the mental flexibility and superiority in concept formation and a more diversified set of mental abilities. They are better able to dissociate concepts from the words which

they verbalized. Since they have already developed a syntactic orientation to language, they are more aware of the dichotomy between form and meaning in language. Surian (2009) has discovered that using both mother tongue and FAL (bilingual) in education is a great asset to the learner. She has also noted that the bilingual learner has a better awareness of language differences, is better at learning new languages and possesses important advantages in intelligence and cognitive growth. She has also discovered that the cognitive systems of bilingually educated learners differ from those of monolingual educated learners (i.e., educated through mother tongue) in some remarkable ways. This means learning, speaking and using two languages may affect fundamental aspects of cognitive and neural development, thereby potentially influencing the way those systems learn and represent information (Klein & Viswanathan, 2004; Yoshida, 2008).

Recent studies also show advantages in the working memory (Diamond, 2009) and executive functions. Yoshida (2008) suggests that bilingualism's demand on executive functions for constantly switching languages and exerting inhibitory control to suppress the mother tongue in the classroom context might be contributing to cognitive flexibilities. Learners are able to dissociate concepts from the words with which they are verbalize. They develop a syntactic orientation to languages and they are more aware of the dichotomy between form and meaning in languages (Diamond, 2009). The next section provides more information on international language policies in relation to mother tongue instruction.

2.6 MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN RELATION TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Benson (2002) and Alidou (2006) claim that instructions in a home language eases the transition between home and school. This argument is increasingly bolstered by empirical evidence from a range of countries such as Mozambique, Burkina Faso

(Brock-Utne 2006), South Africa and Botswana (Benson,2000) which point to the conclusion that learners perform better academically when the language of instruction is a familiar language (home language).Countries like China, Vietnam, and the former Soviet Union have practiced the communist ideal of providing local language instruction to promote comradeship and equality between groups, and while this has not necessarily resulted in equal distribution of educational resources, it has supported a great deal of enabling legislation (Kosonen, 2004).

The Six-Year Yoruba Medium Primary Project, revealed in the findings of North American studies (Thomas & Collier, 2002) and the experience of many European countries, suggests that a language foreign to the learner should be taught as a subject for five to seven years prior to being used to teach academic content. This would mean focusing on the mother tongue throughout primary schooling and using appropriate methodology to teach other languages as subjects, a model that is not yet being practiced in multilingual countries. Alidou (2006) supports this with evidence from countries like Tanzania and Zambia which highlights that educational progress can be impeded by English medium of instruction on EFAL learners and that skills may be insufficiently developed to serve as an effective educational medium.

Baker (2006) and Benson (2011) both suggest that medium of instruction is the most powerful means of maintaining and revitalizing a language and a culture as it is also the most important form of intergenerational transmission. Chumbow (2012) agrees with both researchers as he sees it as the most direct agent of linguistic genocide. Medium of instruction policy determines which social and linguistic groups have access to political and economic opportunities, and which groups are disenfranchised (Chumbow 2012). He therefore sees this as a key means of power

(re)distribution and social (re)construction, as well as a key arena in which political conflicts among countries and ethno linguistic, social and political groups are realized.

According to Ferguson (2004) medium of instruction policies are the key vehicles for civilizing and assimilating indigenous peoples. There are many issues involved in the formulation of language in education policy. The selection of a medium of instruction is possibly the most critical, but also emotional and contentious, because it relates directly to political choices (Fergusson, 2004). Several researchers (Ferguson, 2007; Hardman, 2008) investigate literature on the educational dimensions of the medium of instruction which reveals that there is a substantial body of academic opinion asserting the view that primary education, particularly early primary education and early literacy is most effectively conducted in a language familiar to the learner and improves the quality and quantity of interaction between an educator and a learner (Fergusson, 2004; Hardman, 2008). Heugh(2006) and Brock-Utne (2010) suggest that the problem might be created by the shift from the so-called 'early exit' policies, under which learners transition to English as medium of instruction (MOI) after three or four years of using mother tongue as MOI in primary schools. It can therefore be argued that this tendency will enhance the quality of education and foster greater respect for other languages. Despite adjustments in the language policies, there is little sign of major changes of educational policy as only one language is still seen as a major language in many African countries. Adeyemi (2004) confirms this view when stating that English has a considerable natural and international coverage of users with a sufficient reliable codified form. The next section provides more information on international language policies in relation to mother tongue instruction.

2.7 MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Mother tongue in education refers to the native language or the first language to teach at formal and non-formal levels (Abijo, 2014). According to Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) mother tongue is the greatest asset to be used by any human being in the task of foreign language learning. It provides an indispensable language acquisitions support system. Without the use of mother tongue, children's potential is often wasted, thereby resulting in educational failure and a lack of development (Mackenzie & Walker, 2013).

Schroeder (2004) examined mother tongue education in schools in Kenya amongst Tharaka-speaking children. In Kenya, KiSwahili is the national language and English is the official language with 61 languages used in total. Similar to other countries, most of the indigenous African languages native to Kenya are not used in formal education, although mother tongue education is allowed up to grade 3. The study reported on a poor, rural community that needed some kind of educational improvement, and the implementation of a new strategy in the form of a mother tongue programme was considered an improvement. Due to positive uptake by all stakeholders, the programme was able to continue even when the funding was no longer available. Some positive outcomes of the programme included educationists writing their folktales, creating new stories, documenting historical and cultural information in textbooks, and putting their songs in print. In another research, Abijo (2014) examined emerging trends in the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in lower Nigerian primary schools. According to Abijo (2014), in most cases Nigerian children are not privileged to be taught in the mother tongue. They have to contend with the language of wider communication, which is English. This has led to the marginalization of Nigerian indigenous languages like Yoruba, which is

spoken in eight states in Nigeria and used as the language of instruction for the first three years of schooling. He recommended that the mother tongue policy should be enforced by the government; language teachers should use only Yoruba as the medium of instruction; there needs to be compliance with the policy by school administrators; and adequate teaching materials should be made available to the Yoruba language teachers in order to enhance effective language teaching.

Issues of mother tongue instruction are also commonplace in many countries beyond Africa. For example, Menon, Viswanatha and Sahi (2014) looked at the potential role of languages in teacher education programmes in a multilingual context in India. Their understanding of language is as follows: it is socially situated in relation to power, and language is a social set of practices or discourses and language proficiencies. Their discussion centres on the use of English and other local and regional languages in India. They state that teachers have a significant role to play in responding to language policies that could affect their students positively or adversely. They conclude that “regional languages in India have a robust, rich and complex history, and need to be kept alive, dynamic and functional even as we widen access to English for a larger number of people (Menon et al, 2014:61). According to Mackenzie and Walker (2013), it is important to learn from other experiences that support mother tongue education learning. They cite a few examples of best practices: in India materials were developed in the mother tongue to improve the reading and achievement levels of learners in eight minority languages in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa; in the Philippines, their mother tongue based education programme contained a series of bilingual traditional stories of Lubuagan prepared by teachers which reflect culture and lifestyle of the students; and in Yucatan, Mexico where the language nest approach is used as an immersion-based

methodology to revitalized the Mayan language and culture and to foster an understanding of indigenous traditions (Mackenzie & Walker, 2013).

2.8 MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mother tongue as the MOI is mostly implemented in the Foundation Phase in education (Muthwii, 2004), but for mother tongue to have a lasting educational impact and value to the learner, the continuation of the initial MOI is of paramount importance in the school (Sefa Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2003). However, in most schools it is the case that mother tongue is discontinued after Grade 3 (final grade of Foundation Phase) as MOI in South African public schools. According to Muthwii (2004) the mismatch between the ideal of the discontinuation of mother tongue as the MOI and the adoption of English as a MOI from the Intermediate Phase (Grade 4) is a reality. This has educational consequences to the literacy development of the learners. Hence, this research focuses on the exploration of educators' and parents' views on the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Grade 4 in the four selected pilot schools in East London Education District.

Mother tongue should be effectively implemented to the level where it can be used for teaching all subjects and the learners to be able to understand and learn with confidence in their home language (De Wet, 2002). In other words, learners should be literate in the use of mother tongue in all school subjects. If a transition in the medium of instruction in schooling occurs before learners have developed an acceptable level of reading, written as well as spoken proficiency in both a home language and second language, then the learning across the curriculum could be negatively interrupted (Alidou , 2006). Mother tongue should not be used in isolation, but other languages could be added after the child has mastered his or her home language (Mfum-Mensah, 2005)

2.9 IMPORTANCE OF MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION

Khosa (2012) states that, learning in the mother tongue provides a strong foundation for all other learning. Khosa further says, children who come to school with a strong foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the languages offered in schools. Macdonald (1991:18) states that, “a thorough first language course gets children off to a good start in education because the language provides a bridge between the child’s home and the demands of the new environment of the school.” She goes on to say that at school children can say what they think if they are allowed to speak the language they know. They can express their own ideas and can be creative, but if they have to learn a new language, they are put into a kind of prison. They cannot tell the teacher what they think because they do not have the words to say it.

“Once they are well equipped mentally in their first language, children can transfer their skills and knowledge to a second language with reasonable ease” (Macdonald 1991: 19). Similarly, Cummins (2001) states that conceptual knowledge developed in one language helps to make input in the other language comprehensible. This clearly means that if a child already understands certain concepts in her own language, all she has to do is to acquire the label of those terms in English. Saville-Troike (1991: 89) maintains that: “When students begin learning a second language, they do not start learning all over again, but interpret meaning in terms of what they already know, not just about language, but about the context in which it is being used and about strategies for social interaction.” This clearly means that the process of a second language learning depends on prior experience and also on the nature and level of the development of the first language. Skutnab-Kangas (1994) argues that all people can identify positively with their mother tongue and have that identification

accepted and respected by others whether their mother tongue is a minority language.

2.10 ADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED WITH MOTHER TONGUE AS LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Evidence from literature revealed that the advantages associated with home language as a MOI can be divided in the following categories: cognitive, pedagogical, cultural identity, psychological, assessment advantages, improves access to education, and improves reading and learning outcomes.

2.10.1 Cognitive Advantages

Teaching primary literacy in the learner's home language makes the most cognitive sense in the learning of a child (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2007). The connection between sound and letter is easily made by the learner if the language used has meaning to the learner. An important contributing factor is that the development of especially linguistic competencies and conceptual proficiency in the home language results in expected higher performance levels in the second language (Senson, 2001). Learners who first learn to read and write in their home language have a better understanding of a second language in its written and oral mode (Ouane & Glanz, 2005). This state of affairs means that the learning of the learners begins with the familiar work to the unfamiliar and from the known to the unknown.

However, when learners are taught and learn in their home language from Grade 1-3 and the medium of instruction is changed from Grade 4 onwards, this can result in dire consequences for the cognitive and socio-development of the learner. When learners master their home language, they are able to transfer knowledge from their home language to the second and even other additional languages. This transfer of

knowledge from home language to second and other languages within the mind of the learner is known as Common Underlying Proficiency (Malone, 2003).

2.10.2 Pedagogical Advantages

According to (Ejeh, 2004), teaching learners by means of a second language as a MOI often results in teachers facing language difficulties and challenges to express the subject content. In such instances, learners do not have the more advanced language competence to understand what teachers teach. It is accepted that home language facilitates mutual communication between the teacher and learners. Effective communication leads to better teaching on the part of teachers and better learning for learners (Alidou et al., 2006). Teachers are more likely to use effective, learner-centered and context-specific teaching methods that enhance their effort to teach and the learners' effort to learn. The use of a home language allows teachers to create an atmosphere of trust between the learners and themselves. Learners who are not intimidated by their teachers are more alert, take responsibility, participate more actively in classes and contribute to helping their peers (Alidou et al., 2006).

Literacy acquisition is associated with language acquisition (Malone, 2003). It takes time for learners to acquire high levels of literacy and language acquisition and this requires continuing teaching and guidance from a competent and knowledgeable person. The South African education system requires from learners to learn a second language as part of the official curriculum. Learners' ability in reading and writing rise considerably where literacy programmes are given special and long term attention (Malone, 2003). Literacy education based on a local, relevant curriculum allows for amongst other aspects for the local production of reading materials. Furthermore, the production of teaching material in a home language is a valuable

resource for the development of contextually appropriate teaching material (Ouane & Glanz, 2005). There is empirical evidence from a range of countries such as Mozambique (Benson, 2000), Burkina Faso (Brock-Utne, 2006), Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1989), Botswana and Zambia (Bus, 2011) all of which point to the conclusion that learners perform better academically when the language of instruction is a familiar language as Tanzania and Zambia highlight that educational progress can be impeded by first additional language (FAL), or the skills may be insufficiently developed to serve as an effective educational medium.

