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**THE LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF HIGH SCHOOL
LEARNERS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS IN THE MAFIKENG AND
VRYBURG DISTRICTS OF THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE, SOUTH
AFRICA**

BY

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ABSTRACT

THE LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS IN THE MAFIKENG AND VRYBURG DISTRICTS OF THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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This study investigated language attitudes and practices of high school learners, teachers and parents in the North West Province, South Africa, in relation to the new Language- in- Education Policy (LIEP). Seven high schools in the Mafikeng and Vryburg Districts were selected for the study based on the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) they offered prior to the new LIEP. One hundred and seventy-one learners, twenty-two teachers, and twenty parents participated in this study.

A survey questionnaire was administered to the learners and teachers. Parents were interviewed face-to-face to curb the problem of limited literacy. The questionnaire focused on language preferences and reasons for language preferences, and opinions on the new LIEP. Observations of classrooms, extra-curricula and non-curricula activities were conducted.

The results of the study indicated that the majority of the participants across school media preferred English both as a subject and as a LOLT. Two main reasons given for this preference were that: 1) English is the most

commonly used language at school, in the Province and in the world, and 2) competence in English enhances job opportunities. The language chosen by most learners for Assembly was English. An equal number of teachers chose the Setswana-English, and Afrikaans-English combination for Assembly, and most parents chose Setswana. English was the language chosen by most learners for letters to parents. Most teachers chose the Afrikaans-English option, and for parents Setswana was the most preferred language. More than half of the learners who responded were supportive of the new LIEP, but more teachers were non-supportive of the policy. Only three parents were non-supportive of the new LIEP, the rest believed that it would work.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that there is an overwhelming support for English as subject and as LOLT schools and participants. The major reason for this preference is that English is associated with economic privilege.

This study has implications for the education of high school youth in South Africa, the sociolinguistic aspects of language in education in general, and in South Africa in particular. Stakeholders in education need to be educated about the pedagogic importance of mother tongue instruction. Research into language in education policy must reflect the historical and political issues affecting language choice and empowerment through language. Finally, the government needs to re-commit itself to the realization of the LIEP by making human and material resources available to schools to meet the demands of stakeholders.

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my dearest mother, Gasekete Thiba, for her selfless dedication to her family and her love for education. Robala ka khotso 'MaTieho. To Papa Moeketsi Thiba, for all the sacrifices he made for me. Doh and Punkie, I try to live our dream little brothers.

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Darkey and Thandi Afrika, ke lebogile bonnaka, le ka moso, Mpho Faith Tire, you are priceless, Ciambaka Mary Mugo and Austin Jackson, asante sana. Thank you all for always being there when I needed you most. Bro Tito, may you receive endless blessings for your generosity of spirit, I owe my sanity to you.

Badimo ba ga Mokgoro, Kekesi, Tsatsi, Thiba, Ke lebogile Barolong le Bakgatla ba Bagolo (Dedication to my ancestors).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How different in function are African languages from any others anywhere in the world? I would like to suggest that languages fulfill similar functions wherever they are spoken. Through all my schooling days, therefore, Xhosa, my language, had little or no relevance to my education, except that when I pursued it to course II at university I failed it. In South Africa it is estimated that 40 to 50 percent of the population is illiterate, and that the greater part of the illiterates are women. I think it is here that the African languages become particularly relevant, especially in adult education (Govan Mbeki, 2000).

Mbeki's words capture the current state of educational underdevelopment in South Africa as a result of the undervaluing of mother tongue instruction. As he states, African languages are relevant and necessary to address the high rate of illiteracy in South Africa. The research literature from the UNESCO declaration of mother tongue instruction in 1953 (Robinson 1994, p. 70) to work by Prah (2000) and others in the 1990s clearly demonstrates that educational development is facilitated when the learner's first language is used. Within this framework, this study investigated language attitudes and practices of learners, teachers and parents in post-apartheid South Africa, specifically seven selected schools in the North West Province. Because the South African language in education situation is inextricable from the social and political history of racialized conquest and domination in the country, it is necessary to explore these complex factors to gain an understanding of the purpose of this study and the necessity for such a study at this juncture in the history of South Africa.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

On April 27, 1994, South Africa held its first ever democratic elections where all citizens, irrespective of race, voted for a new democratic government after decades of white minority rule. These elections saw the demise of apartheid, at least by law, and the birth of democracy. Apartheid was a system of legalized racial discrimination, unique to South Africa, which was used by the Afrikaner National Party government from 1948 to 1994 to oppress 36million Africans, Coloreds and Indians, in the land of their birth. Prior to the elections, the country was divided along four distinct racial lines, White, Black, Colored and Indian. In what Smitherman (2000, p.319) calls "Verwoerd's blueprint for apartheid," the country was further divided into "homelands" or "Bantustans" for different segments of its African population. Four of the homelands, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei, were said to be "independent countries." The remaining six homelands were called "self-governing" territories (Omer-Cooper 1994, p. 214). Citizenship in the homelands was determined by language. For instance, the homeland that was designated for Setswana speaking citizens, Batswana, was called Bophuthatswana.

The people who were chosen to head these Bantustans were first language speakers of their linguistically determined homelands. Anybody else who was not a mother tongue speaker of the designated language in a particular homeland became a citizen nonetheless if the homeland found him or her in the area. For instance, if a person whose mother tongue was Sesotho happened to

live in Bophuthatswana, that person automatically became a citizen of that homeland, or else the individual had to seek permission to live and work there.

Herbert (1992, p. 4) captures this complex situation in this manner:

Language, has however, been used explicitly to define national citizenship in Southern Africa. For example, the 1976 Status of Transkei Act conferred automatic Transkeian citizenship (and automatic loss of South African citizenship) upon all those who were registered in 1963 as a consequence of the Transkei Self- Government Act (all black people of Transkeian origin), as well as upon those born outside the Transkei whose fathers were of Transkeian origin or who were born out of wedlock and whose mothers were of Transkeian origin, and upon those who were not otherwise defined as citizens but who spoke a language or dialect used by the Xhosa or Sotho-speaking people of the Transkei.

Language has therefore always been a critical tool of the politics of control in South Africa. The National Party government used it to promote apartheid and to oppress Africans through its divide and rule strategies. The Homeland Act and the Group Areas Act that separated South Africans on both racial and linguistic lines were two examples of these strategies. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the agenda for redressing the imbalances of the apartheid years, the African National Congress (ANC) led government recognized the vital role language would play in restructuring the new South Africa.

Homeland governments had two or three official languages, English and/ or Afrikaans, and a South African indigenous language that was used to mark each homeland as a separate entity. For instance in Bophuthatswana, English, Afrikaans and Setswana were official languages. However, the languages of the courts, government and post primary education were still English and Afrikaans since the homelands were controlled by the South African central government in

spite of their state of "independence." For instance, matriculation (grade twelve) final examinations were all constructed by the government in Pretoria and sent to all schools for African children, including homeland schools.

The irony of the evil of apartheid, however, is that indigenous languages were developed in the homelands as a result of their official status. Of course, this development happened by accident, not by design, in that the languages were used to promote the idea of separateness and independence. Homeland governments developed and used indigenous languages alongside English and Afrikaans. Further, the use of these languages in media, especially television and radio, helped to facilitate the growth and development of these languages. This positive step, however, did not stop the power of English as the language of learning and teaching (LOLT), especially in post primary education, and as the medium of government, law and commerce in the homelands. For example, even if a magistrate were highly competent in a local language, court proceedings would be held in English or Afrikaans.

The study of language in education policy in South Africa cannot, therefore, be separated from the historical context of political developments in the entire country.

The evolution of the country's language in education policy has occurred in four phases: 1) missionary education, 2) Bantu Education, 3) post-1976 uprisings, and 4) post-1994 all race elections. In the first three phases, the policy was determined solely by the government of the day, and little or no recognition was given to indigenous languages. The fourth phase marks a radical movement

away from the previous three policies with the articulation of the new language policy that gives power and equity to all eleven official languages of the country, nine of which are indigenous.

Very little is recorded in history books about pre-colonial education in South Africa. This does not, however, mean that there was no structured education then. Traditional schools such as initiation schools were a means of transmitting knowledge from one generation to the other. For the purpose of this study, the development of language in education policy will be restricted to colonial and post-colonial South Africa. The arrival of missionaries in South Africa in the eighteenth century marked the beginning of formal education for Africans. The sole purpose of the missionaries was to convert Africans to Christianity (Omer-Cooper 1994, p.39). Education was a secondary aim in the missionary agenda. However, the role of mission schools in the formal education of Africans cannot be underestimated, especially with reference to language policy.

Mabokela (2000, p.96) says this about the role of mission schools:

At the crux of the British agenda was the goal of Anglicising the Dutch in the Cape Colony. This goal was accomplished by introducing English as a medium of instruction in schools. The imposition of English in schools sparked a long struggle for dominance between the Dutch and the British, a struggle which still resonates in modern language debates in South Africa. The British policy towards the education of Africans ...was on Christianising Africans rather than educating them.

Mission schools used English as an LOLT but also encouraged the use of African languages as LOLT's from at least the first to the fourth grade of elementary school. English was introduced gradually as LOLT in what is referred to in De Klerk (1995, p.56) as "additive bilingualism". According to Ohly (1992,

p.51), the missionaries themselves did not consider African languages deficient and therefore unequal to English. Rather, the failure of the mission schools to promote and maintain the use of African languages in schools was caused by the low political and social status of the indigenous languages. Roy-Campbell (2000, p.257) states that the switch from mother tongue to English in missionary schools created a distorted image of the superiority of English to indigenous languages.

She argues that:

This contributed to the association, in the minds of many Africans, of English with education and opportunities for personal advancement. The dual policy of promoting yet devaluing African languages by the colonial administrations helped to shape attitudes towards the indigenous languages, attitudes which persist to this day.

Brown (1992, p.80) quotes Memmi's assertion that the bilingual approach used by mission schools devalued the African languages. Brown calls this "colonial bilingualism" because even if the missionaries recommended the use of indigenous languages, they continued to use English as LOLT and placed a higher value on English than they did on African languages. The language in education policy for missionary schools in principle was that indigenous languages *could* be used as LOLT's. However, the schools used English as LOLT in spite of this policy. Undoubtedly, the missionaries used English because they wanted to promote the language. Further, job security for Africans, for example, was guaranteed by their competence in English, not in African languages. In her comparison of the language policy in the USA and the RSA (Republic of South Africa), Smitherman (2000, p.318) asserts that:

While USA Blacks were stripped of their African languages RSA Blacks were allowed to retain theirs. However, British colonial language policy

relegated these languages to low status by considering them “dialects”, rather than languages, and by establishing a system of material rewards for Africans who spoke English.

Therefore, the value of the indigenous languages was lowered by their lack of economic power while the status and value of English was elevated at their expense.

When the National Party assumed political power in 1948, the government began to consolidate the apartheid principles of Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid and the first prime minister of the Union of South Africa. The National Party used apartheid to divide and rule South Africa for fifty-two years. Verwoerd established different departments of education along racial lines. The department that was created for Africans was called the Department of Bantu Education. The purpose of this department was to plan a deliberately inferior education for African children. The FAK (*Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge – Federation of Union of Afrikaans Culture*) articulated the goal of Bantu Education in its recommendation that was subsequently adopted by the Department of Bantu Education:

....any system of teaching and education of natives must be based on these same principles (trusteeship, no equality, separation)... must be grounded in the life- and world- view of the whites, most especially the Boer nation as the senior white trustees of the native.... The mother-tongue must be the basis for native education and teaching but.. the two official languages must be taught as subjects because they are official languages... (Mesthrie 1995, p.309)

Education, like all spheres of society, was divided along four distinct racial lines, and each group was placed in a hierarchy with the white at the top,

followed by the Indian, then the Colored, and finally the African. Christie (1986, p. 55) observes the following about the racial divisions of education in South Africa:

Under the apartheid system, patterns of educational inequality were entrenched. Different education systems do not provide equal education for different population registration groups. And the separate education systems have also entrenched patterns of social class.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 resulted in the massive closure of mission schools and the resignation of talented African teachers. The Act declared that all schools must register as government schools, therefore taking away the power of the schools to make decisions on language policy matters. The Act also made English and Afrikaans LOLT's to be introduced in first grade (Mesthrie 1995, p.310). The government also declared English and Afrikaans LOLT's in teacher training colleges (Herbert 1995, p.82) and in secondary schools (Granville, *et. al.*, 1998, p.260). African teachers refused to implement the government's language in education policy and resigned en masse to protest the Bantu Education Act.