2.10.3 Cultural and Identity Advantages

"Language, culture and literacy are elements that define individuals and their sense of belonging to a group or a nation" (Alidou et al., 2006: 37). According to Benson (2001) and (Alexander, 2003) anthropologists as well as linguistics have long recognised that there is a relationship between language and culture. Using the learner's home language makes it possible to integrate for example African culture into the school curriculum and thereby creating a culturally sensitive curriculum and developing a positive perception of the culture. Integrating the learners' culture and language into curriculum activities ensures amongst other things parent involvement in school activities. The integration of cultural activities and parental involvement are important factors for making schools part of the community, because schools do not function in isolation but are social institutions (Alidou et al., 2006).

Home language represents the familiar home culture, traditional values, and experiences of the learner. An effective teacher also functions as a cultural mediator, using his or her understanding of the language and culture of the community to motivate the learners and help them to understand the curriculum content and culture represented by the school (Benson, 2001). A learner cannot be proud of his

or her cultural inheritance if the learner cannot express him or herself in their home language, because of being taught in an additional language (Senkoro, 2004). According to Ball (2010) children gain a better self-concept and have a strong sense of their own identity. Such children usually achieve better in school and life than children who are forced to learn in an unknown, strange language. The use of a familiar language for instruction validates local culture and knowledge, thus creating a bridge between the formal school system and children's home and community environment. This, in turn, facilitates parental involvement and strengthens community support for education, since language is not a barrier to participating in children's schooling (Ball, 2010).

2.10.4 Psychological Advantages

Social stigmatisation and discrimination of languages affects literacy education negatively as it results in resistance by learners and community members (Ouane & Glanz, 2005). Signs of resistance can be high illiteracy rates due to low attendance rates, high dropout rates, high repetition rates, low performance in exams and low communal support. In this regard, the mother tongue and respective cultures are considered as key sources of identity and self-confidence. Through the use of home mother tongue education as well as culturally adapted curricula in schools, the knowledge and communicative practices of the individual's community are valued. Literacy education expands under such conditions and therefore increases the learner's possibilities to shape and participate freely in social interaction. Literacy education is successful in a positive learning atmosphere in which learners and teachers feel comfortable with especially the language use, in particular. Success in learning enhances self-esteem and motivation to attend school. Stress and anxiety

are detrimental to learning while teachers draw faster on coercive measures when they teach in less familiar languages (Ouane & Glanz, 2005).

2.10.5 Assessment Advantages

Mother tongue instruction necessitates moving from a traditional evaluation of school effectiveness and functionality that mainly focuses on achievement results to assessment methods that are more inclusive and holistic. It is of no avail that the curriculum guidelines state that children should learn to cooperate, learn to till the land or to help in the neighborhood; if all is measured through tests and examinations in an unfamiliar language. Assessment should focus more on learners' ability to demonstrate mastery of knowledge and communication skills (language proficiency) acquired in schools through various kinds of practical application (applied competence). Therefore, locally designed examinations that correspond to local curricula should be undertaken in the home language of learners (Alidou et al., 2006).

Teachers and learners communicate more effectively when home language is used (Alidou et al., 2006). Effective communication in a teaching-learning situation leads to better teaching on the part of the teacher and improved learning for learners with an accompanying improvement of achievements and results. The use of home language in basic education produces positive outcomes if carefully implemented (Biseth, 2005). Effective communication leads further to more learning opportunities in classrooms where languages familiar to both learners and teachers are used. Moreover, when teachers teach effectively reading, writing and numeracy skills through medium of a home language, then learners can develop adequate literacy skills to become productive citizens of the country (Alidou et al., 2006). Unacceptable practices are at the order of the day in schools where learners are supposed to be

taught in English as a medium of instruction, but because learners do not fully understand the language, teachers use their mother tongue. However, during assessment it is expected from learners to write in English with unfavorable effects on the results because of language challenges.

2.10.6 Improves Access to Education

Children who understand the language of instruction are more likely to enter school at age-appropriate times and attend school regularly; moreover, they are less likely to drop out than those who receive instruction in a foreign language (Smit & Huisman, 2008). An analysis of data from 22 developing countries and 160 language groups revealed that children who had access to instruction in their mother tongue were significantly more likely to be enrolled and attending school, while lack of education in a first language was a significant reason for children dropping out (Smits et al., 2008). In another study in Mali, students in classrooms that used children's first languages as the language of instruction were five times less likely to repeat the year and more than three times less likely to drop out (Bender & Dutcher, 2005).

2.10.7 Improved Reading and Learning Outcomes

A recent review of research reports on language and literacy concludes that becoming literate and fluent in one's first language is important for overall language and cognitive development, as well as academic achievement (Ball, 2010). Evidence from Cameroon, India, Mali, the Philippines, South Africa, Vietnam, and elsewhere attests to the benefits of learning in a familiar language. First, children learn to read faster if they speak the language of instruction, because they already have a repository of vocabulary, knowledge of linguistic construction of the language, and the ability to pronounce the sounds of the language. For example, a recent

evaluation of a mother tongue education program in Cameroon reveals that children who were taught in their mother tongue, performed significantly better - 125% on average in multiple subjects (including Maths and English) than a control group of peers who attended schools where English was the medium of instruction (Chuo & Walter, 2011). Similar results were achieved in a program in the Philippines, where children learning in their mother tongue showed statistically significant improvements in all subjects compared to children who were learning only in Filipino (Walter & Dekker, 2011).

2.11 THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN RELATION TO MTI

Mother Tongue Education is still difficult to implement in SA for reasons including the variety of mother tongues among teachers and learners, lack of teacher training in the languages, and lack of resources available in these languages (Carless, 2002). The position is aggravated by parents who do not want their children to learn through the medium of indigenous languages because they believe that it will ruin their children's' ability to speak English with fluency (Jankie, 2010). In contrast with Cummins (2001) maintains that mother tongue instruction helps develop not only the mother tongue but also children's' abilities in other languages. In addition to the difficulty in implementing mother tongue instruction, black African parents are afraid that their children will lose socio-economic mobility and access to higher ranking positions in society if they are taught in their home language (Mda, 2004; Nomlomo, 2006).

This urges many parents to choose education for their children through the dominant language - English; thereby unknowingly going against children's' right to education in a language they understand (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). As a result, many black African learners cannot read or write fluently in either language, and when

communicating, they resort to code mixing, where they use words like “Ndihungry” (I am hungry), “nditired” (I am tired) (Jankie, 2010). Owen-Smith (2010) adds that black African parents’ eagerness for their children to become fluent in English makes them fall into the trap of suppressing their mother tongue. Moreover, parents’ negative perception of the mother tongue instruction devalues the mother tongue while raising the status of English (Alexander & Bloch, 2004). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) cautions that the speakers of indigenous languages are responsible for “killing their languages”. The effect of favoring a dominant language (English) at the expense of Indigenous African language can have disastrous consequences for children and their families (Cummins, 2001). This could create communication gaps between generations (grandparents with their grandchildren, and even parents with their offspring. For example, a child may be fluent in English, but only to realize that he/she cannot communicate with members of his/her family (especially grandparents) because they may not be able to speak the language that the child is used to vice versa. Thus, mother tongue provides the basis for learning another language (Guvercin, 2011). Research by Alexander (2008) and Heugh (2006) corroborates this by concluding that when children begin learning in their first language they are likely to succeed so that they can acquire a second language easily.

2.11.1 Parental Involvement

A familiar language of instruction improves the communication between teachers and learners as it facilitates easier negotiating of meaning (Malekela, 2006). The same argument applies for communication with parents and between teachers and parents. Fluent and accessible communication encourages parents' participation in their children's school work, which leads to more effective teaching and learning

(Desai, 2006). Instruction in a home language leads to inclusion of more localised content in the curriculum and makes the educational experience more relevant to the life-world of the learner. Parents experience less fear of becoming involved in school matters when they are able to discuss their child's learning with the teachers (Djite, 2008). Parents are further capable to assist in their children's school work (Desai, 2006).

Mahlobo (2003) and Dornyei (2004) studied the effects of variables such as the contribution of parents in their children's language acquisition and proficiency and the influence of other variables such as the school and classroom environment. The curriculum of the home is characterised by family values that manifest from parent-child interaction. Such values set a foundation of individual responsibility, hard work, perseverance and the importance of education and educational achievement (Mahlobo, 2003). The literature review highlights the following parental factors as influential on learner motivation:

- Parents' socio-economic status,
- Parents' level of education, and
- Appropriate family context and culture (Mahlobo, 2003).

2.11.2 Parents' Socio-economic Status

Some research indicates that there is a significant relationship between parents' socio-economic status and their children's level of intelligence (Mahlobo, 2003). Families with low socio-economic status lack items such as books, magazines, radios, television, TV games, computers and computer games that can serve to stimulate children intellectually and provide exposure to English. This can affect the learners' ESL proficiency and academic performance since such learners tend to be characterised by a lack of motivation, poor academic achievement, poor language

skills, inductive rather than deductive reasoning, as well as inability to use high order cognitive strategies like analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Du Toit, 2003 and Mahlobo,2003).

2.11.3 Parents' Educational Background

The parents' level of education determines their levels of aspirations for their children, parental involvement in the education of their children and the family value systems. According to Driessen, Van der Slik and De Bot (2002), children of highly educated parents benefit more from education as their parents are able to assist more in their learning. Such children can make more progress than those who are not fully supported by their parents due to poor educational backgrounds. Parental involvement entails their assistance on high scholastic achievement, thus offering academic guidance and provision of resources on school related tasks and managing and emphasizing educational activities of their children rather than pleasurable things like TV programmes, choice of books and magazines (Fehrmann et al. 1987 in Mahlobo 2003). This means that expression of affection and interest in the child's academic and personal growth, effective value systems, family practices, parental beliefs and attitudes toward education can contribute to motivation and positive self-concept. When parents cannot speak or understand English, the learners' acquisition of English is neither supported nor reinforced after school hours. Such parents may also feel ill-equipped to assist with homework.

2.11.4 Parental Expectations from Learners

Parents' expectations of scholastic success, a better career, as well as high professional status attainment, are important and easily transmitted through a development of a family context and culture which values education in so far as it leads to self-improvement and high self-esteem (Schnider & Lee 1990). They point

out that such a context can be created through, amongst others, verbal encouragement of children to excel in ESL tasks, helping them with English homework and practical projects, monitoring progress in English, rewarding every improvement, offering academic guidance when possible and support from an ESL perspective. Parents should also provide reading materials such as books, newspapers and magazines with topics of interest to their children. In conclusion, a variety of studies show that a home conducive to learning and a family context which include the parents' level of education, positive educational aspirations and effective involvement in their children's improvement in ESL proficiency, can result in high general scholastic performance. This is a clear indication that education and ESL achievement is not the responsibility of the school alone. For education to succeed, parents should also play a prominent role in the education of their children.

2.12 CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENT MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION

2.12.1 Material and human resources

According to Gabana (2013), Human and material resources in the implementation of mother tongue education play a noteworthy importance. The skilled teachers who can speak and understand a language of instruction and other stakeholders who can directly participate in the implementation at the school levels play remarkable roles (Gabana, 2013). Moreover, the availability of teaching and learning materials written in the mother tongue and their relevance to teachers' and students' cultural contexts enhance a profound significance in the implementation and enhancement of mother tongue education (Magwa and Mutasa, 2006). Magwa et al, views the implementation of successful mother tongue education, the availability of human and material resources is one of its inputs. For instance, the preparation of adequately trained teachers in the local language or child's mother tongue and culturally relevant

teaching materials (students' textbooks and teachers' guides) in children's language should be available during the implementation of mother tongue education (Gabana, 2013). In addition, the availabilities of the reference books and /or supplementary reading materials in children's language can enhance their learning and children are more successful in their academic endeavors. Not only does the availability of the instructional materials support children's learning, it can also assist teachers to carry out teaching and learning processes effectively (Magwa et al, 2006).

In the preparation of teachers, their proficiency in the language of instruction and their awareness can greatly affect mother tongue education, as they are children's models in the school. Thus, teachers who are willing to participate in the implementing mother tongue education should be carefully selected and trained since their interests, knowledge and skills can affect students' learning in the classroom (Qorro, 2008). Moreover, Qorro (2008) states that they should be adequately trained through methods and skills of handling schoolchildren. Their methods of teaching and assessing students' learning should be enhanced and developed using on-job training within schools. Moreover, teachers should be supported while they engage in teaching in terms of how they can deal with students who come to classroom from various societal and cultural backgrounds (Gabana, 2013). Since teachers could influence positively or negatively the behaviour or attitudes of the students' learning in the classroom, they should be carefully selected, trained and recruited. Gabana also states that the awareness-creation for teachers on the use of mother tongue in education should also be conducted during training and teaching-learning processes in such a way that they can develop positive attitudes towards education through the mother tongue or local language.

2.12.2 Community Involvement

According to Gabana (2013) Community, in a given social context, refers to social groups culturally, politically, economically, geographically inter-connected in certain ways. The community can have common language, culture, norms and values that bind them together. These common attributes and strong linkages can bring them together to enhance sustainable development of the society in the aspects of economy, education, technology, language, cultures and politics. Thus, community involvement in the development requires the participation and effective communication that is facilitated through a language use (Gabana, 2013).

With the development of the nation and nationalities, the discourse around education through indigenous languages goes beyond educational policy (Ball, 2010). It touches all spheres of human elements needed for individual and societal development in aspects of education, economy, politics, technology and communication as a language is a tool for human communication. Thus, issues of education through mother tongue are technical, political, and ideological and for parents and communities it is personal (Ball, 2010). However, Ball states that there is evidence that one of the most important considerations in the success or failure of education through mother tongue is the extent to which parents and local communities engage in the implementation of their own language provisions. Parents and the local community can support education through their language by building the schools, selecting appropriate teachers for training, and supplying resources that are locally available (Kembo-Sure, 2008).

In general, community involvement in the processes of learning and teaching activities that take place in and outside the schools enhances children's learning. It is

more feasible and supportive if the medium of instruction is children's home language as parents and family members can engage directly or indirectly in developing children's literacy skills. In addition, the local communities are more involved in supporting children's learning in various ways (Boly, 2006).

2.12.3 School Contexts

According to Gabana (2013), school contexts refer to ecology of the schools whereby learning and teaching activities take place. It is an institution where the outcomes of education can be determined and measured. It can encompass the physical appearance of the school buildings, and the presence of human and material resources that facilitate processes of education in schools (Gabana, 2013). Kembo-Sure (2008) also states that school context comprises attitudes of the school community towards education through local language, the school culture and the commitment of stakeholders or local communities towards school improvement efforts. All these factors have implicit or explicit relationships with the schools and they can affect processes of teaching and learning in the schools. In this regard, Mutasa and Negota (2008) stated that the school is a powerful institution that is responsible for the preparation of the young people who can effectively participate in the development of their country regarding the socio-economic status. Thus, within the schools, high-quality instruction, pedagogic success, behaviour and academic achievement can be facilitated in order to create a continual, supportive environment and positive academic self-perceptions and engagement in the schools (Mutasa and Negota, 2008). As pointed out by Ball (2010), learning and teaching outcomes of children predominantly depend on the quality of the school community and the environment in which they are growing and developing. To Ball, this means that schools are environments where children can develop their full potential and critical

thinking. Thus, the quality of the school environment, its physical appearance and the quality of managerial bodies determine general academic achievements of children in general and mother tongue-education in particular (Ball, 2010).

In general, the school and its environment can play a great role in providing the quality of education that assures young generations' competitiveness in the market jobs, the development of modern sciences and technologies (Gabana, 2013). Magwa and Mutasa (2006) states that the development of a country in education, sciences and technologies enables its nations to use their indigenous resources, knowledge and cultures and to make sustainable development. Implicitly, to reach a higher and advanced development in all facets, the school must meet the needs of diverse cultures by participating all in culturally relevant education without any discrimination based on children's cultural and social-historical backgrounds(Magwa et al, 2006).

2.12.4 Language Policy

Spolsky and Shohamy (2000) define language policy as "an effort by someone with or claiming authority to change the language practice (or ideology) of someone else". Within the language policy, the policy maker has some level of authority over those expected to follow its requirements. Shohamy (2006) further defines it as a mechanism used to create de facto language practices in educational institutes, especially in a centralized educational system. Shohamy (2006) also emphasizes that in most cases, educational staff of a given institution work according to, and as agents of implementing these policies without questioning its quality, appropriateness and relevance to the successful learning for learners. It is these policies, especially in a centralized system that represents language manipulation,

that determine which language or languages should be used as a medium of instruction and to what degree that usage is acceptable (Shamony, 2006).

In the apartheid South Africa (SA), a number of policies aimed at addressing the imbalances of the past were promulgated after democratic elections in 1994. One of them was the 1997 multilingual language education policy which was designed to usher equality and equity in education system, to promote and develop all the eleven official languages, to support the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners, to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages (SASA Act 84 of 1996; LiEP, 1997; Curriculum, 2005). SA is a multilingual and multicultural country with an extraordinary diversity of races, groupings, languages and landscapes that characterize this country. It also has the most diverse and accommodating language policy in the world (Bamgbose, 2003).

Despite the large number of official languages in SA, English still remains the dominant language (Dyers, 2008) and as a result, many parents do their best to ensure that their children are educated in English since it has an influence on social class, level of education, career and region. In the South African language policy, the Department of Education (DoE, 2007) stipulated that learners should be taught in mother tongue in the foundation phase (grade 1-3) and one official language can be used as subject to promote an additive approach. In the intermediate or senior phases the medium of instruction (MOI) provided by a school depends on the choices made by school governing bodies (SGB) and learners in selecting their language of learning and teaching (LOLT). The language in education policy (LIEP, 1997) together with SASA (84 of 1996), which conferred certain rights on SGBs in determining the language policy of a school and the right to choose their MOI.

This is based on the fact that in South African National Curriculum Statement (South African Department of Education [(SADOE), 2002]) declares that, since the first additional language (FAL) may also be used as language of teaching and learning (LOLT), its teaching and learning should achieve levels of proficiency that meet the threshold level necessary for effective learning across the curriculum. This proficiency includes 'the abstract cognitive academic language skills required for thinking and learning (SADOE, 2002). Hence many schools in SA opted for English as medium of instruction even in EFAL schools since it is a lingua franca language and a choice made by SGBs of the schools.

Despite these good intentions, the main problems facing the national language policy and its implementation plan are the lack of political interest and effort, as well as inadequate resources being made available for effective implementation of the policy (Abongdia, 2013). This means that many learners continue to have to shift to English after the first three years of schooling, while many educators are teaching in English without any adequate command of the language. De Kadt (2005) and Abongdia (2013) remind us that language does not only affect education but also hinders communication between the state and its people, thus leading to poor political participation.

2.13 SUMMARY

In this chapter, discussions of the policy and legislative background that builds into language in education policy in schools are discussed which asserts that the learners' mother tongue must be used as the language of learning and teaching and English be maintained as a subject was presented. Furthermore, the benefits and shortcomings of MTE as a lingua franca, and MOI were also discussed. Mother tongue as the MOI was pronounced to be more cost-effective, than if education was

to be offered in a foreign language. The next chapter is discussing the methodology and paradigm in which the study is located.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter departs from the literature review presented in Chapter 2. This chapter explores the methodological orientation and paradigm in which this research is located. Myers (2009) sees the research method as a strategy of enquiry or a body of methods used in a particular activity or research process which moves from the underlying assumptions to the research approach to be used, research design, research paradigm, data collection and data analysis. It also includes variables such as targeted population size, description of the sample and the research instruments to be used (Myers, 2009). Most researchers view methodology as the blueprint for data collection, measurement and analysis in order to achieve the objectives of their studies (Mertens, 2005). The research procedure is elucidated and its appropriateness is discussed. It outlines the research orientation, describes the case study selection process, and it shows how access to participants was gained. It also describes how data collection and data analysis procedures were adopted in the study and how ethical considerations were maintained.

3.2 RESEARCH ORIENTATION

The present research is located in a qualitative approach and aims to describe and understand in a subjective manner, parents' and educators' views on mother tongue instruction in Grade 4 in four selected primary schools. Qualitative methodology is a social science research approach which was developed to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena (Meyers, 1997).

It aims to help us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. It involves the use of methods such as case studies, interviews, observations and textual analysis, which provide insights into cultural aspects and human interactions (De Villiers, 2005). According to Joubish (2011), it is concerned with social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about:

- Why people behave the way they do
- How opinions and attitudes are formed
- How people are affected by the events that go around them

According to Mouton (2001) in qualitative approach, research takes its departure points as the insider perspective on social action; people are telling you their side, and you as a researcher, are listening. Mouton also states that in this approach the goal of research is defined as describing and predicting human behavior, with the research taking place in a natural setting. Creswell (2007) states that, qualitative research is a research process whereby researchers build up a complex, holistic framework by analyzing narratives and observations, conducting the research work in the natural habitat. However, Leedy and Omrod (2001) broadly define qualitative research as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Hence De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002) including Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, and Guest, and Namey (2005) state that qualitative research provides illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues and are most useful for answering humanistic 'why?' and 'how?' questions. This indicates that qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Qualitative data sources included observation, interviews, and documents analysis (learner's books and portfolios). These sources allowed the researcher to enter the participant's lived-world and study their lived-experiences (Brown,2001).This research method also assisted the researcher to get answers to the research questions as well as a complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The qualitative data was recorded through the use of semi-structured interviews and observations. Educators and learners were made aware of the purpose of the research for transparency and ethical purposes. This attempt was to show a true reflection of the participants' perceptions on the use of mother tongue as MOI (Makubalo, 2007). This means that dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of both educators' and parents' perceptions were captured. This enabled the researcher to discover the main ideas and relationships related to the research topic. Another advantage of applying this approach was that its discovery capacity enabled the researcher to capture the richness of the data as it involved an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the motives that govern the behaviour (Denzin& Lincoln, 2003).This enabled the researcher to make meaning out of the information that was provided by the participants. The interaction with the participants enabled the researcher to gain valuable data that was useful in understanding their circumstances and perceptions regarding the use of mother tongue as MOI to speakers. The researcher gained new insights about some particular phenomenon and discovered the problems that existed within the phenomenon which in this case was the use of mother tongue as MOI in Grade 4.

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

The term paradigm originated from the Greek word paradigm which means pattern and was first used by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). Kuhn defines a paradigm as an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approaches and tools. He further refers to it as a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common with the nature and conduct of research (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). With this, he implies that a paradigm is a pattern, structure and framework or system of scientific and academic ideas, values and assumptions. The term paradigm is defined as a systematic set of beliefs and methods that provide a view of the nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Alexander (2007) points out that a paradigm is a theoretical model within which the research is being conducted, and organizes the researchers' view of reality (though they may not be aware of it). This is in line with Ellis (2000) claim that a research paradigm is a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers, which, adhered to by a group of researchers, it conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions.

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm, which is based on the notion that researchers use constructs such as culture, social context and language to build their view of the world and that social reality is shaped through social interactions, as argued by Gibbons and Sanderson (2002). It also provides opportunity for the voice, concerns and practices of research participants. Van Rensburg (2001) has noted that interpretive researchers reflect an interest in contextual meaning, rather than generalized rules hence instead of surveying large groups. In other words, researchers look for rich and detailed information of a qualitative nature through in-

depth interviews, observations or interpretation of documents. Morrison (2007) defines the interpretive paradigm as an attempt to understand individuals' interpretations of the world around them. Mertens (2005) also emphasizes that all research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is based on some underlying assumptions about what constitutes valid research and which research methods are appropriate. The interpretive paradigm is relevant to this study because it focuses on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. The researcher sought to gather data from Grade 4 teachers and language HODs and parents on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction, in order to gain a better understanding of their perceptions, experiences and lived reality. It is against this background that the interpretive paradigm is deemed suitable for this study.

3.2.2 Research Design: Case Study

Burns and Grove (2001) describe the research design as a blueprint or outline for conducting the study in such a way that maximum control is exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research results. Hua and David (2008) agree with this view as they see research design as the researcher's overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions guiding the study. Burns and Grove (2001) further emphasize that designing a study helps researchers to plan and implement the study in a way that would help them to obtain the intended results, thus increasing the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation. In other words, the research design can be seen as a logical plan or master plan of a research that throws light on how the study is conducted. It shows how all of the major parts of the research study such as the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs, work together in an attempt to address the research questions. The research design is similar to an architectural outline.