Protests by African teachers forced the government to relent and introduce the use of African languages as LOLT's for the first six years of school. However, the use of English and Afrikaans as LOLT's continued after standard four (grade six). The centralized examinations in standard five were in English or Afrikaans and therefore the children could not cope with the transition from mother tongue instruction to English and Afrikaans. As a result of this declining performance in the education of African children, teachers protested against the government and demanded that schools be given resources to deal with the

language issues (Hartshorne 1995, p. 312). The government did not take the teachers protestations seriously and insisted on the use of English and Afrikaans as LOLT's and did very little to promote the use of African languages as LOLT's in African schools beyond standard four. There was no effort to develop materials in indigenous languages for post-standard four education then.

The government's insistence on dual LOLT's of Afrikaans and English was executed out of fear that if schools were to choose between the two, English would be the option taken by African schools. According to Hartshorne, " Because of a fear that Afrikaans would be given a second place, the department ruled that both languages should be introduced at first year." The real language in education battle of the government in the 1960's was between English and Afrikaans, as Hartshorne (1995, p.307) observes. This battle continued throughout the different political phases of the country and seems prevalent even today. Mabokela (2000, p. 96) attributes this persistent struggle between English and Afrikaans to the imposition of English as a medium of instruction from the years of British rule in the then Cape Colony. The author also states that this battle continues to permeate debates on language policy and planning in South Africa. The language in education competition between Afrikaans and English is more political than pedagogical. The learners, especially African children, were caught up in the linguistic-political crossfire. Neither of the two languages was their first language, but the government continued to force schools to choose between English and Afrikaans and gave little, if any, consideration to African languages.

In the years that followed the 1953 declaration of the Bantu Education Act, African teachers began to protest intensively mainly through the African Teachers Association of South Africa (ATASA) (Christie 1986, p. 55). The main complaint against the government was the inferior education of African children characterized by lack of human and material resources, and the continued use of Afrikaans and English as the sole media of instruction in schools for African children. Finally, in the middle of the 1970s, just before the school uprisings of 1976, the government relaxed the dual English-Afrikaans LOLT policy and allowed schools to choose between the two languages. In African schools, however, the real status of Afrikaans was unchanged since the Department of Bantu Education was manned by conservative Afrikaners who made the final decision on school language policy. Thus Afrikaans became the most common LOLT in African schools. In white schools learners could attend Afrikaans or English medium schools. Colored and Afrikaner children attended Afrikaans medium schools and English speaking and Indian children attended English medium schools. These were separate schools, i.e. white children had their own schools and so did Indian children.

In 1976 African school children throughout South Africa took to the streets to protest the imposition of Afrikaans as LOLT. The uprisings were sparked by the Soweto school children and ignited by the fatal shooting of 13 year old Hector Petersen, the first victim of police brutality against African school children. Omer-Cooper (1994, p.226) describes the magnitude of the unrest:

In 1976 schoolchildren throughout Soweto staged a massive demonstration against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.

The police used force to disperse the demonstration and it developed into bitter and violent rioting that spread from Soweto to other towns around the Rand and Pretoria and then out of the Transvaal to Natal and the Cape. The riots were far and away the largest outbreaks of racial violence that South Africa had ever seen, far greater in scale than the 1952 upheavals and those which followed the 1961 Sharpville massacre.

Contrary to popular belief, the children did not explicitly demand the use of English as LOLT. There was no mention of a specific LOLT since the main goal was the removal of Afrikaans as LOLT and the granting of political rights that the apartheid government had denied the people of South Africa for nearly three decades. The decline of Afrikaans as a result of the uprisings, however, contributed immensely to the rise of English as LOLT in schools for African children.

The political instability that followed the uprisings in African townships also led to the great exodus of African children from these schools. Parents did not want their children to miss school because of the ongoing protests and the detention of African children by the South African Justice department. Police brutality escalated as the children refused to yield to suppression. Omer-Cooper (1994, p.226) states:

In the effort to suppress the upheaval the security forces killed large numbers of young blacks. Hundreds of arrests were made and these were followed by suspiciously large numbers of 'suicides' and unexplained deaths of persons held in police custody. In response large numbers of black youths fled the townships and escaped across South Africa's borders into Botswana and Swaziland.

Children were abducted from the schools by security police and detained without trial for days on end. Christie (1986, p.11) describes the situation in this manner:

As we write this book the education system in South Africa is in crisis. Since 1976 there has been continuing school unrest. Black students have protested against the education system and also against apartheid in general. Students have marched, boycotted classes, burned schools and government offices, and clashed with the police. They have been expelled, injured, detained and killed. And they have demanded changes in the education system. Police have fought with birdshot, bullets and armoured cars...

Overt police brutality and the collapse of education in townships made some parents transfer their children to English medium schools in white residential areas. A number of English medium schools began to open their schools to African children who could be bussed to these schools. This gave birth to the so-called "multiracial" schools in South Africa. However, only a few African parents could afford to take their children to these "open" schools (later known as "Model C" schools).

The final phase of the metamorphosis of language in education policy is marked by the declaration of the eleven official languages policy. In 1996, nine African languages— Setswana, isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, Seswati, Sesotho, Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivhenda—became official languages along with English and Afrikaans. This is a deliberate attempt by the government to make the schools and the country as multilingual as possible (Act 108 of 1996, 4). In principle, therefore, the new Constitution and the new Language- in- Education Policy (LIEP) make provision for the promotion of African languages in schools. The new policy represents a conscious effort by the government to redress the imbalances created by apartheid by giving speakers of indigenous languages the

chance to have access to education in their mother tongues or in other official languages of their choice.

The political evolution of language in education policy has made it difficult for speakers of indigenous African languages to do well in schools. According to the Language-in-Education Policy, "these discriminatory policies have affected either the access of the learners to the education system or their success in it" (Act 27 of 1996, 1). There are several reasons why learners did badly at school. However, the primary reason of the failure was attributed to the dramatic shift from mother tongue instruction to English or Afrikaans at standard five. The common examinations in standard five that would allow learners to move to middle school were in English or Afrikaans. After six years of mother tongue instruction, African learners were tested in a new LOLT. Thus, even though the learners had done well in the first six years of schooling, switching to a new language, English, lowered their performance (Hartshorne 1995, p. 310).

The new policy offers hope for the improvement of the quality of education of African children who have had limited access to English and Afrikaans and who, as a result of this limitation, have suffered set backs in education. Schools as public agencies have the responsibility of implementing the provisions of the Constitution by promoting the equality of languages. This researcher believes that if LIEP is not carried out in schools it will remain merely a policy that exists only on paper. It is against this background that this study was conducted in order to ascertain the language attitude and practices of learners, teachers and parents in the North West Province.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The new language in education policy, which grows out of the Constitutional language policy, is a radical departure from previous policies because of its overt aim of promoting indigenous languages in South Africa. The preamble of the language in education policy document states that:

The inherited language-in-education policy in South Africa has been fraught with tensions, contradictions and sensitivities, and underpinned by racial and linguistic discrimination. A number of these discriminatory policies have affected either the access of learners to the education system and the success within it. The new language in education policy is conceived of as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government's strategy of building a non-racial South Africa. It is meant to facilitate communication across barriers of colour, language and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one's own would be encouraged. (Act 27 of 1996)

Previous rulers in post-colonial Africa were trying to avoid the competition of local languages by choosing colonial languages as official languages. The South African government sought to avoid this post-colonial "inheritance" situation by enshrining a national multilingualism policy – eleven official languages- in its new Constitution:

- (1) The official languages of the Republic of South Africa are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.
- (4) (2) all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably (Act 108 of 1996, p. 4)

The aim of the language policy is therefore to extend the Constitutional stipulation by promoting multilingualism and redressing the inequalities resulting from "linguistic discrimination."

The new language in education policy requires that schools determine their language policy based on the demands of the students, or "learners," as

they are called in South Africa. The Constitution guarantees the rights of learners to be taught in official languages of their choice based on practical considerations, such as the number of learners demanding a particular language (Act 108 of 1996,14). This Constitutional guarantee, albeit well-intentioned, poses new problems for teachers, parents and school governing bodies.

Language planning-policy is neither an integral part of teacher training programs, nor is it included in most higher education programs. Thus most educators have no theoretical foundation in language planning-policy. Further, the fact that teacher training programs did not put an emphasis on the pedagogic implications of mother tongue instruction contributed to the negative attitude toward and the stigma associated with the use of indigenous languages in education. This is bound to pose problems for those who are now faced with the challenge of being active participants in the formulation and implementation of school language policies. The problem of development of materials to meet the requirements for teaching indigenous languages is another challenge that is inherent in the implementation of the policy.

For the policy to be successful, teachers, parents and learners must be active and willing participants in the implementation of the new multilingual language policy. The problem of this study, then, was to investigate the language attitudes and practices of learners, teachers and parents in seven selected public high schools in the North West Province. As a result of major challenges facing schools in the implementation of the new language policy, attitudes of the stakeholders are crucial. The study thus examined the

participants' willingness to implement the new language in education policy. Knowledge of the policy stipulation alone will not guarantee implementation. As Heine (1992, p. 25), observes, there can indeed be a "remarkable gap between the declared policy and the actual patterns of use". The new LIEP requires the use of more than one language of learning and teaching, the offering of additional languages as subjects, immersion or other language maintenance programs, and other means approved by the head of the provincial ministry of education (Act 27 of 1996, 4). It is critical to ascertain the attitudes of participants in light of this policy. Successful implementation of South Africa's new LIEP is crucial if racial and linguistic inequalities are to be redressed.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the language attitudes and practices of public high school learners, teachers, and parents in selected public high schools in South Africa's North West Province. This broad topic was investigated against the principles of the new language in education policy stipulated in Act 108 of the 1996 Constitution. Act 108 of 1996 states that:

Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable (p. 14).

There were three groups of participants in the study, learners, teachers and parents. Questionnaires were administered and face-to-face interviews were conducted to ascertain: 1) the participants' choice of language (s) used in their school; 2) their justification for choosing the language (s); and 3) their knowledge of and views about the language in education policy and the national language

policy stipulated in the Constitution. Observations were also carried out at the seven schools to determine the language practice in curricula, extra-curricula and non-curricula activities.

The new legislative policy was designed to redress linguistic inequalities of the apartheid order. It makes provision for the development and promotion of African languages through their use in all agencies of government including schools. To implement the new LIEP, Act 27 of 1996, 2 details specific guidelines for schools:

Languages of learning and teaching

A learner in a public school shall have the right to instruction in a language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practical.
Schools shall provide more than one language of learning and teaching where the need arises.

Languages as subjects

All schools shall offer at least one approved language as a subject in Grade 1 and Grade 2.
All schools shall offer at least two approved languages, of which one shall be an official language, from Grade 3(std 1) onwards.
All language subjects shall receive equitable time resource allocation.

A language of teaching and learning (LOLT as used in South Africa) refers to any language that is used to teach, what would be called a medium of instruction in other contexts. According to the new LIEP, schools may choose to offer only one LOLT depending on the demands made by the learners or their parents, and at least one language as a subject. Languages as subjects refer to additional languages that a school may offer as a subject rather than a LOLT.

These languages can also be used as LOLT. So, Setswana can be offered by a school both as language as a subject and as LOLT.

The addition of the indigenous languages to language policy and planning in South Africa constitutes a fundamental and radical change in the country's national language policy which for more than five decades recognized only English and Afrikaans as official languages. The nation's boldly expressed policy statement warrants a close examination to measure the degree to which it has been implemented thus far, particularly with regard to African languages, since the policy states that all languages should be treated equally, and that previously disadvantaged languages must be protected and promoted. Schools as agencies of government have a significant role to play in the promotion of African languages. However, the successful implementation of the language in education policy rests on an awareness of the policy stipulations and the willingness of stakeholders— parents, learners, and teachers—to implement the policy.

Thus, the purpose of this study was twofold. First, the findings of this study would inform the feasibility of the realization of the new LIEP with regard to the attitudes of learners, teachers and parents. Second, the study would also reveal whether or not there have been any changes in the language in education policy since the articulation of the new LIEP with regard to languages as subjects and LOLT's.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are four major questions that this study sought to examine:

- 1). What are the participants' preferred languages as subjects and why?
- 2). What are the participants' preferred LOLT's and why?
- 3). What are the participants' preferred languages of extra-curricula and non-curricula activities and why?
- 4). What are the participants' opinions about the new LIEP?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Attitudes: The term is used in this study to refer to preferences. (De Klerk and Barkhuizen , 1998)

Curriculum 2005: A new outcomes- based national school curriculum aiming at lifelong education for all South Africans. (Bengu, 1997, p.i)

Content subject: Any school subject other than languages (e.g. mathematics, history, science, biology.)

DET: Department of Education and Training (former department for Africans)

Dual medium: Two LOLT's are offered at a school and both are used interchangeably in classrooms. See also **parallel medium**.

Flaaitaal: An argot spoken in the townships, mainly, but not exclusively by males. It is a mixture of a variety of local languages with an Afrikaans syntax (Makhudu, 1995). This variety is similar in some way to U.S. Ebonics.

Language as subject: Any language that is offered by a school as part of the curriculum of that school. This language might or might not be used for teaching and learning other subjects.

Language in Education Policy (LIEP): Policy that addresses issues of languages as subjects, language of learning and teaching, norms and standards regarding the protection of individual rights, the rights and duties of the schools, and the rights and duties of the provincial education departments.(Mothata (ed), 2000, p.93)

Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT): A language used in schools in South Africa to teach different school subjects/ medium of instruction.

Language of Wider Communication (LWC): Language used to communicate with members of the school community including parents and members of the larger community and society.

Language Task Group (LANGTAG): A policy advisory group to the national ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. (LANGTAG 1996, p.i)

Learner: Any person studying in a school from K-12. The word is used to replace 'student' or 'pupil'. (Mothata (ed), 2000,p.95).

Medium (Afrikaans/Setswana/English medium): A language that is used as LOLT in a school determines the school type, e.g. Afrikaans medium school.

Member of the Executive Council (MEC): A provincial minister or head of a ministry charged with the responsibility of a government department.

Mother tongue: In this study, mother tongue refers to the language that a speaker uses most in the home. This language is often learned from the mother.

Other languages may be used in the home and therefore may be the speaker's first languages.

Official language: Any of the eleven South African languages declared official by the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, p.4

Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB): An independent statutory body appointed by Parliamentary Senate to monitor the observance of the Constitutional provisions and principles relating to language use. (LANGTAG 1996, p.i)

Parallel medium: Two languages are offered as LOLT's, each group of learners is taught in one of the LOLT's. The LOLT's are not used interchangeably. See also dual medium.

Parents, Students, Teachers Association (PTSA): A voluntary organization concerned with non-curricula aspects of a school such as fundraising and cultural celebrations.

School Act: A policy document that is used as a basis for school governance.

School Governing Body (SGB): A body elected by parents of learners to act on their behalf in the governance of a public school. (Mothata (ed), 2000, p.152).

Subject streams: Grouping of learners by subject studied, for example, Mathematics stream, History stream, Agriculture Science stream.

Language stream: LOLT group in a parallel medium school, English stream, Afrikaans stream (McCormick, 1986).

Township: A ghetto or inner-city area designated for Africans by the former apartheid government of South Africa.

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

The present study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one gives a brief introduction, statement of the problem, historical background of the problem, purpose of the study and a definition of terminology used in the study.

Chapter two presents a literature review of major studies conducted in language policy in general, and language in education policy in particular. The studies range from international to studies carried out in Africa, through research conducted in the Southern African region, to studies carried out in South Africa after the 1994 dispensation.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in the gathering of data for this study. The chapter includes the sample population, the instrumentation and procedures used in data collection.

Chapter 4 focuses on the data presentation and analysis. The key questions in the study are presented and the responses are analyzed.

The final chapter of this study is a presentation of conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research reviewed in this study examines issues pertaining to the feasibility of implementing Language Planning-Policy, particularly in schools. Most of the studies focus on attitudes of stakeholders towards languages that are used as LOLT's. The stakeholders include governments, governmental institutions such as the military, schools, students, teachers, and parents. The binding thread in most of these studies is the fact that they were carried out in multilingual contexts where, with the exception of the Butzkamm and the Smitherman studies, indigenous languages are in competition with already established second or foreign languages. These two common denominators, the multilingual context and second or foreign language element, are pertinent factors in the present study.

The persistence of the use of a foreign language as official language that was evident in the homeland system in South Africa is common elsewhere in the world, especially in Africa. In his argument for the use of African languages in post-colonial Africa, Bokamba (1995) draws four major conclusions from literature on language planning in Africa. The first conclusion that the author cites is that language planning in African countries is not systematic. According to Bokamba,

This conclusion is supported by the fact that most of the language policies in the continent have been imposed, rather than developed systematically by the various governments that have come to power and the private institutions (church and commercial enterprises) that have supported them since the European occupation of the continent in the 17th and 18th century (p.15).

Bokamba further states that the governments allowed the missionaries to use a few selected African languages but that in the 19th century when the governments took over the schools, they imposed the official languages of the colonizers. This is evident in the history of language policy in South Africa where the British, then the Dutch, governments took turns at imposing first English, then Dutch and finally English and Afrikaans throughout the years of minority rule in the country.

The second conclusion that Bokamba draws from the literature on language planning is that language policies were developed and implemented “without significant input from Africans.” Except for consultation with regards to corpus planning, the attitudes and demographics of the speakers of indigenous languages were never consulted. The third conclusion, and perhaps the most relevant to this study, is that:

..post-colonial African states, with a few exceptions, have continued the inherited colonial era language policies in spite of perceived and demonstrated problems with such policies. A number of studies have argued persuasively that the retention of the status quo on the inherited colonial language policies demonstrates both lack of political will on the part of African political elites and the existence of an “elite closure” mentality (p17).

Bokamba’s fourth conclusion is that of the use of “pervasive multilingualism” is an excuse for using imported languages as official languages. African rulers believe that such a multilingual policy will hamper the progress of unity in nation building. Bokamba, however, argues that there is no evidence

that political disunity is a direct result of a policy of multilingualism. Political discontent is a result of multiple problems that are not necessarily linguistic.

Heine (1992, p. 23) also cites the failure of language policies in Africa as a result of the inheritance of colonial policies. The author states that:

Most African nations have retained the overall structure of the language policies which they inherited from the respective colonial power. However, these same nations are nowadays experiencing serious sociolinguistic problems...

Heine distinguishes between endoglossic and exoglossic nations. The former refers to nations that use indigenous languages as official languages, and the latter refers to those nations that use foreign languages as official languages. The author observes that endoglossic nations can be active or non-active. It is in non-active endoglossic nations in which:

...there tends to be a remarkable gap between declared language policy and actual patterns of language use. Promotion of the indigenous language on a national level may be the declared goal of their policy, but most government controlled linguistic communication remains confined to a foreign language, which is either the only national official language, or one of a few of these (p. 25).

The notion of retained colonial language policies observed by Bokamba and Heine is also expressed by Bamgbose(1991, p.69) who argues that language in education policies in post-colonial Africa are marked by this "inheritance situation." The author states:

Language in education provides the best illustration of what has become known as an *inheritance situation*: how the colonial experience continues to shape and define post-colonial problems and policies. Thus, while it would seem that African nations make policy in education, what they actually do is carry on the logic of the policies of the past. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in the very language selected, the roles assigned them, the level at which languages are introduced and the difficulty of changing these.

Bamgbose believes that it is in the language in education policy that the concept of inheritance is more visible. After the government has selected the official language/s through status planning, then codified the chosen language/s in corpus planning, the third phase is acquisition planning. Language in education policy is governed by what the government decides on acquisition planning. The language in education policy in South Africa has gone through all these phases of language planning. The declaration of the eleven languages as official languages by the Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, p.4, marks the status planning stage of the policy. The codification of standard dialects by the language boards marks corpus planning. And finally, the acquisition stage was founded in the articulation of the LIEP document, the School Act provisions, and the role of language in the government's Curriculum 2005 document. The main aim of this present study was to establish whether or not the language in education policy in the North West in particular was "actually carrying on the logic of (apartheid) policies of the past" (Bamgbose 1991, p. 69).

Roy -Campbell (1998,p. 57) states that the inheritance situation was caused by the African rulers' "rationalisation that they (colonial languages) were neutral languages", and were therefore best suited to be used as languages of wider communication (LWCs). However, Bamgbose (1991, p. 23) disputes this concept of neutrality:

While it is true that a LWC does not belong to any ethnic group, it does not follow that it is therefore neutral and acceptable. All languages are culture-laden, and a LWC such as English or French carries with it the values of its native speakers which are shared in some ways with the elites in Africa. But it is also clear that the language does not "unite" the elites, for having used the same language to unite to fight and win

independence, they continue to use it for their ethnic and political rivalries and divisions.

In South Africa, as was the case in Namibia, English was used alongside indigenous languages as the language of the struggle. But, as Bamgbose observes, this language continues to be used for “political rivalry.”

South Africa is a multilingual country, first colonized by the British and then taken over by the Afrikaners, Europeans of Dutch origin. The languages of these two colonial powers have remained the official languages of the country since contact with the West in the 17th century. The studies reviewed in this chapter are therefore relevant for the present study since they provide comparable evidence of what might happen with language policy implementation in South Africa.

The LIEP was articulated in 1996 after the Constitution of the country had been published and made available to the public. The policy was a result of massive consultation with stakeholders, academics and government -instituted bodies such as the National Language Policy Unit (NLP), Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG), Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), and other bodies like the University of Natal's Education Policy Unit and the Centre for Education Policy Development Evaluation and Management (Brown 1997). The then minister of education announced the LIEP in his July 14, 1997 speech. In his statement on the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996), Bengu (1997, p. 2) states:

The underlying principle in our overarching language policy is to maintain home languages while providing access to and the effective acquisition of

additional language(s). Our policy rests upon the right of the learner to choose the language of learning and teaching.

Inherent in this policy is the principle of equality of all eleven official languages in South Africa and the responsibility of the schools to offer these languages to all children according to their choice and preferences. The foundation of this policy is in the Constitution of the country, Act 108 of 1996:

Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. (p.14)

This principle is further articulated in the Curriculum 2005 document issued by the National Department of Education (1997, p.22):

An important underlying principle is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). Hence the Department's position that an additive approach to multilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of our language-in-education policy.

The right to choose the language of teaching is vested with the individual. This right, has, however, to be exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism.

Schools therefore have the responsibility of carrying out the principles laid down in the Constitutional language provision and in the educational policy documents. The decisions that they make about school language policy should reflect the principles articulated in the two documents, the right of the learners to choose the official language/s of learning and teaching, the maintenance of home languages and the promotion of multilingualism.

Lessow-Hurley (1990, p.126), states that in the thirty years of the existence of language policy and planning as a discipline, the initial stages were characterized by the study of language policy and planning that was restricted to

"standardization and dissemination." However, according to Lessow-Hurley, quoting Eastman (1983):

Language planning specialists have begun to consider language problems and solutions and to develop strategies for managing language change within the context of historical, social, economic, and political circumstances of a nation.