A case study is the detailed and thorough investigation of the case as noted by Bless (2004). According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) case studies help researchers to connect the micro level or the actions of individual people to the macro level or large scale social structures and processes. This means that a case study is the study of a phenomenon in its natural setting. The purpose of a case study is to probe deeply and analyze the phenomena used intensively to establish generalization about the wider population to which that unit belongs as argued by Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2001). A case study was used in this study because the researcher sought to explore the views of educators and parents on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Grade 4. The case in this study comprises of four primary schools, namely: two rural and two urban schools. The focus is on Grade 4 and the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

3.2.2.1 Advantages of Using a Case Study Design

Hua and David (2008) highlight a number of advantages and disadvantages of using the case study design which are:

- A key strength is that it allows multiple sources and techniques in the data-gathering process;
- Data can be both qualitative and quantitative and can come from primary research as well as from secondary sources such as government publication, novels, etc;
- Tools for collecting data can include surveys, tests, instruments, interviews, and observation; and
- It is able to provide rich and in-depth data on the behaviour of an individual or small group (David, 2008).

3.2.2.2 Disadvantages of the Case Study Design

- It provides little basis for scientific generalization, as it represents a sample.
- In a case study, the researcher's goal is to expand and generalize theories and not to enumerate frequencies. Moreover, case studies rely on analytical generalizations where the researcher strives to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory;
- Can also be susceptible to bias, as the researcher works quite closely with respondents and might have difficulties in remaining detached from them; and
- Often, researchers are advised against single-case studies because the findings of such studies might not be applicable to other situations. (Hua & David, 2008).

3.2.2.3 How to Overcome Shortcomings of the Case Study

A key strength of the case study method involves using multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. These methods help to determine in advance the nature of evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use from the data to answer the research questions (Hua et al., 2008). Another disadvantage of a case study is that its findings are based on generalizations, and any possibility of a generalizability of the findings can be avoided by using more variations in respondents and procedures and that might withstand and still yield the same findings which might be valid to support external similar cases. (Davids, 2008) The researcher can overcome bias by providing transcripts of all the interviews as this can tamper with the issues of reliability and validity of the data gathered and consequently, the findings.

3.3 RE-STATEMENT OR RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore educators' and parents' views on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4.

3.4 RE-STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to address the above research purpose, the following research questions were formulated.

Main Research Question

3.4.1 What are educators' and parents' views on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4?

Sub- Research Questions

3.4.2. What are the possible advantages of mother tongue instruction?

3.4.3 How can educators and parents promote the use of mother tongue in Grade 4?

3.4.4 What challenges do educators and parents perceive with the introduction of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4?

3.5 METHODOLOGY

Myers (2009) sees research method as a strategy of enquiry or a body of methods used in a particular activity or research process which moves from the underlying assumptions to the research approach to be used, research design, research paradigm, data collection and data analysis. It also includes variables such as targeted population size, description of the sample and the research instruments to be used (Myers, 2009). Most researchers view methodology as the blueprint for data collection, measurement and analysis in order to achieve the objectives of their

studies (Mertens, 2005). Thus, this chapter outlines important details of the study such as research paradigm and the research design that was employed to elucidate the research questions. This is followed by an outline of the research context and the method of sampling used to select the research participants. This chapter also discusses the instrument employed for data collection and the procedure used for data analysis. There is a detailed discussion of the measures employed to ensure trustworthiness, credibility and the ethical considerations that guided the study. Finally, it elaborates on problems that were encountered during data collection for the study.

3.5.1 Approval Process

A research proposal for submission to the faculty Research and Higher Degrees committee was completed. In putting together the chapter on methodology, the researcher had ongoing discussions with the supervisor to ensure quality and to obtain ethical clearance (Appendix A) for the fieldwork. Permission to conduct research in schools was requested from Eastern Cape Department of Education in the province. Contact with perspective participants was sought through face to face interactions.

Participants were also provided with a cover letter which clearly described the research and its purpose and its anticipated contribution to the field of quality in teaching and information about protecting of rights, confidentiality and the voluntary nature of the study. An informed consent form which details the intent of the study, the use of potential findings and any potential consequences for the participants were provided to all participants (Appendix D). All participants were provided an opportunity to read the consent letter with the provision that participation is strictly on

a voluntary basis and could be ceased at any time during the study's research duration see Appendix C. The participants of the 4 schools (for the case study) were requested to sign informed consent forms for the interview process.

3.5.2 Research Population and Sample

According to Seaberg (2003), a sample is an element of population considered for actual inclusion in the study or a subset of measurement drawn from a population we are interested in. Sampling refers to a process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population (Johnson & Christensen, 2008), preferably in a way that they represent the larger group from which they were selected (Gay, 2008). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) argue that qualitative researchers tend to select a few participants who can best shed light on the phenomenon under investigation, rather than sample a large number of people with the intent of making generalizations. Sampling is made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the best possible source of information to answer the research question. There are three most common sampling methods used in qualitative research: purposive sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling (Mack, 2005).

The study used purposive sampling which is a form of purposeful selection to permit in depth inquiry and understanding of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). The researcher used the purposive sampling as to make a conscious decision about which individuals and which school sites would best provide the desired information (Burns & Grove, 2007). This process of purposive sampling was based on the assumption that the researcher was able to select elements which represented a "typical sample" from the appropriate target population (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2001). This view is supported by Hill (2010) who contends that the researcher should attempt to select people who have experienced phenomena related to the study and who are willing to

open up about those experiences. Another reason for selecting this method was the fact that purposive sampling through human instrumentation increased the range of data exposed and therefore maximized the researcher's ability to identify emerging themes that took adequate account of contextual conditions and cultural norms (Gray 2004). Purposive sampling provided the researcher with the most useful data which was valuable for the introduction, implementation and action and evaluating the use of mother tongue as the MOI in Grade 4.

Purposive sampling simply means that the research participants were selected for a specific purpose. The logic and power of purposive sampling therefore rested in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study (Kasenga, 2007). Information-rich cases are those from which one could learn a great deal about issues of central importance for the purpose of research. This type of sampling was based on the assumption that the researcher wanted to discover, understand and gain insight, which was the actual objective, and must therefore select a sample from which the rich and in-depth information can be learned. All schools were EFAL schools with EFAL educators and EFAL learners whose home language was IsiXhosa. Thus English was the language used in the classrooms for teaching and learning. Two schools were located in rural areas with high rates of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty. The other two schools were located in the township where there is high rate of unemployment, poverty and drug abuse. The researcher aimed at selecting participants who were deemed information-rich in experiences relating to teaching and learning using MT as MOI in Grade 4. The researcher's sample consisted of four purposively selected grade 4 educators (one from each school), four language head of departments (one from each school) and four parents from the school communities in the East London Education District to get an in-depth information on

the use of MT as MOI among EFAL in Grade 4. Groenewald (2004) also regards ten participants as sufficient to reach saturation. Grade 4 was selected based on the fact that it is the entry level in the intermediate phase where learners shift from being taught in the MT to foreign language which is English. The interviews were, thus, conducted in order to gain an understanding of the experiences and perceptions on using a foreign language as MOI in Grade 4, shifting from mother tongue instruction in Grade 3.

3.5.3 Data Collection Techniques

Creswell (2007) describes data collection as the steps that involve setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interviews, documents and visual materials and establishing the protocol for recording the information. The researcher collected data in the form of words rather than numbers through recorded interviews, observations and document analysis (Khosa, 2012). The primary data sources included the grade 4 educators in four primary schools in IsiXhosa speaking communities in the East London Education District, four language heads of department and four parents. The main data collection technique used in this study were semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis.

3.5.4 Interviews

Sewll (2007) sees interviews as a method of asking quantitative or qualitative questions orally to key participants. Quantitative questions are closed-ended and have a specific answer to choose from that can be categorized and numerically analyzed whereas the qualitative questions are open-ended to allow the participant to provide a response in his or her own words. Genise (2002) also agrees that interviews are methods of gathering information through oral quiz using a set of preplanned core questions. According to Shneiderman and Plaisant (2005),

interviews can be very productive since the researcher pursues specific issues of concern that may lead to focus and constructive suggestions. Shneiderman and Plaisant (2005) suggest the following advantages of using interviews for data collection purposes:

- direct contact with the users often leads to specific, constructive suggestions;
- good at obtaining detailed information; and
- need few participants to gather rich and detailed data.

Depending on the need and design, interviews can be unstructured, structured, and semi-structured with individuals, or may be focus-group interviews. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were used.

3.5.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Gibson (2007) sees the semi-structured interviews as one-on-one interviews and a mode of obtaining information through direct interchange with an individual to gain knowledge and information that the researcher seeks. On the other hand Eloff (2007) sees semi-structured interviews as a method commonly used in research projects to corroborate data emerging from other data sources. Although the open-ended question produces data that is difficult to organize and code, it allows subjects to respond freely and express shades of opinion rather than forcing them to have pre-coded opinions.

Patton (2002) defines semi-structured interviews as a flexible process that allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand interviewees' responses. It involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme or situation (Boyce & Neal, 2006). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were relevant in this study because they

allowed the researcher to use probes with a view of clearing up vague responses or asking for incomplete answers to be elaborated on (Patton, 2002). This method of interviewing has features of both structured and unstructured questions, and the researcher, therefore, used open-ended questions (Govender, 2009) to give participants an opportunity to elaborate on or to provide more relevant information if they opted to do so. This was advantageous to the researcher as it promoted consistency with all participants. The researcher used a set of pre-planned questions for guidance in such a manner that the same areas were covered with all the participants. The researcher interviewed four Language Heads of Department, four grade 4 educators and four parents. For parents, HODs and educators, a one-on-one semi-structured interview were conducted.

3.5.4.2 Observations

Observation is way of gathering data by watching behaviour, events, or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting (Cohen, 2007). On the other hand, observation is not to report on individuals' performance, but to find out what kinds of problems in general are being encountered (Phillistine, 2005). Hence Cohen, (2007) noted that observation involves gathering live data from live situations. Mecer (2008) points out that if the observer stays for relatively longer periods, people become less self-conscious and gradually start behaving naturally. Kuhn (2005) emphasizes that observations can be either direct or indirect. Direct observation is when you watch interactions, processes, or behaviours as they occur, hence the need for the researcher to visit the classrooms to observe how learners and educators interact with each other, the learning processes and how learners behave. Strydom (2002) suggests that observation can be overt, whereby everyone knows they are being observed and can be covert where no one knows they are being observed and the

observer is concealed. The benefit of covert observation is that people are more likely to behave naturally if they do not know they are being observed whereas the overt has a disadvantage in that participants may change their behaviour when they know that they are being observed (Abongdia, 2013). Nevertheless, the researcher used the overt type of observation for the purpose of transparency and ethical related issues. Both educators and parents were made aware about the research, and the researcher was actively involved in some classroom activities and made use of contrary approaches by participating as fully as possible in activities to become invisible in her role as a researcher. The researcher had to pay three visits to each of the Grade 4 classrooms for a period of 30 minutes. The researcher, therefore, observed lessons where learners were taught in mother tongue and also in English in four Grade 4 classrooms. This enabled the researcher to gather necessary in-depth information for the study.

3.5.4.3 Documents

This is a way of extracting information from the written sources like attendance registers, minutes of meetings, results' analyses and schedules. The main focus here is to concentrate on all written communication that may provide information on the subject under investigation. Cohen (2007) defines documents as artifacts and symbolic materials such as writings and signs, which tell the researchers about the inner meaning of everyday events; these documents may yield descriptions of rare and extraordinary events in human life. Creswell (2005) argues that document analysis takes place when information already exists to obtain comprehensive and historical information, or when the researcher needs to gain an impression of how a programme operates without interrupting the programme. This is just a form of supportive evidence to the information received from the respondents, especially the

mark sheets and teachers' lesson plans, learners' portfolios and the schools' language policies. From these documents the researcher was able to pick up the challenges of implementing mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. These documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they grounded an investigation in the context of the problem (Merriam, 2001).

The following evidences were sought from the document analysis:

- Learning outcomes had been covered;
- Activities and tasks embedded skills, knowledge and values;
- An adequate number of tasks had been given for continuous assessment;
and
- Communicative, reading, process writing and text-based tasks were given
(Merriam, 2001).