The study of language policy and planning in South Africa demands the above approach as a result of the country's historically turbulent development of language policy in general, and language in education in particular. In South Africa, language and education were used by the apartheid government to discriminate against the majority of the country's population, approximately 36 million Africans, Coloreds and Indians. Hence the inclusion of this provision in the Bill of Rights:

In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account-
(a) equity
(b) practicability; and
(c) *the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices* (my own emphasis). (Act 108 of 19996, p.14)

Most of the literature reviewed in the ensuing discussion reflects the contextual dimension mentioned by Eastman. The researchers who carried out the studies considered matters beyond standardization to reflect the political and social dimensions of language policies.

The following studies focused on different perspectives of policy implementation such as attitudes towards languages, particularly African languages, the use of mother tongue instruction in education, and teacher and learner preferences for languages of teaching and learning. The studies

approach one or two aspects of policy implementation and either students/learners only, or teachers only and/or parents only.

In order to realize a proposed policy, it is important to measure the level of interest of the target group of these languages. One such study was conducted in the United States by Smitherman (1998). The researcher reports on a pilot survey that she carried out to determine the interest of African Americans in learning African languages (1998, p. 275). The survey was conducted in five locations, Michigan State University, Wayne State University, Governors' State University, Medgar Evers College and Tennessee Missionary Baptist Church. The researcher used the paper and pencil questionnaire technique. The main questions asked by the researcher were, among others, whether or not the respondents have studied an African language, the method used to study such a language, reasons for studying the language and preferred language. A total of 234 surveys were returned and 86% of the participants were African American, 2% Latino and 12% white.

The results of the survey revealed that only 10.3% of the participants had actually studied an African language. 74.9% of the participants who had not studied an African language before indicated that they would "definitely" want to study an African language. The most common language preferred by the participants was Kiswahili. Wolof, Hausa, Yoruba, and IsiZulu were the other preferred languages. Although Smitherman admits a shortcoming in the paper and pencil method, and the need to refine her method, she concludes that her

survey reveals an enthusiastic interest in the study of African languages among African Americans. She concludes that:

This research project is premised on the conceptualization of language as culture, identity and ideology. Learning an African language is not conceived as an end in itself but as an avenue for African Americans to rediscover themselves through the power of language and as a bridge between Africans in the United States and those in Africa. (p. 280)

Smitherman's study reveals that even in a country where English is a predominant language, there still exists an interest in people of African descent to learn African languages. If this is the case, it could be assumed that people in the continent would also be interested in learning indigenous languages, and not only foreign colonial languages if the Africans in the diaspora show such an interest in African languages. Smitherman's conclusion also reflects a cultural-identity dimension to the study of African languages. In spite of years of separation from Africa, the participants in this study show an eagerness to know their origin through language. In South Africa where English has taken over as the language of commerce and education, it would be interesting to find out if there is any urge on speakers of African languages to use the indigenous languages to maintain their culture amidst the competition resulting from the hegemony of English.

In another related study, Smitherman (2000, p. 297) conducted a public opinion survey of African Americans on the English only policy. The researcher used an instrument that was meant to elicit opinions about the teaching of foreign languages in public schools. The instrument included a question about the legislation of English as the sole official language in the United States.

Smitherman's survey was conducted in five cities that have a high density of African Americans: Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit and Philadelphia. The survey was conducted by telephone. Telephone numbers were chosen at random from census tract areas that were 75% or more African American.

The researcher's report focuses on two cities, Detroit and Atlanta. The total number of the sample in the two cities was 414. The respondents for the English -Only question ranged from 408 to 356. The English-Only question had three parts, a yes/no question on the legislation of the law, the implication of the law and the respondent's attitude towards the law, and the reasons for the attitude.

The results of the Smitherman survey indicated that 41.4% of the respondents were not aware of the English only legislation. However, 64.6% responded "No" to the question of whether or not they would support such a law. Only 29.2% of the respondents in the two cities support the English-Only law. The results also revealed that 53.6% of white respondents in Detroit and Atlanta were opposed to the English-Only law. Smitherman compared her findings with a January, 1991 Gallup Public Opinion Survey. The Gallup survey indicates that 78% of registered voters favored the English-Only law. Smitherman cites three specific shortcomings of the Gallup report including the fact that the study did not target cities that had a significantly high number of African Americans.

Smitherman concludes that there is a need to educate African Americans about the English-Only law. Similarly in South Africa, the effective implementation of the language in education policy will depend to a significant

extent on the teachers, parents and the learners' knowledge and understanding of the provisions of the Constitution and the LIEP. A study that focuses on public opinion, especially of parents, will reveal the level of interest, the preferences and the level of awareness of the provisions of the language policy.

In the Philippines, English and Spanish used to be the most dominant languages until the 1973 Constitution declared English and Pilipino official languages (Pineda 1981, p. 25). The situation in schools in the Philippines was that a lot of learners dropped out of school after grade four, and most of them were, according to Pineda, functionally illiterate. Although two million people could read and write, they could not do so in English, the language in which they were trained at school. The situation was also aggravated by the fact that although the greater number of the population was not literate in English, the laws were in English. There was a distinct class division for those who were literate in English and those who were not. Pineda states:

Whether it was intended or it was a mere consequence, society was stratified as a result of the use of a foreign language. Therefore, it is only the national language that could be a force that would correct the imbalance that was brought about. (p. 29)

The situation in the Philippines has now changed with Pilipino taking over the functions that were conducted in English including medium of instruction. The bilingual language policy in the country allows for the mastery of both English and Pilipino. English is the country's primary foreign language and Pilipino is its national language.

Language planning problems are not only peculiar to countries where European languages were used as official languages. An example of an African

language used to suppress other languages is the Ethiopian imperial government of Haile Selassie and his successors. Cooper (1989, p. 23) argues that the economic inequalities in Ethiopia that led to the revolution were fuelled by Haile Selassie's language policy. Cooper states:

This inequality was enhanced by the exclusive promotion of Amharic during the reign of Haile Selassie. Amharic was the country's official language. It was the sole medium of initial primary-school instruction throughout the country, even in Eritrea in which, until the annexation in 1962, Tigrinya and Arabic had been used as mediums of instruction. Where demand for admission to the first grade exceeded the number of places available, schoolmasters sometimes reduced demand by requiring that entering scholars already know how to read and write Amharic.

Cooper further indicates that Christian missionaries were used to promote Amharicization. It is against this background that Boothe and Walker (1997) studied the implementation of mother tongue instruction in Ethiopia. The researchers reported the positive efforts that the government put forth to help teachers achieve the goal of spreading the use of mother tongue as LOLT across Ethiopia amidst the challenges posed by constraints in human and physical resources. Boothe and Walker adopted a participant-observer role. Their study focused on three major areas: the reason for the initiative, the process of material development and the effectiveness of the entire process of the use of mother tongue instruction (1997, p.2).

According to Boothe and Walker, during the reign of emperors in Ethiopia, Amharic had been enforced as LOLT throughout the country. With the fall of the last emperor, Haile Selassie in 1974, the new government decided to introduce the use of mother tongue in non-formal education. In 1991, the Transitional Government introduced mother tongue instruction in formal education, and in

1992 a policy document supporting mother tongue instruction was produced. A special task group was established to facilitate the translation of the school curriculum from Amharic into other languages. The problems and challenges faced by schools in the implementation of the policy were mainly shortage of human and physical resources. These challenges, however, did not deter the government from promoting the use of mother tongue instruction in schools. The government provided three quarters of the funding for the development of material. According to Boothe and Walker, the enthusiasm of non-Amharic speakers for using their own languages in schools also helped speed up the success of the policy implementation (p16). Boothe and Walker concluded that in spite of the many difficulties that the government faced in implementing mother tongue instruction, the positive attitudes of parents and children, and the government's determination to help, contributed to the success of the implementation program.

The success of the spread of mother tongue instruction in Ethiopian schools reflected the willingness of the people of Ethiopia to implement the new language in education policy. This study also demonstrates that it is not only foreign languages that can be used to oppress indigenous languages. The power of a language to maintain hegemony depends on the economic might associated with that particular language. The elevation of English above other languages in South Africa was associated with job security and economic upward mobility. Similarly, in the case of Ethiopia, it was the language of the emperors, Amharic, that was given the elevated status of official language. Other

indigenous languages were suppressed, and Amharic was at times used as a gatekeeper to deny education, and therefore economic upward mobility, to speakers of other languages.

Another study that investigated the implementation of a post-colonial language in education policy in Africa was carried out in Cameroon by Gfeller and Robinson (1998). The two researchers conducted a study to evaluate the 1980s *Projet de Recherche Operationnelle pour l'Enseignement des Langues au Cameroun* (PROPELCA) (Action Research Project for the Teaching of Languages in Cameroon). The project was an initiative that was geared towards the promotion of the use of mother tongue as LOLT in Cameroon. The experiment introduced "extensive multilingualism" in schools in Cameroon. It was initiated after the government realized that learners did not do well in school and that part of the problem was the use of English and French as LOLT's. The academic performance of Cameroon learners was found to be declining as a result of the use of French and English as LOLT's, so the government initiated the PROPELCA project to investigate the possibility of switching from foreign languages to mother tongue instruction.

The experiment began with two schools, but by the time the report was issued, twenty schools were involved. The research team divided the children into control and experimental groups. In the experimental group, the children were taught the subject matter in mother tongue, and in the control group, they were taught in English or French. The end of term examinations were used as the instrument to measure the effect of the two different approaches to

instruction. The experimental group took the examinations in mother tongue, and the control group took the examinations in English or French. Results indicated that the children who took the examinations in their mother tongue performed significantly better than those who took the same examinations in French or English (the official languages). The conclusion drawn by Gfeller and Robinson was that mother tongue instruction facilitates intellectual development since the learners' understanding of the subject matter deepened when they were taught in mother tongue. The researchers also established that the children preferred mother tongue instruction to second language instruction:

According to the teachers, the children expressed themselves with more facility, first in their own language and subsequently in the official language; generally they preferred being taught in their own language rather than the official language....pupils' attitudes show a preference for this (the use of local languages in instruction) method. (p.25)

As is the case with the new language in education policy in South Africa, it is imperative to determine the choices and preferences of learners so they will cooperate with the LIEP. The failure of the Nationalist government in South Africa to consider the preferences of learners was one of the factors that contributed to the violent uprising in 1976.

Indigenous language instruction sometimes occurs indirectly through code switching and code mixing. The use of mother tongue in classes that use colonial languages is an important aspect in language policy implementation in that it ensures that the languages are used by schools even if this is done indirectly. In a small study on code switching, Butzkamm (1998) analyzed a recorded history lesson in a German grammar school to study the use of mother tongue to

facilitate learning. The class was made up of 25 thirteen-year-old learners who were first language speakers of German. The researcher wanted to examine how the use of German could facilitate the learning and understanding of a history lesson in English. Butzkamm marked the instances where the learners used German and the teacher supplied the corresponding English lexical item. He also noticed that the learners used non-verbal communication cues such as pauses to inform the teacher that they could not express the concept or part of speech in English. Butzkamm concluded that the use of mother tongue in teaching and learning encourages free communication and therefore maximizes learning. The learners were not restricted by the use of a foreign language and could therefore use their mother tongue to facilitate understanding and learning. However, he admits that the analysis does not prove effectiveness but reflects what is possible in a practical situation of code switching (p.97).

One noticeable aspect of language policy implementation is that practice does not always reflect opinions revealed in surveys and oral interviews. Botswana recognizes English as an official language and Setswana as a national language. Botswana was a British colony, and English remained a language of learning and teaching even after independence. Setswana is used in the lower grades. Arthur (1997) conducted a study in Botswana to determine the views of primary school teachers about Botswana's language in education policy. Previously, the policy called for the use of Setswana as LOLT from grade 1 to grade 4, and then a switch to English from grade 5. However, in 1993 the

National Commission to the Botswana government recommended English as the sole LOLT in schools.

There were 55 participants (16 males, 39 females) in Arthur's survey, all primary school teachers drawn from three regions in Botswana, two of which are predominantly Setswana speaking, and one that is predominantly Ikalanga. The Setswana first language speakers made up 47.3% of the total number of participants, the Ikalanga mother tongue users also comprised 47.3% of the sample; the remaining 5.5% were speakers of other languages. The researcher used a questionnaire as his main tool to elicit teacher attitudes towards the use of Setswana or English as LOLT in primary schools in the country. He also observed some classes to try and match what they teachers said about the use of English as sole LOLT and what they actually did in class. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions about the use of Setswana and English as LOLT's.

The results of the Arthur study revealed that 56% of the respondents did not want Setswana as the sole LOLT, and 44 out of 55 respondents supported the use of English as sole LOLT throughout primary school. Arthur observed some classes during his research and noticed that teachers did a lot of code - switching between English and Setswana. He writes:

Secondly, it emerged from my study that teachers respond creatively to the communicative challenges they face in their classrooms through the officially frowned-on strategy of code switching between languages. Teachers are therefore not merely passive agents in the provision of education but 'active intermediaries between state concerns and student aspirations' (Davies 1988: 293). *They occupy a unique vantage point from which to comment on the translation of policy into practice, dealing as they do on a daily basis with the discrepancies between curriculum as planned and the curriculum in action. These were the reasons for my decision to solicit teachers' views on educational language policy.* (my own emphasis)

The researcher concluded that even if teachers showed an overwhelming support for English as LOLT, in actual practice, they used both languages, Setswana and English. The importance of soliciting teachers' views cannot be overemphasized since, as Arthur observes, they are responsible for the actualization of principles in policy documents.

The attitude of students and learners in the use of indigenous languages in instruction is as important as that of their teachers. The language policy situation in Zimbabwe is similar to that in other parts of the region, with regards to the status of indigenous languages in comparison to English. Chiwome and Thondlhana carried out a survey in Zimbabwe to determine the attitudes of teachers and students toward the use of Shona as LOLT in the teaching of Shona. As a result of the policy of the colonial government, English was the sole medium of instruction for all courses at university, including the two major languages in the country, Shona and isiNdebele. Chiwome and Thondlhana believe that attempts to reverse the situation in post-colonial Zimbabwe is:

an arduous one because of the negative effects of the colonial education policy, which marginalised Shona and Ndebele by making English the official language, as well as medium of instruction for all subjects ... in all educational institutions. In the minds of students, Shona was associated with the negative aspects of social change such as unemployment and poverty, whereas proficiency in English was erroneously equated with intellectual competence. Many concepts made familiar through the medium of English tended to be expressed in English rather than Shona, which prevented the development of linguistic and analytical abilities in the mother tongue (1995, p. 248).

Chiwome and Thondlhana chose Shona because it is their mother tongue and both had gone through the system of education they describe in the study;

both also taught high school and university in this system. The participants in the Chiwome and Thondlhana study were 143 first year university students in the department of African languages who were reading Shona, 25 high school teachers of Shona, and university lecturers from the departments of African Languages and Literature, Linguistics, and Curriculum Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. The researcher chose the students on the basis of:

... their apparently genuine interest in the subject, pursuing it to university level , which made them more likely to give reliable information about their experiences. (p. 251)

The researchers used a questionnaire for the students and structured face to face interviews with teachers to corroborate the students' responses. The questionnaire was meant to reveal the students' general attitudes toward Shona by eliciting the students' high school learning experience with Shona. The interviews with the teachers included their use of Shona as a medium of teaching to teach the language itself. The questions also included the students' attitudes towards the use of Shona and what languages the teachers encouraged the students to use when there was an option between Shona and English.

The results of the survey showed a general tendency to use both Shona and English as media of instruction in high school whereas at university there was "a marked preference for Shona over English as a medium of instruction" (p252). Some of the advantages mentioned for using Shona as a language of instruction were that topics in cultural studies were easy to discuss in Shona, the language fosters understanding, students express themselves better in Shona and rote learning is prevented. The major disadvantage of using Shona was

mainly a result of lack of formal standard register for the language, the influence of colonial attitudes towards African languages and the lack of encouragement from the Ministry of Education. Also, some teacher participants believed that the students' attitudes towards Shona were influenced by their teachers' attitudes and professional competence.

Chiwome and Thondlhana affirm what Arthur observed about teacher practice in classrooms:

It is not uncommon to find Shona courses being taught in both languages in lecture rooms. This again, is a pragmatic decision: lecturers feel that certain issues need to be presented in Shona, and then evaluated in English. Essential as it may be, such practice can undermine the image of the national language in the minds of the students and give them the impression that serious discussion cannot be carried out in Shona. (p. 256)

In another Zimbabwean study, Mparutsa, Thondlhana and Crawhall surveyed the language attitudes of secondary school students in the country. The investigation stemmed from earlier studies conducted before Ngara (1982) and the Chiwome and Thondlhana (1992) study discussed above. The study was aimed at examining post-independence language attitudes. Mparutsa, Thondlhana and Crawhall chose 100 secondary school participants for their study. The researchers' choice of population was based on three main reasons: 1) this was the first generation of post-war Zimbabweans who were expected to have "internalised some of the changes in the curricula," 2) the participants' ages could be compared to those in the Ngara studies, and 3) the researchers had relatively easy access to the participants through the University of Zimbabwe's Open Day which drew students from all parts of the country.

The researchers observed that there are inherent contradictions in a study such as theirs because when examining attitudes, there is bound to be a discrepancy between " ..what people say they believe, what they say they do, what they actually do, and perhaps even what they actually believe may all be different from each other" (1992, p.239). The researchers also believe that these contradictions in their country stemmed from ideological issues:

The war of liberation put great emphasis on pride of indigenous culture and language. The use of the indigenous languages was a counter-ideological instrument to be used against colonial ideological hegemony, and its linguistic instruments English and Chilapalapa (Fanagalo). Yet, since independence, English has remained the *de facto* language of power and economic advancement. *School curricula reflect this contradiction in a number of ways. Further it is possible for that teachers reproduce this contradiction through their own attitudes and actions. (my own emphasis) (238)*

Mparutsa, Thondlhana and Crawhall used a two-part questionnaire to elicit the participants' attitudes and usage. Section A of the questionnaire contained seven questions of usage and Section B five questions of attitude. The usage questions included the language of mass media that the respondents preferred, the language of the country's information boards (road signs, etc), and the medium of instruction that they preferred. The attitude questions included the association of English with a high level of education, the equality of Shona and/or IsiNdebele with English, and the importance and usefulness of Shona and IsiNdebele. The results of the investigation revealed that even though the participants believed in the importance of national languages, 83% said they would not use them as media of instruction. The reasons given for this response were the common ones of international intelligibility, lack of resources for African

languages and job opportunities and career advancement. On the question of national languages used for national information boards, 71% said yes. The attitude scores were higher than usage scores in that 95% of the respondents said all educated Zimbabweans should know something about literature in the national languages; 69% said national languages and English are equal; 83% said all educated Zimbabweans should speak English; and 96% said national languages were important and useful, and should be taught at all levels of education.

The researchers admit the flaws in their instruments by stating that questionnaires should be backed by structured interviews. They also said that they used questions that were used previously and noticed that these questions elicited stereotypical responses:

The questions that were asked in this pilot study are questions which other researchers in the area have been asking. There is a clear indication that some of these questions, especially those on attitude, have in the past and even now elicited mere stereotyped responses and cliches. There is, therefore, a need to design a better instrument that will enable us to obtain more reliable understanding of language attitudes in Zimbabwe. (p. 239).

Many theorists assert that African languages are inefficient as LOLT's because these languages do not have terminology that can incorporate foreign concepts. In an attempt to examine this notion, Prah (1993) conducted a survey among 720 university students in Southern Africa to determine their attitudes toward and perceptions of African languages as media of instruction in science and technological education. The researcher also sought to solicit the respondents' views on the pros and cons of using indigenous languages in teaching science and technology. Prah's study addresses similar issues

presented in the Chiwome and Thondlhana study cited above except that Prah's investigation extends to the teaching of science and technology.

The subjects in Prah's study were students from six universities in Southern Africa: Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Western Cape, Transkei and Lesotho. The majority of these students were between 16 and 25 years of age. The researcher used a questionnaire to elicit the students' perceptions and attitudes. Prah's instrument covered the following areas:

- 1) whether or not scientific and technological ideas could be rendered in African languages,
- 2) if the respondents' understanding of science and technology would improve if they were taught in African languages,
- 3) why the teaching of science and technology had not been rendered in African languages,
- 4) when such teaching in indigenous languages could occur, and
- 5) the negative social effects of using African languages to teach science and technology.

The results were as follows: 76% responded yes to question 1 above; 91% responded yes to question 2; the reasons given for question 3 included scarcity of resources, the degrading of African languages by colonial powers, the current absence of expertise in teaching science and technology through African languages and the unequal status of languages; answers to question 4 included demands from grassroots, greater democracy in Africa, when Africans have confidence in themselves and their histories and when languages are given

equal status; question 5 responses included the increasing significance of English as an international language, the cost involved in the program, and the possibility of ethnic tensions.

The results of Prah's study revealed that a significant number of students believe that their language is adequate enough to be employed as LOLT in the teaching of content subjects. The researcher's conclusion is that African students have a positive attitude towards the use of African languages as LOLT's and that they "would support the effort of translating and rendering of scientific and technological ideas into African languages as an instrument for the achievement of social development" (Prah 1993, p. 70).

The implementation of the new language policy in South Africa faces similar challenges to those faced by countries elsewhere in the world and particularly in Africa as the above studies demonstrate. The language planners and the people responsible for the execution of such policy can draw from the experiences of other countries on the Continent and elsewhere in the world such as in the Philippines and in India. The "legal force" that Phillipson (1992) decries in other countries has been guaranteed, at least in principle, by the provisions of the South African Constitution and the LIEP document. Research conducted in South Africa will therefore need to be matched to the principles laid down by these two documents.

In a study similar to that by Prah (1993) and Chiwome and Thondlana (1992), Mmusi *et. al.* (1998) conducted a survey at the University of the North (UNIN) to determine the LOLT preference at their university. The survey was

meant to be representative of all members of the university community, students, academic and support staff as well as administrators. The researchers wanted to be certain that all stakeholders at UNIN were surveyed and that their opinions were expressed.

The researchers used a questionnaire to elicit the opinions of the UNIN community with regard to language preferences for curricula, extra-curricula and non-curricula communication. They made a distinction between the LOLT's and the languages of wider communication, the former meant for teaching and learning, and the latter for extra-curricula and non-curricula communication. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed through the deans' offices, to the union office and to administrators and supporting staff.

The results of the survey revealed that "an overwhelming majority chose English as the language of instruction. Northern Sesotho and XiTsonga followed second" (Mmusi et al 1998, p.3). Although the results revealed a preference for English as LOLT, nonetheless, the survey indicated that respondents preferred a multilingual policy for extra-curricula and non-curricula communication. The researchers recommend that the use of African languages outside the lecture halls should be encouraged. One way of achieving this end would be extending the use of indigenous languages to administrative and academic communication, that is, for extra-curricula and non-curricula communication.

The researchers concede that their findings were limited because the majority of the student respondents were from the faculty of Arts.

In an attempt to examine the effectiveness of the new language policy in South Africa, De Klerk and Barkhuizen conducted research on the South African National Defense Force, specifically the Sixth South African Infantry Battalion (6SAI) in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape Province. The main aim of the study was to determine language practices and attitudes toward the new language policy within this former predominantly Afrikaans government structure. The research also sought to ascertain the official language policy of the Battalion.