3.4.4.4 Interview Settings

The interviews took place at times and venues convenient to each participant. The interviews were conducted either in an office in the administration block of the school, or in a classroom to ensure an environment that is free from noise and comfortable to the interviewees. It was explained that the interviews would be conducted in English, but interviewees could respond in any language of their choice especially their vernacular. Most important was that the environment should be comfortable, non-threatening and easily accessible. A pilot study was conducted to ensure that poorly framed questions or badly structured questions did not discourage participants.

At each interview the researcher went through the introductory comments, which entailed an explanation of the aims of the interview as well as the role of the participants. A total number of three participants at each of the four sites were interviewed. The interview protocol was based on simple, semi-structured, open-ended questions (Appendix E) in an attempt to allow probing and extended responses and to ascertain enriched insight into participants' views on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. Participants were put at ease before the actual interview session, which is very important aspect for successful interview session (Heugh, 2007). Permission to audio-tape interviews was obtained from each participant, and interviews were conducted in a professional and non-biased manner.

3.5.4.5 Discussion of Interview Schedules

The interview schedule consisted of two sections (Appendix E). Section A sought personal information to variables such as gender, teaching experience and qualifications. Section B focused on aspects of use of mother tongue as medium of instruction. The interview schedule in Section B comprises of ten questions covering different topics to ensure that questions address the same themes in all interviews. In order to enrich the understanding on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Grade 4, the focus of Question One was on educators' views on MT as MOI. Question Two was on promoting learners' understanding using mother tongue. Question Three focused on the implementation of MT. Questions Four and Five focused on benefits and advantages of using MT. Question Six was on parents' view on the use of MT. Question Seven and Eight were on the development of MT and promotion of communication between learners and educators.

3.5.4.6 Transcribing of the Interviews

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), a transcript refers to translation from one narrative mode – oral discourse, into another mode – written mode. In their view, to transcribe means to transform, to change from one form to another. The data gathered from participants during interviews was transcribed from oral to written mode (Appendix F).

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is described by Gay (2006) as a systematic organization and synthesis of data that involves application of one or more statistical techniques. It, therefore, gives meaning to data collected during research in a way that permits the researcher to answer the research question. As noted by McMillan and Schumacher (2006), qualitative researchers integrate the operation of capturing, collecting, organizing, analysis and interpreting data and call the entire process as data analysis.

Thematic analysis was used in this study. Alexander (2003) describes thematic analysis as identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data sets in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Broom, 2004). The information was categorized and interpreted in terms of common themes reflective of the interview responses. The emerging themes were put together as the findings of the study to enable the researcher to establish educators' and parents' views on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Grade 4.

3.6.1 Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness refers to the demonstration of integrity and competence in qualitative research by adherence to detail and accuracy to assure authenticity and soundness of the research (Twycross & Shields, 2005). The trustworthiness of the qualitative research methodology of this study relates to the planning implementation of the research design which was conducted in a logical and systematic manner to ensure the trustworthiness of procedures according to the criteria of credibility, dependability, authenticity and conformability (Freeman, et al., 2007).

According to Flick (2009), credibility refers to the accuracy of the documentation and reliability of the procedure of the documents and freedom from errors. It can be concluded that credibility in research serves as evidence free from error and distortion. In order to ensure credibility of the study, the researcher conducted member checks with the participants to ensure that the data collected was the true reflection of the participants' views. Member checking was also employed where the interview transcripts and voice recorder were taken to the participants so that they could determine whether their ideas and opinions were presented accurately. The participants' comments were also included in the report. Therefore credibility of this study was strengthened because participants were given an opportunity to react to the data as well as the final report. Babbie and Mouton (2006) argue that, this is concerned with compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them.

As supported by Maree (2010), reliability and validity as far as research instruments are concerned, are putting more emphasis on qualitative research. He further posits that in qualitative research, the researcher is the data collecting instrument. Maree (2011) also states that credibility, applicability, dependability and conformity as the

key criteria of trustworthiness. These are said to be constructed to parallel the conventional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and neutrality. Engaging multiple methods of data collection such as semi-structured interviews and document analysis will promote the lead to the trustworthiness of the study.

Babbie and Mouton (2010) refer to trustworthiness as neutrality of findings or decisions. For the purpose of this study, the experienced researchers or supervisors have scrutinized the instruments that were used during data gathering before the actual collection of data and pilot study; to help in the validation of the instruments. Participants will be provided with a draft copy of research findings to ensure that the findings are not distorted. According to Maree (2007), the use of member checking will enhance the quality of the study through verifying, confirming and validating the research findings.

3.6.1.1 Dependability

Dependability is focused on the process of the inquirer and inquirer's responsibility for ensuring that the process was logical, traceable and documented (Shwandts, 2007). Since this research adopted a qualitative approach, dependability of data referred to the reliability and repetition of the study. The purpose of ensuring dependability of the study within the qualitative research paradigm was to ensure that if another investigator later follows the same case study all over again, he or she should arrive at the same findings and conclusion. According to Yin (2003) the emphasis is on doing the same case over again, not on imitating results of one case by doing another case study.

Another motivation of ensuring dependability of this study was to minimize both errors and biases in the study. In this study the researcher ensured dependability by reading the themes over again to verify that they made sense and audited the entire

data transcripts as Seal (2000) emphasizes that auditing transcripts provides the opportunity to engage in self-critical account of the events.

3.6.1.2 Conformability

Voster and Prozesky (2001) see conformability as a qualitative-oriented criterion for objectivity that indicates the degree to which the findings in qualitative research is the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the research. Therefore data sources of the study as well as data collection tools were clearly described to ensure the conformability of the study. Furthermore Schwandt (2007) argues that it is concerned with establishing the fact that the data and interpretation of an inquiry was not merely a fragment of the inquirer's imagination.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics address beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper and good or bad. Collecting data from people raises ethical concerns (Goddard & Melville, 2001). Therefore the ethical considerations discussed below were adhered to in this study.

3.7.1 Gaining entry

White (2005) states that ethics are generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad, therefore, the researcher wrote a letter to the Department of Education's District Office, care of the (District Director), asking for permission to conduct research in the sampled schools. This was done through a letter from the University of Fort Hare, Faculty of Education, having recognized the proposed study. Letters to school managers were written timeously so as to obtain permission and schedule interviews and other processes.

3.7.2 Informed consent of the participants

Neuman (2003) stated that nobody should ever be coerced into participating in a research because participation must always be voluntary. A consent form that stated

the purpose of the study and seeking participants' consent to participate in the study was given out to participants. Permission from the participants was requested and letters were sent to request permission from the Department of Education and principals of the schools before conducting the interviews. Letters of informed consent were also sent to the parents to be interviewed.

3.7.3 Participants' Right

The participants were not be coerced into participating and participated on their own free will. They were also informed that they could discontinue participating at any point in time.

3.7.4 Confidentiality

The researcher ensured participant confidentiality; she further assured participants that information made public will neither include the name of the respondent, nor make it possible for the information to be linked with a particular respondent.

3.7.5 Protection from harm

Dane (1990) claimed that an ethical obligation rests with the researcher to protect subjects, within reasonable limits, from any form of physical discomfort that may occur during the research work. As far as reasonably possible, the researcher ensured that no harm came to the respondents with regards to the research instruments or the data.

3.7.6 Achieving Anonymity

Gay and Airasian (2003) stated that harm could occur in research through revelation of the identity of the participants. The researcher assured the respondents of anonymity, and the names of the respondents do not appear on the research instruments or the data. Questionnaires or interview guides bore no names, and the participants were made aware that this study would by no means, reveal their

identities, nor link responses with participants' identities, unless they give permission for that.

3.7.7 Release or Publication of the Findings

Huysamen (1993) felt that it is desirable to present the findings to subjects as a form of recognition and to maintain future good relationships with the community concerned. Data and findings of the study were reported without altering any information. In addition, the findings of the study will honestly reported to educational research community in conference proceedings and journal articles. The researcher also ensured the respondents that the information was only to be used for the sole purpose of the investigation and would not be given out to anyone.

3.7.8 Debriefing of Respondents

Salkind (2000) stated that the easiest way to debrief participants is to discuss their feelings about the work immediately after the session and telling them the results of the study. The researcher ensured that the participants discussed their feelings and answered questions have risen in the minds.

3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter firstly discussed firstly research approaches considered when embarking on this research. It also discussed the research orientation, research paradigm, research design, and sampling, gaining entry to participants, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations. It demonstrated why the qualitative case study approach was chosen and showed how the credibility/trustworthiness of the study was established and, finally, explained the procedures adopted. The next chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter departs from methodology presented in chapter three. It focuses on the presentation and analysis of data collected from participants in the four primary schools, in the East London Education District. The researcher used pseudonyms for the four schools, parents and educators to ensure that ethical issues such as confidentiality, anonymity and privacy are adhered to. This chapter presents the contexts of the schools and the biographical information of the participants. Major findings and subcategories of findings which emerged from the data are presented and analyzed in line with guidelines provided in the literature review.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Gay (2006) describes data analysis as a systematic organization and synthesis of data that involves application of one or more statistical techniques. It therefore gives meaning to data collected during research in a way that permits the researcher to answer the research questions.

4.2.1 Data Reduction

Qualitative data are usually in the form of written descriptions and reflections or ideas, and could become too much and a challenge to manage, and that is why data reduction is necessary (Rammala, 2009). According to Mutshinyani (cited in Dhlamini, 2009), data reduction refers to the process of selecting, sampling and transforming the data that appear in transcriptions. The researcher only used critical information which is in line with the purpose and objectives of the study. Data were

then clustered and findings were written as further data selection and condensation (Morse & Field, 1996 cited by Rammala, 2009).

4.2.2 Data Display

Data display is an organized, concise assembly of information, which is a second inevitable part of analysis (Rammala, 2009). This assisted the researcher to draw conclusions from a reduced set of data as a basis for identifying meaning. The researcher coded the schools as school A and B for the rural primary schools and school C and D for the urban primary schools. For the coding of the educators, HODs and parents, the following codes were used: E1 for the educator of school A; E2 for the educator of school B; E3 for the educator of school C and E4 for the educator of school D. The codes H1; H2; H3 and H4 were used for Heads of Departments (HODs), whilst P1; P2; P3; and P4 were respectively used to describe parents on each of the four schools.

4.3 CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOLS

The researcher chose the four primary schools because they fitted the scope and purpose of the study, which was to explore the views of the educators and parents on the use of mother tongue as MOI with the focus on Grade 4 since it is an entry level to the Intermediate Phase. The four primary schools are located in rural and township communities in the East London Education District. The medium of instruction in these schools is English and all educators, HODs and parents were IsiXhosa mother tongue speakers.

School A

In this school isiXhosa is the dominant language in the area where the school is located. The school is an urban area, close to reconstruction and development

project (RDP) houses and informal settlement. Both educators and learners were isiXhosa first language speakers. In the Grade 4 classroom, learners' desks were arranged in pairs and directed towards the educator's table which was in the front of the classroom. There were about 40-45 learners in the classroom. The lower parts of the windows were painted white to avoid external distractions for those learners sitting next to windows since the classrooms were in the last block that faces the squatter camps. Pre-fabricated classrooms were divided with partitions; the thin wall material made it easy for the noise to permeate through from other classes. On the walls were a few displays of posters and charts. Most of the posters and charts were for Mathematics, Physical Science (periodic table) and an English spelling lists which were designed by the educator. There were no displays of learners' work. The medium of instruction in this school is English. The language that is predominantly used by educators, learners and community is IsiXhosa.

School B

School B is a township school situated in a very busy area, but with lots of hawkers at the gate and lots of drug dealers in the community. The school is fenced, has a secured gate and well-structured with sufficient classrooms and a high number of learners. The researcher used a checklist when observing the facilities and neighbourhood of the school. School B has permanent buildings and learners comprise different race groups namely Africans and Coloureds. The language of learning and teaching is English despite IsiXhosa being a dominant language in the area in which the school is located. However, there are people from other ethnic groups who speak other languages. The school caters for learners from low socio-economic backgrounds and the community comprises largely lower income earners like domestic workers, factory workers and hawkers. However, there is a gradual

influx of relatively higher income earners including some professionals in the area. In the classroom where the observation took place, the learners sat in pairs with their desks directed towards the teacher's table located at the front of the class. On the walls, there were a few displays of posters and charts. In school B, there were three Grade 6 classes with 55 learners in each class. School B has a lot of resources compared to school A, and has a safe place to keep materials. The medium of instruction used by educators is English. There are Xhosa and Afrikaans speaking learners, as well as educators coming from other countries like Ghana.