The researchers used 279 subjects from the Battalion's three companies in the study. All eleven official languages were represented by the sample. The researchers used three techniques of data collection: questionnaires, interviews and observations. The research was conducted in English even though 34% of the participants were mother tongue speakers of isiXhosa. The questionnaire was meant to elicit bio-data, the in-depth interviews were meant to establish the subjects' belief about what the actual language policy is, and the observations were meant to corroborate the information provided through the other two tools (De Klerk and Barkhuizen 1998, p. 221).

The results indicated that the Battalion was formulating its own language policy and that it had chosen English as the language of administration, in principle. In practice however, Afrikaans continued to be the dominant language of the South African Defense Force. The strength of this research, although not conducted in education, is the use of three methods for data collection and the representation of all the eleven languages in the country.

Education research in South Africa tends to be conducted at Historically White Universities (HWU's) or by members of these institutions. This bias is reflected by the number of articles in refereed journals. There is therefore a need to conduct research in other provinces that do not have HWU's. The study by Verhoef (1998) is presently most probably the only recorded research in language in education policy issues outside HWU's. Verhoef conducted a small scale study among African high school learners in the North West Province to determine their perceptions towards English and African languages. The four major languages in the province are Setswana, isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans.

The researcher used 145 African learners from unspecified high schools in the North West. According to Verhoef, the sample represented 8% of the total number of learners in the province. The survey was conducted in rural areas; therefore there were no English first language speakers in the sample. Verhoef used the questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. She then did a random selection of 10% of the respondents to conduct in-depth face-to-face interviews. A structured questionnaire was used in the interviews.

The results of the Verhoef study revealed that 64.9% of the respondents supported the use of English as LoLT, 64.7% chose English as a favorite subject and Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho and isiXhosa followed in that order. The face-to-face interview results revealed that learners preferred English because of the manner in which it was taught by teachers, its economic benefits, and its use as a lingua franca in the country. The results also revealed that 68% of the interviewees were proud of the official status of indigenous languages but

regarded the status as "having only symbolic value" (Verhoef 1998, p.190).

Respondents were grateful for the elevated status of indigenous languages but also recognized the functional value of English. High school learners were the only participants in this study, and the study involved only African children.

The studies reviewed in the preceding discussion dealt with various aspects of language planning-policy with special emphasis on language in education policy. Apart from the Arthur study, there has not been much research involving the three major stakeholders in policy matters—parents, learners and teachers. In their review of Heugh, Smitherman and Thiba (1998, p. 322) state that it is important to involve the main stakeholders, i.e. the speakers of indigenous languages, in the study and discussion of matters pertaining to language policy and planning in South Africa. It is the exclusion of the speakers of indigenous languages in South Africa that resulted in ill-conceived language policies of the pre-1994 era, particularly in education. In South Africa in particular, there is a need to conduct research into the implementation of the new language in education policy to establish whether or not the major beneficiaries of the policy— parents, learners and teachers—are supportive of the new policy. Further, as Arthur points out, much of the research concerning policy is done outside the classroom; however, it is in the classroom that actual policy implementation can be observed. There is a great need therefore to investigate language in education policy on site, at schools, and in actual classrooms. The opinions of the speakers of indigenous languages is a very important dimension of research into the implementation of language in education policy in South

Africa given the politics of divide and rule and exclusion that characterized the apartheid era. The importance of the role of speakers of indigenous languages, ordinary people that get affected by decisions taken on their behalf, is central to research in language policy and planning.

The literature reviewed in this chapter points to the possibilities of the realization of post-colonial language policy, and the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and learners towards the use of African languages as LOLT's. However, attitudes and perceptions do not always reveal actual practice. The purpose of this present study is therefore to ascertain the attitudes as well as the actual practices of those involved in language in education policy. The study surveyed three different groups of stakeholders, learners, teachers and parents. Similarities and differences of attitudes and practice of these three groups will impact the realization of language in education policies.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Overview of Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of South Africa's new Language in Education Policy. The study concentrated on seven high schools in the North West Province. The Province was chosen for two major reasons. First, the researcher was born, lives and teaches in the Province and she is therefore more familiar with the area than with any other province in the country. The second reason is that prior to 1994, the North West was divided into a Bantustan and the Republic of South Africa. There were, therefore, three separate departments of education, National Education for White, Colored and Indians, the Department of Education and Training (DET) for African children, and Bophuthatswana Ministry of Education for children designated to be citizens of the Bantustan. The different education departments in apartheid South Africa had racial and linguistic implications in that the languages in education were determined by the race of the learners and the departments to which they belonged. After the 1994 elections, the three departments were merged into one. Any changes in language in education policy that might have taken place as a result of this amalgamation would be relevant to this study.

The goal of this study was a broad scale assessment of the language preferences and practices of high school learners, teachers and parents in the Mafikeng and Vryburg districts. The initial conception was a triangulation study, combining written questionnaires, classroom observations, and in-depth

interviews. However, once the researcher began fieldwork, it became apparent that there were a number of obstacles working against the full and rigorous implementation of this methodological conception. Thus the original design was modified in the direction of an ethnographic study. The obstacles encountered reflect the political history of South Africa, the continuing significance of race, lingering racial tension, and the legacy of traditional cultural values.

Despite the democratization of South Africa in 1994 and efforts to usher in a "new" South Africa, the history of racialized, separate education has left a legacy of racial tension. This is reflected in the North West Province as well as elsewhere in the country. The town of Vryburg in particular has been in the media since the racial clashes at school VC in 1997. The school was a former white Afrikaans only medium school that did not admit African children until 1997. The first African children to be admitted at the school were later attacked by a group of white parents and instructed to leave the school. The intervention of the Provincial government and the Lawyers for Human Rights did very little to quell the racial tensions. In 1999 the school appointed the first African vice principal and 140 African learners remained in the 600 learner school. In order to accommodate African learners, the school introduced English as LOLT and Setswana as a second language as a subject. White and African children are taught in separate classes since the LOLT's are parallel media (languages that are used separately and not interchangeably). All African learners are taught through the medium of English and all white learners are taught through

Afrikaans. No African learners participate in the school's sports activities and the school governing body (SGB) is all white.

Vryburg is a completely racially divided town and race relations in the town are very strained. An incident that happened early on at school VC is illustrative of this tension. On the day the researcher was picked up after delivering the letter of request to the principal, a parent and a learner deliberately stood in the way to make it difficult for the researcher and her brother/driver to pass.

At school MB, also a former white only Afrikaans medium school, and like school VC, the site of early resistance to accepting African learners, the principal informed the parents at the SGB elections about the researcher's request for volunteers for interviews. Not a single one of the white parents volunteered to participate in the study. (Nor did any Colored parents).

As a result of the racial tension in the North West Province in general, and the two districts involved in this study in particular, it was very difficult to access white parents. Thus the research sample in this study includes no white parents and does not reflect their views, as speakers of English and Afrikaans home languages, about language in education policy. Although this is a limitation, in that the study's results cannot be said to reflect the attitudes and practices of white parents, it is important to note that the overwhelming majority of the population in the North West Province (and in South Africa nationally) are not whites but Africans, who have as their home languages not English or Afrikaans but African languages. In the North West, only one percent of the population has

English as a home language, and only eight percent (including Coloreds) use Afrikaans as a home language (CSSSA, 1996).

Another major obstacle encountered involved the use of the consent form. While it is standard practice in the U.S., for Africans in the South African context, the consent form was symbolic of apartheid era practices. Signed statements obtained under questionable circumstances were used against Africans to charge them with alleged acts of treason, or inciting others to acts of violence against the State. Requiring participants to sign a document in order to participate in a study was a painful reminder of signed "confessions" and tricks used by the security police in the old apartheid South Africa. Two parents who were also government officials, one in the office of the Provincial Minister, the other a Director in the Education Ministry, refused to sign the form and stated that they appreciated what the researcher was doing and therefore did not see the reason for filling out a form.

Many potential participants were put off by the consent form, not only because of the wariness as a result of the history of racial oppression in South Africa, but also because of cultural conventions about verbal agreements and concerns about trustworthiness. In the local African culture, giving one's word is an act of honor and commitment. The view that "your word is your bond" is deeply held in this cultural context. The consent form made potential participants suspicious of the researcher's intentions, and the requirement that the form be signed reflected a lack of trust between participants and researcher. The researcher in this study experienced a lot of last-minute withdrawal from

participation. In fact, one would-be participant said, “Do I have to sign a form for *you*, even *you*?” Participants could not understand why they needed to sign a form for the researcher when they had given her their word to participate in the study.

It was not possible in this study to enlist a white co-researcher to overcome the barrier posed by racial tension, and thus no white parents were interviewed. With Africans and Colored, the researcher sought to maximize participation by conducting interviews within the confines of the questionnaire, by allowing teacher-participants to talk off the record, and by not audio or video recording the interviews and observations. Further, the questionnaire was prepared in several languages to accommodate the preference of the participant, and the interviews were conducted in the participant’s language of choice. Nonetheless, most teachers did not return the questionnaires, and several parents did not honor the interview appointments. The number of parent and teacher participants is considerably smaller than originally projected and the interviews more limited in scope than anticipated.

Despite the limitations discussed above, the study does reveal critical data about views of language in education in the North West Province.

Design of Study

Language preferences and practices, both in and outside of the classroom, and opinions about the new Language in Education Policy were assessed. Three main stakeholders were studied: learners, teachers and parents. These three groups of participants were chosen in order to form a more

balanced picture of language attitudes and policy implementation than had been the case in previous studies. For example, work by Verhoef (1998) focused on language attitudes of learners only. Arthur (1997) focused on teachers only. Mparutsa, Thondhlana and Crawhall (1992, p.239) focused on learners and teachers. Very few studies pay attention to the attitudes and role of parents in language in education matters. Smitherman's study of African Americans' attitudes toward the study of African languages was an exception in this regard; it was aimed at language attitudes of what she called "everyday people" (Smitherman, 1998), which included parents.

In South Africa in particular, the role of parents is strengthened by the provisions of the Constitution that empower parents to take an active part in the formulation of language in education policy, a right that they had been explicitly denied by the apartheid government. Parents form an important part of the school community in the new dispensation. Both the LIEP and the School Act demand that parents, through School Governing Bodies (SGB's) and Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA's), make major decisions concerning school administration and implementation of policies so that children are not in any way discriminated against. Parents are expected by the schools to make decisions on behalf of their minor children concerning languages choices. It is therefore necessary to take into consideration the role of parents in language in education policy matters.

It was not only crucial to assess language attitudes. Language practices were also critical in investigating the realization of the new Language-in-

Education Policy. Attitudes may reveal what people think or feel about a certain topic, or their intentions towards a topic, what some theorists call "behavioral intent." However, there is often a discrepancy between intention and actual behavior. In their study of attitudes and language usage in Zimbabwe. Mparutsa, Thondhlana and Crawhall (1992, p. 239) observed that " ...what people say they believe, what they actually do, and perhaps what they actually believe may all be different from each other." Therefore in this study actual language practices of learners, teachers and parents were studied.

To maximize reliable information gathering, ethnographic observations were combined with survey questionnaires, which were administered in writing to students and eight teachers and verbally to parents to counter any possible problem of literacy. Additionally, the teachers whose classrooms were observed were interviewed using the questions from the written questionnaire. The survey and observations took place over a ten-week period from the last week of January to the last week of March, 2000.

The questionnaire was a three-page, three-part survey. The first part consisted of three questions aimed at eliciting the participants' gender, home language and other languages they spoke. There was no question about race of participant since it is now illegal in South Africa to ask about a person's race except under certain well-defined conditions as spelled out in the new legislation. The second part of the questionnaire was aimed at eliciting the participants' preferences for languages offered as subjects, languages preferred as LOLT(s), and languages preferred for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities. The

third part focused on opinions about the Language in Education Policy (LIEP). (See Appendix 3, "Language in Education Survey.") The data revealed from the surveys is rich and informative because the questions were open-ended, allowing for original responses. Mparutsa *et. al.* (1992) commented that survey questions in language attitude studies are usually constructed in such a way that the responses are cliched and stereotypical. The instrument used in this study was designed to avoid this shortcoming by allowing participants to articulate their own responses, rather than choosing from options that the researcher constructed.

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher at each school. The maximum time it took to complete the questionnaire was twenty minutes. The researcher distributed the questionnaire herself, stayed in the same classroom as the participants to answer any questions related to the questionnaire, and collected the questionnaire herself. A total of 171 learners and eight teachers completed the questionnaires, and an additional fourteen teachers were surveyed through interviews using the questions identical to those on the questionnaire. Twenty parents answered the same questions in face-to-face interviews.

Research Sites

The sample was drawn from seven public schools in the Mafikeng and Vryburg districts of the North West Province. The researcher chose public schools because the LIEP is directed toward public schools and not that much at private schools. Also the majority of the country's learners are in public schools rather than private schools. The selection of the schools was based on the

LOLT's of the schools prior to the articulation of the new LIEP. There were three dominant LOLT's in schools in the Province: Setswana, Afrikaans and English. However, Setswana was not an officially recognized LOLT. Further, a significant number of learners were IsiXhosa mother tongue speakers but IsiXhosa was not an officially recognized LOLT. In terms of the general language use in the Province, the aforementioned languages are the four dominant language groups. Additionally, Sesotho and IsiZulu are also languages of significant presence in the Province.

The original number of schools intended for this study was six; however, another school, a Colored Afrikaans medium school, was added as a safety measure in case access was denied to one of the two former white Afrikaans medium schools chosen for the study. In fact only on the third visit to the said white Afrikaner school did the principal grant the researcher access to the school. The seven schools were divided into LOLT's in this manner: 1) three former Afrikaans medium, 2) two former English medium, and 3) two former DET schools (i.e., schools established for African learners in apartheid South Africa) where the official LOLT was English and Setswana was an unofficial LOLT.

The selection of three different media schools was intended to reveal whether or not there had been any changes in the LOLT policy since the introduction of the new Language in Education Policy (LIEP). The schools that were selected for this study are located in Mafikeng, the capital of the North West Province where the researcher lives and works, and Vryburg, the researcher's birth place and one of the two most right wing conservative towns in the

Province. The location of each school reflects the former apartheid Group Areas Act that dictated the residential areas of citizens according to race. One DET school is in the village designated for AmaXhosa, the other is in a township (ghetto). The Afrikaans Colored school is in a Colored township, the one English medium school is in what used to be the capital of Bophuthatswana, the other is in an Indian residential area. Both former Afrikaans schools are in town (in South Africa, a former white only residential area).

The Mafikeng schools referred to in this study as MA, MB and MC were, in the past, English/DET medium (MA), Afrikaans medium (MB) and English medium/Model C – a school that accepted learners of all racial groups in apartheid South Africa- (MC). The schools were referred to in this study by symbols to protect the identity of the schools and to ensure confidentiality in the consent forms. The MA school was a school meant for African children and it remains mainly African even after the 1994 dispensation. The school is situated in a predominantly IsiXhosa speaking rural area 15km outside Mafikeng and has a total number of 960 learners and thirty-two teachers. Sixty percent of the learners are first language speakers of IsiXhosa.

The MB school is a former white only, Afrikaans medium school in the city of Mafikeng. The school first opened its doors to African learners in 1996. The 470 learners are a racially mixed group of Setswana, English and Afrikaans first language speakers. The school has nineteen teachers, sixteen white Afrikaans first language speakers, two Colored Afrikaans first language speakers and one Setswana first language teacher. The school introduced English as LOLT to

accommodate English and Setswana first language speakers. Afrikaans and English are now used as dual LOLT's (two languages used interchangeably in teaching and learning) at the school. English remains the only language as a subject at the school.

The third school, MC, is a former Model C school, which means a school that admits learners of all racial groups. It is situated in the former Bophuthatswana capital of Mmabatho (now Mafikeng). The school was built for children of the Bantustan cabinet ministers, white civil servants and other professionals who could afford to pay the fees. Although the school was public, i.e. supported by public funds, admission was restricted. Admission tests were administered to potential applicants and a high grade in English was a must. The school was explicitly English medium and continues to be so. The 43 member staff is racially mixed: white, Indian, African, and Colored. The learner population is 960 and it is becoming increasingly African. The school has Afrikaans, French, English, and Setswana as languages as subjects.

The Vryburg district was chosen because there has been a lot of racial tensions and conflict caused by the refusal of the white Afrikaans medium schools to admit African children. The latest of these tensions was reported in the "Saturday Star" of May 27, 2000, less than eight weeks after one of the schools was visited as part of this study. In this study the four Vryburg district schools are referred to as VA, VB, VC and VD. VA is a Colored (or "Kleurling" South African terminology for people of racially mixed descent) school and it was used as a second choice school since denial of access to the white Afrikaner

school had been anticipated. The teaching staff is predominantly Colored and there are two Indian teachers. The learners are also Colored with a few African children. The school's former LOLT was Afrikaans and it still is. English is the only language as a subject offered by this school.

VB is an English medium school that has a predominantly Indian population. Of the fifteen teachers, nine are Indian, two are white and four are African. The school has twelve grades, one to twelve, and an average of twenty-five learners per class. It is the first school in the Vryburg district to accept African children. Afrikaans is the only language as a subject offered by the school and this has been the case since its inception.

VC is a former Afrikaans medium school that has 600 learners of which only 140 are African. There are twenty-six teachers who are predominantly Afrikaans speaking whites, a few Coloreds, a few Africans including the vice-principal and one Indian. English and Afrikaans are two LOLT's at the school. The two languages are used as parallel medium, i.e. two LOLT's used separately and not interchangeably. Setswana and English are the two languages as subjects at the school.

VD is a typical DET inner-city school that is almost entirely African with the exception of four Indian children and one Afrikaner teacher. There are 1058 learners and thirty-seven teachers. For 21 years, this was the only high school in the township for thousands of African children. The second high school was opened five years ago in 1996. The school uses English as the official LOLT, but

some teachers use Setswana interchangeably with English. Both Afrikaans and Setswana are offered as languages as subjects.

The following table shows a summary of the participants by their schools as well as their LOLT before the introduction of the new LIEP:

TABLE 1: Participants

SCHOOL	LEARNERS	TEACHERS	PARENTS	LOLT (-'96)
MA	43	05	05	ENG/DET
MB	31	02	02	AFR/WHITE
MC	18	02	02	ENG/MIXED
VA	15	03	03	AFR/COL.
VB	25	02	03	ENG/W & IND
VC	14	05	02	AFR/WHITE
VD	25	03	03	ENG/DET

Key: ENG/DET = English for African learners, AFR/WHITE = Afrikaans white only, ENG/MIXED = English for racially and linguistically mixed learners, AFR/COL . = Afrikaans for Colored learners, ENG/W& IND = English for White and Indian learners.

These seven schools, although selected mainly on the basis of their former LOLT, also represented an inner -city (township in South African terminology) population, rural population and urban population. Since language policies in different schools were based on apartheid principles of segregation and racial and linguistic exclusion, the new policies should reflect changes because of the changing nature of the linguistic and racial compositions of the schools. Also, DET language policy dictated three languages, whereas the new policy allows two languages. In order to answer the research questions in this study, therefore, it was necessary to investigate language policy at three different types of language media schools.

Research Sample – Parents

The new LIEP has made the role of parents in schools very important. The election of SGB's and PTSA is compulsory for each school. Parents are expected to play an active role in the education of their children. The School Act and the LIEP document specify that parents and learners must make decisions concerning the learners' LOLT and language/s as subject/s. Schools are bound by law to meet demands made by parents on behalf of their children with regards to choice of language, as much as it is practical.

Twenty parents were interviewed for this study, four males and sixteen females. The parents were approached by the researcher at various locations. Some parents were met at the principals' offices when they came to pay fees or visit schools. Others were met at SGB elections and PTSA meeting. The researcher explained her research to parents and requested them to volunteer. As already stated, all parents were interviewed face-to-face rather than given written surveys because of the possibility of low level literacy for some parents. The interviews were carried out in languages preferred by parents: Afrikaans, Setswana, English, Sesotho and/ or IsiZulu. The interviews were conducted from January to March, 2000. The questions in the interview were identical to those in the questionnaire administered to learners. The interviews were no longer than twenty minutes per parent. Parents chose the language in which they preferred to be interviewed.

The parents at school MA were interviewed after a PTSA meeting. Five parents, all women were interviewed, on a one-to-one basis. Three of the

parents were interviewed in Setswana, one in Afrikaans and Setswana, and one in IsiZulu. For school MB, the two parents were interviewed on a one-to-one basis at the home of one of the parents. The parents are members of a women's economic empowerment club that was co-founded by the researcher and they chose to be interviewed at home. The parents were interviewed on a one-to-one basis. Both parents were female and they used Setswana and English code mixing. The one parent was interviewed after an SGB election meeting. Both the researcher and the parent used English, Sesotho and Afrikaans code mixing. The other parent was interviewed on Sunday at church and the interview took place in Setswana almost entirely.

Three parents volunteered for interviews on March 20, 2000. They were all Colored females and they were interviewed in Afrikaans at the school. For school VB, three parents were interviewed at their individual homes, all female Setswana first language speakers. All three interviews were conducted in Setswana, Afrikaans and English code mixing. Although it was very difficult to get parents from school VC, the researcher finally got two female volunteers. Both parents were IsiXhosa first language speakers who also speak fluent Setswana. The interview was conducted in Setswana. The three volunteers for school VD were also interviewed at their homes. They were all male Setswana first language speakers. The interviews were conducted in the local Setswana dialect.

Research Sample – Teachers

A total of twenty-two teachers participated in this study, ten males and twelve females. Eight teachers completed the written questionnaire; fourteen who were observed in class were interviewed face-to-face using questions identical to the questionnaire administered to learners. The classroom observation was meant to reveal the actual LOLT's used, rather than just what the teachers said they used. Several teachers talked to the researcher off the record about the new LIEP, but very few were willing to speak on the record about the policy. The questionnaires were distributed during tea breaks to teachers who volunteered; most teachers said they needed time to go through the questionnaires. However, there was a general reluctance to complete the questionnaires and/or to be interviewed about the questions of language policies. The teachers who initially volunteered to participate in the study declined after being requested to sign the consent form. The teachers became suspicious because, as mentioned earlier, in apartheid South Africa, information in written form was sought from people and later used against them in courts or to convict people for alleged acts of inciting violence against the State. Not very many teachers nor parents were therefore willing to put their signature on the consent form. In fact, the whole idea of a consent form was foreign to most participants, and it was therefore judged with suspicion.

Research Sample: Learners

A total of 171 grade ten learners participated in the completion of the questionnaire, 85 males and 86 females. The teachers who were observed

decided which class would complete the questionnaire: language, science or mathematics class. The learners completed the questionnaire while the researcher was in class so she could provide answers to questions raised about the content of the questionnaire. As stated in the discussion of the instrument, the completion of the questionnaire took a maximum of twenty minutes. The learners were all of the same age group, fifteen to seventeen years old. The number of participants per school varied, depending on whether or not it was a former DET, Model C or Afrikaans medium school. The numbers were highest at DET schools and lowest at former Afrikaans and English only schools. In fact, the highest number of participants, forty-three, was at school MA, a former DET, and the lowest, fourteen, at VC, a former white only Afrikaans medium school.

This study focused on high schools because learners at high school are on the brink of post-school and career choices. The impact that their language choice has on their career paths cannot be underestimated. Further, high school learners might be able to articulate their choice of LOLT to principals and governing body chairs better than primary school pupils. Also as in the case of the Mparutsa, Thondhlana and Crawhall study, this group of learners are the first "post independence generation and it was expected that they would have internalised some of the changes in the curricula" (1992,p.236).