School C

School C is situated away from the community and learners are transported to school and those without transport have to walk long distances. School C is a disadvantaged school with old structures, fading paint and still uses the pit toilet system. There are usually no school activities on rainy days because of classroom shortages. The school is unsecured because there is no fencing and learners move around freely without control. The learners come from the rural village with a lot of shacks and shebeens (liquor store) and isiXhosa is predominantly used as the language of communication with English as the medium of instruction. The home language for both educators and learners is isiXhosa. The whole school has six classrooms from Grade 1-7 and utilises a multi-grade system. There were 45 learners in Grade 4 class with one educator.

School D

The school is located in the center of the community close to houses and shacks. The population of the community where the school is situated is estimated to be closer to 1500 people, with about 80% unemployed and poverty stricken. The total

number of learners enrolled at this school is currently hundred and seventy, having decreased from two hundred and eleven learners in 2013. Both learners' and educators' home languages is isiXhosa. The school starts from Grade R to Grade 7. The Grade 4 classroom was neat and there were between 35-40 learners with one educator. The educator who teaches all the learning areas. The medium of instruction for this school is English, but the dominant language in the school and even outside the school, is IsiXhosa.

4.4 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

4.4.1 Educator's profile

The study was not only interested in the performance of learners in but also on the educators' and parents' views on the use of MT as MOI. Hence, the researcher included the profiles of Grade 4 educators and HODs. In this study, a total number of 8 participants were interviewed using the interview schedule in Appendix C

Table 4.1: Shows the presentation on of participants by positions (ranks)

Name of school	No of interviews conducted	of No of level educators	post 1	No of Heads of Departments
School A	2	1		1
School B	2	1		1
School C	2	1		1
School D	2	1		1
TOTAL	8	4		4

The table above indicates that the data was collected from the four primary schools coded as school A, B, C and D. Four Grade 4 educators and 4 HODs per school participated.

During interview process, participants were also asked to respond to demographic questions, which include gender, home language, number of years teaching experience and qualifications.

Table 4.2: Presentation of number of participants in relation to gender

Position	Male	Female	Total
HOD	1	3	4
Educator	1	3	4
TOTAL	2	6	8

HODs comprise of one male and three females, whilst post-level 1 educators, comprise of one male and three females.

Table 4.3: Presentation of number of participants in relation to qualifications and years of teaching experience.

School	Participants	Qualifications	Years of teaching experience	Total
A	P1	SPTD, ACE	7 years	1
	H1	BA, HDE	13 years	1
B	P2	BEd	10 years	1
	H2	SPTD, HDE	14 years	1
C	P3	PGCE,	9 years	1
	H3	BED, BEd (HONS)	21 years	1
D	P4	SPTD, ACE	11 years	1
	H4	NPDE, BEd	15 years	1
Total				8

From the data contained in Table 4.3, it could be declared that all educators and Heads of Departments are adequately qualified with qualifications ranging between Professional teaching diplomas and Bed Honours.

4.4.2 Profile of the Parents

The parents also formed part of the participants in the study. The table below (Table 4.4) presents the parents' marital status, occupation, gender, age, highest qualifications and home language. All the parent participants are members of the School Governing Body (SGB).

Table 4.4: Presentation of participants in relation to marital status, occupation, gender, age, highest qualification and home language.

Participant	Marital Status	Occupation	Gender	Age	Highest Qualification	Home Language	Total
P1	Single	Unemployed Domestic worker	Female	48	Grade 12	Xhosa	1
P2	Single	Self-employed	Male	55	Grade 12	Xhosa	1
P3	Single	Unemployed	Female	42	Grade 12	Xhosa	1
P4	Married						
TOTAL							4

Three of the participants are single parents, comprising one male and three females, whilst one parent is married. One female and one male are unemployed, whilst one male is self-employed, with one female unemployed and one female working as a domestic worker.

4.5 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations as well as interviews with SGB parents as members of the community. One-on-one interviews were used to interview educators, HODs and parents. This method of accumulating data resulted in a thick description, which proved the basis of exploring the educators and parents views on the use of MT as MOI. The researcher's analytic procedures brought order, structure and meaning to the thick narrative data, to search for emerging themes, patterns, recurring general statements, and to generate categories. The analysis of the data required disciplined examination while paying careful attention to the purpose of the research. The researcher carefully considered verbal and non-verbal data and applied data reduction strategies to select critical information which is in line with the purpose and objectives of the study.

The researcher presented the data from participants (Grade 4 educators, HODs and parents) verbatim. In some cases the researcher quoted strands from interviews, where observations and document analysis did not fully link with the particular theme. The analysis of the data was based on thematic analysis as Burtun, Brundrett and Jones (2008) state that qualitative data by its nature is more open to ambiguity and requires the identification of emergent key themes for it to be organized, collated and interpreted. The themes which emerged from the data were listed and the themes for each interview question that elicited the educators' and parents' views on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction, were quoted verbatim and italicized. With the help of theoretical underpinning from the literature review of the study, the following themes emerged from the study:

- Mother tongue as medium of instruction;

- Lack of parental support;
- Language policy in relation to the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction;
- English as medium of instruction;
- Teacher training on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction;
- Lack of resources to support mother tongue as medium of instruction; and
- Culture in relation to mother tongue as medium of instruction.

4.5.1 Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction

Participants were asked about their views on the use of MT as MOI. All participants were positive about the use of mother tongue as MOI. This is how they responded:

E1: *Teaching in the learners' language enables the learners to learn more effectively because the concepts in learning have to be understood and the concepts can only be grasped in one's mother tongue and not as effectively in a second language*

E2: *Lessons are easily grasped when you use your home language ... it is easy for learners to understand what is taught*

E3: *Learning in MT at an early stage would give learners ability to transfer knowledge from known to unknown language and able to understand the language better as they progress.*

H1: *Some want to use their MT and would excel in their own language, like 'tsotsi' (smugglers) excel in their language because they know and love it.*

H3: *For a child to come up with meaningful things, that child has to learn with his/her home language... it assists learners to build knowledge around big words*

H4: *A child can express him/herself in his/her languageit is very easy to tell how you feel when you use your own language. I think it is easy for learners to answer ...*

H4: *Learners can understand everything if they are taught in isiXhosa, as opposed to when learners are taught in English because they code switch most of the time to be understood by learners.*

P3: *... this Xhosa thing makes learners happy in their classrooms*

P1: *I want my children to be taught in their mother tongue, [abakwazi nokokukhumsha kakade] since they do not know even that English,*

P4: *Learners will not always be in the same area to use mother tongue, they need to learn English so that they can be able to communicate with other people in other parts of the world.*

Responses highlight the advantages as to why mother tongue should be used as a MOI in education. These responses referred to the use of a familiar MOI for learners in order to improve the manner in which learners learn, improved and effective communication as well as the increase in interactive participation between teachers and learners in classrooms (Benson, 2001). Teaching in a home language is regarded by the participants as conducive for the inclusion of local and contextual content in the curriculum that makes the educational experience more relevant to the life-world of learners (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2007). According to Desai (2006) the use of mother tongue as MOI is helpful in allowing learners to learn more effectively. Participants feel that learning in MT at an early age would give learners an opportunity to transfer knowledge from known to unknown language and able to understand the language better as they progress.

4.5.2 Lack of parental support

Parental support entails their assistance on scholastic achievement, offering academic guidance and provision of resources on school related tasks and managing and emphasizing educational activities to their children (Leithwood, 2010). When learners are not encouraged or do not receive the necessary support both emotionally and physically, they tend to lose interest in their school work.

On the question of how mother tongue as the medium of instruction can help to promote parent involvement, respondents had the following to say:

E4: Parents must show support to children. We teachers are usually very positive and are not a hindrance to the parents coming to the school because we do understand this community we are living in. So, when they come, they know they are supposed to come during break time, lunch time or in the evening so as not to interrupt classes

and lose time for the pupils. So, they know when they can come for consultation.

H3: *If the parents can be involved in their children's education. We actually want them to come, but external factors keep them away. But there are those parents who are not educated who to them, education is not important and they don't value it.*

P1: *I want to assist my child but I cannot read English and their school work is different from what I learned at primary school. [Ndingamncedisa umntwana wam ukuba angafunda ngesiXhosa], I can assist my child if s/he can learn in isiXhosa.*

P2: *When learners are given homework, it becomes easy for the child to talk to me as a parent and I can help the child with the homework.*

P3: *I cannot assist my son with his homework. I am not educated, he ask his friends to help. I do not have time because I sell African beer so that we can buy food for him and his siblings, only if he can learn in isiXhosa.*

P4: *I am not educated, I want to assist my child but I do not understand his homework. I do not know where to start.*

What is disturbing about these statements is that parents who are not using English as their mother tongue struggle or are not capable to assist their children with

homework activities. This study found that parents acknowledge that they are responsible for assisting their children with their schoolwork, but the problem is that they are not fluent in English to offer meaningful assistance to their children.

4.5.3 Language policy and use of mother tongue as medium of instruction

In order to come up with possible suggestions regarding language policies in schools, the following claims were made by respondents:

E2: *I think MT as MOI is good because South Africa is a multicultural country. Policy makers must continue with mother tongue up to Grade 4.*

E3: *MT must be used as MOI, South Africa is a diverse country so we have the right to use our own language.*

E4: *The policy makers must try and simplify or use simple words for the young kids at primary level, the language used in MT must fit their level of thinking. They should consider the origin or the backgrounds of learners especially those from rural areas.*

There was a strong indication that language policies should make provision for MOI to continue until grade 4. It also became apparent from the above responses that schools should be allowed to develop and structure language policies according to the background and language needs of learners. From the above responses, it appears that educators strongly feel that they should be granted the opportunity to exercise their right in choosing the MOI in rural areas. However, some participants

felt like they do not have a say concerning in choosing MOI and felt obliged to comply with the language policy.

4.5.4 English as medium of instruction

The dominant position of English, nationally, internationally, motivated the researcher to elicit views from participants on the importance of this language. The participants were, therefore, asked why they prefer their learners to be taught in English rather than in isiXhosa, their mother tongue. The following were some of the responses from the participants.

***E1:** They felt it is necessary because the examinations are in English; learners are assessed in English in their content subject. They must be used to the English language so that they do not struggle when they are assessed, and to be taught in English, the learners will improve their confidence in expressing themselves in the second language.*

***E4:** They like their children to learn in English and most of them are aware that it is the language mostly used globally when you meet a person who do not know your own language.*

***E2:** They wanted their kids to go to schools where they are able to learn English. They see it as the language that would help their children to get jobs as English is an international language.*

Despite being in favour of the use of mother tongue as MOI, educators also agreed on the importance of English and pointed to the crucial role of English for the purpose of learner assessments, communication and preparation for the job market.

4.5.5 Teacher training on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction

With an untrained background to teach in a home language, teachers are usually sceptic and even unwilling to support any LTPs in schools to introduce home language as LoLT (Malekela, 2006) Most of the participants agreed that teachers need to be trained using MT so that it can be developed before it can be used as MOI. This is how they responded:

E1: There should be a training for teachers in order for the language to be developed. We were not trained to teach home language, the focus is given to other subjects like Maths and Science

E2: The department did not train any teacher or anybody in the use of MT as MOI so it cannot be developed. The training for the teacher is needed, the department should make means.

H3: To tell you the truth, it will be difficult for isiXhosa to be developed because teachers were not enough trained to implement this MTE. Our college training as teachers was done in English, at school we were taught in English

The above responses shows that educators are not only in favour of mother tongue as medium of instruction, however, they also realized the importance of professional training for the effective teaching using mother tongue as medium of instruction.

4.5.6 Lack of resources to support mother tongue as medium of instruction

Researchers confirm the lack of resources in many South African schools. Participants realized the importance of adequate resources in order to realize the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in schools. This is how they expressed themselves regarding this particular aspect:

E1: *There are no enough resources to facilitate the mother tongue education. Sometimes the learners share the textbook or sometimes it is only the teacher who has a textbook.*

E2: *We theorize everything, concrete teaching is impossible to practice due to lack of resources. Our learners do not gain insight from lessons but have to just memorize in most cases.*

E3: *Abanasigama kule language' [they lack vocabulary for the language] and what makes it difficult is the fact that we do not have the necessary resources to unpack the lesson.*

H3: *There are no public libraries in the community, there is no library, no laboratory in the school, there is a shortage of textbooks and there are no computers in the school and in the village*

Respondents regard the lack of resources as a major stumbling block for effective teaching and learning. Research evidence in North West Province by Legotlo (2002) has shown that lack of resources is a common problem in South African public schools. This lack of resources and facilities creates socio-cultural disadvantages for

learners as it hinders their learning. The lack of resources in terms of particular textbooks and lack of library facilities is viewed as a major stumbling block. Learning resources and facilities are not enough in many schools. This lack of resources and facilities creates social and cultural disadvantages for learners, especially in rural schools (Rammala: 2009).

4.5.7 Culture in relation to mother tongue as medium of instruction

According to Alidou (2006), language, culture and literacy are elements that define individuals and their sense of belonging to a group or a nation. This view is also confirmed by several researchers. Both educators and parents agreed that use of mother tongue promotes culture. The following extracts emerged from interview responses:

E2: *Teaching in isiXhosa will make our culture as Xhosa speaking people to be preserved eternally*

E4: *The use of mother tongue is the key and fundamental aspect in promoting my African image and heritage.*

P4: *Because isiXhosa is our culture ...We will be able to know our forefathers cultures and rituals*

H1: *Your culture is maintained by your language, when your language is not there, gone is yourself worth*

E3: *Self- worth is brought back so that people will know who they are
I see this as a good thing for bringing back our culture*

The above responses by the participants show that it is indeed important to use mother tongue as MOI, as it will not only enable learners to do well in class, but they will also have a link with their culture. Using the learners' home language makes it possible to integrate culture into the school curriculum and thereby creating a culturally sensitive curriculum. The discontinuity of using home language as MOI in Grade 4 creates a gap between the home and school and may even lead to a culture shock in terms of language usage when the school introduces another MOI. An example of this language transition experience is the content of the school textbooks. If books are written in an unfamiliar language, it is inevitable that the books will also bring forth unfamiliar cultural notions. According to Benson (2001) and Alexander (2003) anthropologists as well as linguistics have long recognized that there is a relationship between language and culture.

4.5.8 Data gained from observations and documents

Observations from four schools showed that most learners were able to speak isiXhosa (MT) during mother tongue lessons as they indicated that they also used the language at home but with other subjects it was a different case because they were incorporating with English words, “like”, “and”, “but”. During the observation the researcher noted that the learners were using their mother tongue when discussing or explaining to their peers in all subjects, including English lessons and were expected to use English when responding to the educators. This shows that learners depended on their mother tongue and have insufficient vocabulary of the language used as MOI hence the shift to their languages each time they get stuck. Furthermore, most educators either conducted lessons in isiXhosa or used code switching as a resource for teaching and learning since this enables them to see and know that the learners understand the lesson. The educators claimed that, having

textbooks that are in neither learners' nor educators' mother tongue can result to unclear teaching and learning processes. Code switching is commonly used because the educators admitted that sometimes they felt like they had no choice but to code switch given that the learners do not understand the content, instead they would just sit and look at the educators with confusion during lessons since the textbooks and texts used were in English.

Mark sheets were analysed to see the performance of Grade 4 learners. The marks for isiXhosa were higher but all the content subjects that are conducted in English had low marks. From the tests they wrote from the beginning of the year up to August, most learners did very well more than 83% passed home language as compared to other subjects. Learners' portfolios showed the learners' understanding of the rules for mother tongue since it is their language.

4.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher presented, analysed and discussed the findings of data gathered from participants. Data was coded into themes. The findings of this study on exploring the use of MT as MOI in all the four schools were: there was more learner-talk in mother tongue lessons but teacher-talk approach featured in English lessons. However, learners were free to interact with their teachers when the teacher code-switched into IsiXhosa. Despite the challenges in the implementation of MT, the participants revealed that MT is the best language for learning and teaching and it should be used as MOI. The next chapter focuses on the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter concludes the study by providing a synthesis of the literature and research findings. A synopsis of forgoing chapters will firstly, be provided, and key findings of the study recommendations for practice and for further study,

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The preceding section presented the data and findings. This section presents a discussion of the findings. The discussion of the findings is embedded within the theoretical framework and literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The purpose of the study is to explore the use of mother tongue (isiXhosa) as the medium of instruction in four primary schools in the East London Education District. The following themes emerged from the data analysis namely: Advantages associated with mother tongue as the medium of instruction, challenges associated with the implementation of mother tongue instruction, and strategies to promote mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

5.2.1 Advantages associated with mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

Participants were optimistic about the advantages and linked the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction to:

5.2.1.1 Improved learner performance

The findings show that using mother tongue (isiXhosa) as the medium of instruction could enable learners to easily grasp the underlying basic concepts that are taught in various subjects, which will also enable them to learn more effectively and

subsequently improve learning outcomes. Thus, using mother tongue as the medium of instruction can affect learners' comprehension skills and their general academic performance. Because of the learners being able to express themselves easily in their home language, they are able to understand and respond with less anxiety to learning challenges (Nomlomo, 2006). Harushimana (2014) expatiates further on these findings when she states that countries like Finland, South Korea and Japan where mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction, are ranked highest in terms of education according to the worldwide Education Rankings of 2012. Brock-Utne (2006) and Benson (2000) echoed these views when they state that learners perform better academically when the language of instruction is a familiar language (home language). Benson (2000); Brock-Utne (2006) and Fafunwa (1989) note that learners perform better academically when the language of instruction is a familiar language and stress that educational progress can be impeded by a foreign language, or skills to serve as an effective educational medium may be insufficiently developed.

5.2.1.2 Improved Parent Involvement in Homework Activities

Using a vernacular as the medium of instruction will also help to improve parents' involvement in the education of their children. Parents, semi-literate or educated, who have no or little command of English, experience difficulties in reinforcing their children's learning at home. It means that parents will now be in a better position to support their children on a regular basis with homework activities. This finding is affirmed by Benson (2002) and Alidou (2006) who claim that instruction in a home language eases the transition between home and school. Desai (2006) asserts that fluent and accessible communication between teachers, learners and parents

encourages parents' participation in their children's school work, which leads to more effective teaching and learning.

5.2.1.3 Preservation of Culture and Heritage

Using learners' vernacular as the medium of instruction is also seen as a way to preserve and promote different languages and cultures, thus, keeping cultures and heritage alive. A possible inference that could be made, is that the exclusion of learners' mother tongue and the continuous use of English could eventually and inadvertently lead to the neglect and abandonment of learners' culture and heritage. Using the learners' home language makes it possible to integrate culture into the school curriculum and thereby creating a culturally sensitive curriculum (Alidou, 2006). It is against this background that Baker (2006) and Benson (2011) assert that the medium of instruction is the most powerful means of maintaining and revitalizing a language and a culture as it is also the most important form of intergenerational transmission. Benson (2001) and Alexander (2003) found that there is a relationship between language and culture. Alidou et al. (2006) supports this view when stating that language, culture and literature are elements that define individuals and there sense of belonging to a group or nation. According to Senkoro (2004) a learner can only feel proud of his/her cultural inheritance if he /she can express him/herself in a home language.

5.2.1.4 Improved teaching practices

It also pertinent to note that mother tongue instruction has the potential to improve current classroom practice and teaching strategies as teachers will prepare and present their lessons in a language in which learners have a good command. For instance teaching will become more focused without having to code-switch, which is

also a time consuming exercise. According to Ejieh (2004) teaching learners by means of a second language as the MOI often results in teachers facing language difficulties and challenges to express the subject content and learners who do not have advanced language competence struggle to understand what teachers teach. Thus, using mother tongue as the medium of instruction facilitates mutual communication between the teacher and learners. Effective communication leads to better teaching on the part of teachers and better learning for learners (Alidou et al., 2006).

5.2.2 Barriers associated with mother tongue as the medium of instruction

Despite all the sentiments in favour of mother tongue as the medium of instruction, some participants were also ambivalent about the implementation of mother tongue instruction and cited the following possible inhibiting factors:

5.2.2.1 English as an international language

Using English as the medium of instruction is associated with employability. It can therefore be argued that using a mother tongue (vernacular) as the medium of instruction in schools could limit employment opportunities for learners. Proficiency in English is also regarded as a requirement for all examinations, tests and other assessment activities in the Intermediate Phase and higher grades which are set and conducted in English. Using a mother tongue for teaching purposes could have an adverse effect on learners when they are assessed in English. Furthermore, the use of mother tongue is seen as a way of excluding learners from English which is considered as an international language of communication. Adeyemi (2004) confirms this view when stating that English has considerable natural and international coverage of users with sufficient reliable codified form.

This position is aggravated by parents who do not want their children to learn through the medium of indigenous languages, because they believe that it will ruin their children's ability to speak English with fluency (Jankie, 2010). Mda (2004) and Nomlomo (2006) claim that black African parents are afraid that their children will lose socio-economic mobility and access to higher ranking positions in society if they are taught in their home language. This view is confirmed by Dyers (2008) who states that despite the large number of official languages in South Africa, English still remains the dominant language and as a result, many parents do their best to ensure that their children are educated in English since it has an influence on social class, level of education, career and region. Owen-Smith (2010) postulates that many black African parents' eagerness for their children to become fluent in English makes them fall into the trap of suppressing their mother tongue. Alexander and Block (2004) believe that parents' negative perception of mother tongue instruction devaluates the use of mother tongue, while raising the status of English.

5.2.2.2 Lack of specialised teacher training

Using mother tongue as the medium of instruction in schools can be seriously hampered in the event of teachers not having specialized training in the use of a particular vernacular for teaching purposes. Lack of specialized teacher training in the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction will not only limit their command of the language of instruction, but could inevitably affect learner performance. With an untrained background to teach in a home language, teachers are usually skeptic and even unwilling to support the introduction and implementation of home language as the MOI (Malekela, 2006).

5.2.2.3 Lack of resources

The use of mother tongue as the language of instruction can also be affected by the lack of resources. The availability of textbooks, reading materials and libraries is essential to complement what is taught in the classroom. Nascimento (2008) report that school resources are significant and regarded as pedagogically important. According to Matjila and Pretorius (2004) and Minskoff (2005), South African schools are not well resourced with libraries and most are also without books. There is generally a lack of literacy materials in African languages and as such learners have no opportunity to read in their own African languages.

5.2.3 Strategies to promote mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

In South Africa all learners study in their mother tongue (isiXhosa) in grades 1-3, with English mandated as the medium of instruction from Grade 4 and higher. Thus, in order to introduce and implement any vernacular as the medium of instruction, national intervention is required.

5.2.3.1 Language policy

What surfaced predominantly is the need for policy change in respect of the language of teaching and learning in schools. The LIEP together with the South African Schools Act (Act 84/1996) confer certain rights on School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in determining the language policy of a school and places emphasis on choice, rather than strong state intervention as the basis for determining the policy pertaining to the MOI in schools. Thus, there is a need for policy makers to involve all stakeholders, and to take the language needs and background of the community in consideration. The language predominantly used by parents and the entire community should guide decisions regarding the language policy in a particular

school. This finding is echoed in Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights (1996: 6) which clearly states that “Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public education institutions where that is reasonably practicable.” It is in this sense that Brock-Utne (2005) suggests that policy makers should be devoted to the strengthening of African languages as the medium of instruction (MOI), given the African child’s learning problem is related to linguistics.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The findings of this study are in response to following research questions:

- (1) What are educators’ and parents’ views on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4?
- (2) What are the possible advantages of the mother tongue instruction?
- (3) How can educators and parents promote the use of mother in Grade4?
- (4) What challenges do educators and parents perceive with the introduction of mother tongue as medium of instruction in Grade 4?

The responses with regard to these research questions guided the researcher to come to the following conclusions:

It is interesting to note that the most participants in this study who called for the use of mother tongue as the MOI do so in order to enhance academic performance. These participants understand that learners do not fail because they do not understand the content, but because they do not understand the language (English) in which the content is taught. Furthermore, the schools do not have appropriate resources like libraries and laboratories. In view of this lack of resources, the

teaching and learning process cannot function effectively. The most important conclusion is that when the schools lack adequate reading materials (other than a textbook), it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to implement the use of mother tongue as MOI curriculum fully.

The data in this study further showed that using foreign language as MOI prevented learners from gaining assistance from parents with their homework and other tasks that needed to be done at home as some parents do not even understand the language. It also indicated need for providing a choice to educators and learners regarding their use of the language of instruction other than English as educators need to be proficient in a language of instruction in order to teach through that language. A certain extent of resistance against the use of mother tongue as the MOI exists in schools and communities for the reason that English is associated as a warranty for future employment.

5.4 SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS

The main aim of the study was to explore the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. Four objectives were formulated, namely:

1. To determine educators' and parents' views on the use of mother tongue instruction in Grade 4.
2. To determine the possible advantages of mother tongue instruction in Grade 4
3. To determine how mother tongue instruction can be promoted by educators and parents.

4. To determine the possible challenges associated with the introduction of mother tongue instruction Grade 4.

Chapter one introduced the reader to the importance of using mother tongue as the medium of instruction up to Grade 4. Research questions were formulated and an overview of the research paradigm design and the methodology were described; the terminology was defined, and the chapter concluded with the chapter outline.

Literature review in **Chapter two** was conducted on the use of MT as MOI based on the following headings: mother tongue as medium of instruction, advantages associated with mother tongue, and challenges to implement mother tongue education.

In **Chapter three**, the research design and methodology employed to investigate the research questions were discussed according to the following headings: research orientation, research purpose, research methodology, data analysis and ethics.

Chapter four provided a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data collected through semi-structured interviews.

The discussion of data collected was preceded by biographical information of the respondents in relation to gender, teaching experience, qualifications and age. This was followed by thematic discussion and interpretation of the interviews conducted. The data responses that answered the research questions set in chapter one were discussed.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that learners from four schools faced different challenges and difficulties in using the newly adopted language as MOI for learning and teaching in

their everyday school activities. This means there is still a lot that needs to be done to ensure that mother tongue education continues up to Grade 4. Parents and learners should be motivated to play an important role in using mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Educators should also be given specific training in teaching using the mother tongue. The study not only suggested the need for mother tongue teaching approaches, but also suggested the need for enrichment programmes to empower both parents and educators in using mother tongues as MOI in Grade 4.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the study are as follows:

5.6.1 Recommendations for practice

The use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction should continue up to Grade 4 in order for learners to perform well. The schools and the SGB should be knowledgeable about the language policy implications for the school and must see to it that staff members are familiar with the school's language policy. The staff and community should be involved in the development of a language policy for the school.

The education authorities in partnership with the schools must ensure quality LTSM which are made available in a particular mother tongue as MOI. Educators should also receive appropriate in-service training to capacitate them in using mother tongue as the medium of instruction. In the same manner, parents should be encouraged and empowered to assist their children with homework activities.

5.6.2 Recommendations for further research

A study that looks at the challenges to be encountered by learners in the senior phase where English is used as the medium of instruction.

A study that looks at the professional training of teachers in the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

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

Certificate Reference Number: PYL021SSAK01

Project title: **Exploring the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Grade 4: A case study of four schools in East London Education District**

Nature of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Phelisa Prudence Sakati

Supervisor: Dr JN Pylman

Co-supervisor:

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

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

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

18 May 2015



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES
Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape
Private Bag X0032 • Bhisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
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Enquiries: NY Kanjana

Email: nykanjana@live.co.za

Date: 30 June 2015

Ms Phelisa Prudence Sakati

38324 Phase 3

Scenery Park

East London

5247

Dear Ms Sakati

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS STUDY: EXPLORING THE USE OF MOTHER TONGUE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 4 – A CASE STUDY OF FOUR SCHOOLS

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the above mentioned research in four High Schools under the jurisdiction of East London District of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
 - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
 - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
 - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
 - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educators' programmes should not be interrupted;
 - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;

building blocks for growth

Page 1 of 2



Ikawva eliqambileyo!

- g. the research may not be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where a special well motivated request is received;
 - h. your research will be limited to those schools or institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;
 - i. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis.
 - j. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary.
 - k. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation upon completion of your research.
 - l. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.
 - m. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
 - n. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation.
3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE.
 4. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
 5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Ms. NY Kanjana on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email nykanjana@live.co.za should you need any assistance.



NY KANJANA

DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH & SECRETARIAT SERVICES
FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION



APPENDIX C: LETTER OF PERMISSION

38324 Phase 3
Scenery Park
East London
5249
23 March 2015

TO: The Principal
..... Primary School
East London
5200

SUBJECT: Research Studies
Dear Sir / Madam

I, Phelisa Prudence Sakati, an M.ED student at the University of Fort Hare seeks permission to conduct research in your school from 01/07/2015.

My research topic is **“Exploring the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. A case study of four schools in the East London Education District.”** I will be interviewing the HOD and one mother tongue educator. I will also be observing a mother tongue lesson being conducted by a mother tongue teacher. The time I will spend is from one hour to two hours.

Kindly grant me permission to conduct the research in your site.

Yours faithfully

Sakati P.P. (200801655)

APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTER

Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study entitled: **Exploring the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4.**

This study explores the educators and parents' views on the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. The advantages of using mother tongue instruction, the possible challenges, the role of parents and strategies to promote mother tongue instruction.

The researcher undertakes to assure you of the following:

- To maintain your confidentiality;
- To protect your rights and welfare; i.e. to ensure that no harm comes to you as a result of your participation in this research.
- No manipulation or withholding of information is involved in this study.
- To present information and transcripts used in this research in such a way as to maintain the participant's dignity and if in doubt to first consult with you.
- The participant is free to withdraw from this research process at any time whatsoever if the need should so arise.

It is hoped that education at large will benefit from your insights into academic composing arising from this research. I acknowledge your sacrifice in volunteering to add to the body of academic knowledge and your perseverance in carrying out the research task to its completion.

Yours sincerely

P.P. Sakati

MED student (200801655)

Participant's signature of agreement: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE PRINT NAME: _____

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS

SECTION A: Biographical Data

1. Gender : _____
2. Age : _____
3. Home Language : _____
4. Years of teaching experience : _____
5. Highest level of qualification : _____

SECTION B: Educator's views on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction

1. How do you feel about the use of mother tongue as MOI in Grade 4?

2. In what way can the use of mother tongue (isiXhosa) promote learner's understanding of work?

3. How practical is it for schools to implement mother tongue as the medium of instruction?

4. In what way could the use of mother tongue benefit or disadvantage learners in Grade 4?

5. In what way would learners who are not competent in English benefit from the use of mother tongue as MOI?

6. Why do you think do some parents prefer the use of English as MOI?

7. In your opinion, what should be done to promote the use of mother tongue as MOI in Grade 4?

8. Why do you think, an African language (isiXhosa) first needs to be developed before it can be used as the MOI?

9. How would the use of mother tongue promote communication between learners and educators in the classroom?

10. Anything that you would like to ask or say?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

SECTION A: Biographical Data

1. Gender : _____
2. Age : _____
3. Home Language : _____
4. Occupation : _____
5. Highest level of qualification : _____

SECTION B: Parent's views on the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction

1. How do you feel about the use of mother tongue (isiXhosa) to teach your children in Grade 4?

2. In what way do you think could your children benefit the use of mother tongue (isiXhosa) as MOI in Grade 4?

3. In your opinion what should be done to promote the use of mother tongue in schools?

4. How do you encourage your children at home to develop positive attitude towards their mother tongue?

5. In what way does the use of foreign language (English) as the MOI benefit or disadvantage learners in schools?

6. What problems do you foresee with the use of mother tongue as MOI?

7. How can you promote the use of mother tongue amongst your children?

8. How do you think would the use of mother tongue in schools prepare your child/ren for the world of work?

9. What challenges do you foresee with the use of mother tongue as the MOI?

10. Do you have anything that you would like to ask or say?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

EDUCATORS' INTERVIEW

1. How do you feel about the use of mother tongue as MOI in Grade 4?

Mother tongue is the key and fundamental aspect in promoting the African image and heritage. As the medium of instruction, use of mother tongue can be the solution to the high failure rate of our pupils at school as it is the language they understand from birth. It can explain certain terms better than the use of the big English words that confuse our people.

2. In what way can the use of mother tongue (isiXhosa) promote learner's understanding of work?

The use of mother tongue can promote learners understanding, especially on the core or content subjects. These subjects mostly talk of the experiences of the people as they grow up but because they are in English people tend to not understand what they told about simply because it is in English, meaning that they do not understand English.

3. How practical is it for schools to implement mother tongue as the medium of instruction?

The practicality on the implementation of mother tongue is very high, we first need to write content subject textbooks in isiXhosa and categories of the community. As we speak, teachers in the classrooms mostly switch from English to isiXhosa the language they understand. As a result, big English terms are simplified.

4. In what way could the use of mother tongue benefit or disadvantage learners in Grade 4?

Academically they will benefit as they would master the content but economically they would be disadvantaged as they won't know the international language.

5. In what way would learners who are not competent in English benefit from the use of mother tongue as MOI?

It will increase the pass rate to all the subjects and appreciation of heritage. They will gain more understanding of content and high recognition of mother tongue.

6. Why do you think do some parents prefer the use of English as MOI?

They wanted their kids to go to schools where they are able to learn English. They see it as the language that would help their children to get good jobs as English is an international language.

7. In your opinion, what should be done to promote the use of mother tongue as MOI in Grade 4?

It can be promoted through alternatively having Xhosa written textbooks, there should enough resources, since there is a lack of them. Teachers need to be trained in using the mother tongue as medium of instruction and parents must be involved.

8. Why do you think, an African language (isiXhosa) first needs to be developed before it can be used as the medium of instruction?

It need to be developed because even the beneficiaries of the language are unable to speak the language properly. The development of certain terms should be put in place so that the content of the subject can be more developed and understandable.

9. How would the use of mother tongue promote communication between learners and educators in the classroom?

It will bring an effective communication between teachers and learners. Learners will be able to express themselves fully on how they understand what they being taught and how they do not understand it. Teachers would be more confident when they are teaching using their language.

PARENTS' INTERVIEW

1. How do you feel about the use of mother tongue (isiXhosa) to teach your children in Grade 4?

I feel great! That is why a child will express herself in a confident way and understand better, this Xhosa thing makes learners happy in their classrooms.

2. In what way do you think could your children benefit the use of mother tongue (isiXhosa) as MOI in Grade 4?

When properly understood the lesson they can also come up with their ideas and examples.

3. In your opinion what should be done to promote the use of mother tongue in schools?

There has to be an IsiXhosa day, should a learner be found speaking in another language, be penalized.

4. How do you encourage your children at home to develop positive attitude towards their mother tongue?

By giving them Xhosa books with general interesting stories and teach them about their heritage.

5. In what way does the use of foreign language (English) as the MOI benefit or disadvantage learners in schools?

What they would have understood if written and asked in their mother tongue becomes difficult as a result fails such a question. It would be better if when asked in foreign language, be written in home language on the reverse side. [Kangangokuba], as a result I cannot assist my son with his homework. I am not educated, he ask his friends to help. I do not have time because I sell African beer so that we can buy food for and his siblings, only if he can learn in Xhosa.

6. What problems do you foresee with the use of mother tongue as MOI?

Children won't be able to express themselves in foreign language if at all mother tongue is used throughout.

7. How can you promote the use of mother tongue amongst your children?

By reading a lot about the fore leaders and what they did previously which needs young people to learn from. I want my children to be taught in their mother tongue [abakwazi nokokukhumsha kakade], since they do not know even that English.

8. How do you think would the use of mother tongue in schools prepare your child/ren for the world of work?

It becomes very interesting when everyone knows and understands where he or she comes from because it won't be easy for one to be diverted from his or her culture. So [kugcina inkcubeko yethu], it keeps our culture.

9. What challenges do you foresee with the use of mother tongue as the MOI?

They might not express themselves when communicating with other tribes if mother tongue is the only language used as medium of instruction.

10. Do you have anything that you would like to ask or say?

Mother tongue needs to be taught by someone who likes reading and also prepared to research about the history of her or his tribe. For it won't be wise for anyone to learn more about foreign things and be blank when it comes to his or hers, this is just an advice.

23 Elfin Glen Road, Nahoon Valley Heights, East London, 5200



To whom it may concern:

This document certifies that the dissertation whose title appears below has been edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall style by Rose Masha, a member of the Professional Editors' Group whose qualifications are listed in the footer of this certificate.

Title:

Exploring the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in
Grade 4: a case study of four primary schools in the East London
Education District

Author:

Phelisa Prudence Sakati

Date Edited:

18 January 2016

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rose Masha".

Rose Khanyisile Masha

(040) 402 2345 or 082 770 8892

Bachelor of Library and Information Science, Hons (English Language Teaching), HDE,
MA (Hypermedia in Lang. Learning), PhD (Education).