Classroom Observations

At each school, two classes were observed once a week over a period of five weeks, one language and one science or mathematics class. During the first two visits the researcher did not take written notes. The reason for this was to

minimize the chances of rehearsals by the teachers being observed. Rehearsals refer to the possibility of teachers preparing for a presentation for what they might think the observer expected of them. Further, note-taking on the first day might have caused too much distraction since the mere presence of the observer was in itself a distraction. By the third visit the researcher hoped to have established a rapport with the class and the teachers to have her presence cause little distraction to the natural flow of lessons. Only from the third visit therefore, did the observer take notes focusing on language use in class for instruction and between teachers and learners and among learners. A total of fourteen teachers were observed, two from each school. The distribution of subject per teacher was as follows:

Setswana:	01	Afrikaans:	02	Mathematics:	03
English:	04	Physical Science:	03	Biology:	01

Extra-curricula Activities

The researcher observed Assembly, a gathering of the entire school where all important announcements are made and devotion is conducted. Schools conducted Assembly on at least three days a week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The procedures differed from one school to another. Some schools had learners, teachers, and priests conduct Assembly by leading in prayers, Scripture readings and chanting of hymns. Other schools restricted the conducting of Assembly to teachers and/or learners. The time of the Assembly was determined by individual school policy. At schools MA - MC, teachers and learners led morning devotion and made announcements. Also at

school MC, learners were allowed to present topical issues such as AIDS and drug abuse through short plays or brief oral presentations. At V-schools, teachers led Assembly except when there was a priest from one of the local churches. Teachers made important announcements including introducing the researcher at her first Assembly attendance.

Other extra-curricula activities that were observed included school choir practice at school MA. Music practice was done in preparation for the annual school music competitions. Practice was done twice a week from 2pm to 4pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. At all other schools except VB and VC, sports activities such as soccer, basketball and choir practice were observed. VB did not have any sports activities and at VC, African learners did not take part in school sports. Given the racial tensions in this school, the researcher did not consider observing the white only sports teams.

Non-curricula activities

The researcher observed three SGB elections at schools MB, MC and VA. The elections were scheduled on March 03, 2000 at 7pm for school MB, March 16, 2000, at 6pm for school MC, and March 20, 2000 from 10am to 8pm for school VA. At MA, a PTSA meeting was observed on March 18, 2000. The meeting was held on a Saturday so that parents who lived far from the school and those who work during the week could attend.

Field notes were taken at all events.

Procedures

The researcher distributed the questionnaires to learners and collected them. The questionnaires were completed in class while the researcher was present to answer any questions or clarify any point in the questionnaire. Teachers received the questionnaires during tea break and completed them in the staff room. However, the rate of return was very low.

Interviews with teachers took place after the fifth classroom observation. These interviews took place either in the staff room or in the teacher's office. At school MB, a special room was set aside by the principal for the interviews.

Interviews with parents took place either at school or at the parents' homes, according to their preference. The researcher approached some parents at the SGB and PTSA meetings and scheduled appointments with those that wanted to be interviewed at home and conducted interviews after the meetings with those who preferred to be interviewed at the school on the day of the meetings. Other parents were approached at church or in their homes to request interviews.

Assembly or morning devotion was observed at all schools on the days that the researcher visited each school if it was a day for Assembly. At least one PTSA meeting was observed at school MA and three SGB elections at MB, MC and VA. At least one Wednesday afternoon at each school was devoted to observing extra-curricula activities. At VD end of term activities were observed. Field notes were taken at each activity except Assembly. It would have been improper to take written notes during a religious activity.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The principal aim of this study was to investigate the language practices and attitudes of high school learners, teachers and parents and their views on South Africa's new Language in Education Policy (LIEP). As mentioned earlier, the LIEP is the outgrowth of South Africa's effort at practical implementation of the country's new democratic Constitutional Language Policy of eleven official languages. Data gathering was conducted in seven schools in the Mafikeng and Vryburg districts of the North West Province, over a period of ten weeks from January 24 to March 31, 2000.

Two methodologies were used in this study: 1) survey questionnaires for teachers and learners; most administered in writing, some administered orally; and 2) on-site observations of classroom teaching and learning, extra-curricula and non-curricula activities. The survey questionnaire was administered orally to twenty parents to avoid any response problems caused by parents with limited or no formal literacy. Fourteen teachers representing the seven schools were selected for classroom observation. Non-curricula activities, such as elections of three School Governing Bodies (SGB's) and one Parent-Teacher-Student-Association (PTSA) meeting were also observed. Extra-curricula activities that were observed included Assembly, choir practice and sports training.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The major issues analyzed in the survey data were the following:

- 1) the languages that participants preferred as subjects;

- 2) the languages preferred as LOLT's;
- 3) the languages of preference for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities; and
- 4) opinions and observations about the new LIEP.

LANGUAGES AS SUBJECTS

Which language/s would you like your school to teach as subjects and why?

This question was meant to elicit information about the participants' preferences for languages as subjects and the reasons for their preferences. The participants were given the following language choices: the four most dominant languages in the Province, Setswana, English, Afrikaans, IsiXhosa, and an "other" category in which they could list any other language/s they preferred. The number of choices made was not limited to one language; therefore participants could choose as many languages as they wanted. The following tables represent the responses to this question:

TABLE 2.1a

LANGUAGES AS SUBJECTS PREFERRED: Learners

N = 109

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	17	16%
ENGLISH	37	35%
AFRIKAANS	19	18%
S. AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES	25	23%

TABLE 2. 1 a (con't)

ALL LANGUAGES	02	02%
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	32	30%
NO RESPONSE	00	00

TABLE 2.1b

LANGUAGES AS SUBJECTS NOT PREFERRED: Learners

N = 62

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	13	21%
ENGLISH	00	00%
AFRIKAANS	16	28%
S. AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES	32	52%

TABLE 2. 2: Teachers

LANGUAGES AS SUBJECTS PREFERRED: Teachers

N= 22

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	16	73%
ENGLISH	17	77%
AFRIKAANS	11	50%
S, AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES	05	23%
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	02	9%
NO RESPONSE	01	5%

TABLE 2. 3: Parents

LANGUAGES AS SUBJECTS PREFERRED: Parents

N= 20

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	13	65%
ENGLISH	16	80%
AFRIKAANS	15	75%
S. AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES	11	55%
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	00	00
NO RESPONSE	00	00

The participants' preferences, as reflected by the tables, put English as the most preferred language to be taught. Of the 52 learners who responded to the question of languages they do not prefer as subjects, none chose English as a subject they would not prefer. An interesting difference comes with the second preferred language. The majority of learners chose French, the teachers chose Setswana and the parents chose Afrikaans. Interestingly, no parent chose a foreign language as a preferred subject.

The following are tables reflecting the reasons provided by participants for their preferences of languages as subjects:

TABLE 3. 1.a

REASONS FOR PREFERRING LANGUAGES AS SUBJECTS: Learners**SETSWANA**

1. Mother tongue	03
2. Teach others who don't know it	03
3. Dominant language in school and Province	02
4. Pride in own language	04

ENGLISH

1. Most commonly spoken and used language in the school, Province, country and world	20
2. Everybody needs to know English	06
3. Job opportunities	03
4. Need to know more than one language	02
5. Other (teach others, best language)	02

AFRIKAANS

1. Mother tongue	09
2. Communicate with monolingual Afrikaans speakers	
3. LOLT	02
4. Former white school	02

SOUTH AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

1. Home language	
2. Give other languages a chance	02
3. Understand speakers of other languages	04
4. Pride in language	01
5. Other	06

(TABLE 3.1. a con't.)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

1. Aesthetic (fun, romantic, sexy)	07
2. Travel abroad	13
3. Need to know other languages	04
4. Learn culture and history of other people	01
5. French: widely spoken language	02
NO RESPONSE	12

TABLE 3. 1.b

REASONS FOR LANGUAGES NOT PREFERRED AS SUBJECTS: Learners

SETSWANA

1. Does not support ability to learn English	01
2. Not everyone's L1	01
3. Limited/doesn't take you anywhere	02
4. Difficult to write	03
5. Not acceptable at previous school	01
6. Prefer English	01

AFRIKAANS

1. Dislike	04
2. Difficult	04
3. Most people understand and speak it	01
4. Not important/useless	03
5. Limited to South Africa	01

SOUTH AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

1. Not important	01
2. Difficult	15

TABLE 3. 2

REASONS FOR PREFERRING LANGUAGE AS SUBJECT: Teachers

SETSWANA

1. Demand from Setswana L1 parents	01
2. Everyone must have a chance to learn an indigenous language	01
3. Dominant language in school and Province	05
4. Learners must know their origin, language and culture	02
5. Instill language pride in learners	01

ENGLISH

1. Must be used as L1 in the whole school	01
2. Must be used as L1 for English stream learners	01
3. Need to know more than one language	02
4. Most commonly used language in the school, Province, country and world	01

SETSWANA, AFRIKAANS, ENGLISH

School language policy	01
------------------------	----

SOUTH AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

1. Home language	01
2. Give other languages a chance	01
3. Easy to learn and close to learners' L1	01

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French: Second most widely spoken language	01
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NO RESPONSE:

01

TABLE 3. 3.

REASONS FOR LANGUAGE AS SUBJECT PREFERENCE: Parents**SETSWANA**

1. Mother tongue	06
2. Dominant language in school and Province	02

ENGLISH

1. Changing circumstances demand command of English	01
2. Job opportunities	02
3. Need to know more than one language	01

AFRIKAANS

1. Job opportunities	02
2. Most common language after English	02
3. Learners need to know more than one language	01
4. Children don't understand English that well	01
5. Mother tongue	01

SOUTH AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

1. Easy to acquire/closest to L1	01
2. Location of school	01
3. Any, depending on resources	01
4. Home languages are important	01

The above tables show an abridged and translated version of participants' reasons for their choices of languages as subjects. Since some of the reasons were in Afrikaans and/or Setswana, the researcher translated them into English so as to group similar reasons together. A great effort was put into representing the reasons as closely and as accurately as possible. The following discussion is a summary of languages preferred as subjects and reasons for preference.

1.1. English

English was the most preferred language as subject across all participants; thirty-five percent learners, seventy-seven percent teachers and eighty percent parents. The most common reason given by learners was that English was “the most commonly used language at school, in the Province, and in the world.” The reason for English as providing job opportunities was given in both the learner and the parent lists of reasons. Another common reason across all three groups was that there was a need to know more than one language. The choice of English as preferred language as a subject reveals the historical and current importance and value placed on English competence. English remains the dominant language as a subject and LOLT. All seven schools involved in this study offer English as a language. The Provincial government also uses English more than any other language to communicate with the people in the Province. The discussions in the Provincial Legislature are conducted in English. The researcher attended the opening of the Provincial Parliament in March and all proceedings were conducted in English, except for the praise song. The reason given by the participants is therefore based on their actual experience with the use of English in schools, in the Province and indeed in the country. One learner said that the President of the country speaks English, and another said that: “No one important speaks IsiXhosa.” The irony is that the President’s first language is IsiXhosa.

1.2 Setswana

The results for Setswana differed across the three groups of participants. Learner preferences put Setswana in fifth position at sixteen percent. Teacher preferences placed the language second at seventy-three percent. Setswana ranked third with parent preferences at sixty-five percent.

The most common reason given across the three groups was that Setswana was the most dominant language at school and in the Province. Learners and teachers gave "pride in own language" as another reason for their preference. Parents and learners gave the "mother tongue" reason. Teachers also said that learners must know their origin, language and culture.

As Verhoef (1997) observed in her study of learners in the North West Province, there is pride and recognition of the importance of indigenous languages. Although these languages were not highly placed by all participants, their importance was acknowledged. Teachers also recognized that Setswana was the most common language in the Province and therefore it would be practical to offer it as a language as a subject.

1.3 Afrikaans

Like Setswana, the position of Afrikaans differed across the three groups. The language was placed fourth with learner preferences at eighteen percent. Teacher preferences put it in the third place with fifty percent, and parents second with seventy-five percent. The three most common reasons given by learners are that Afrikaans is mother tongue to some learners, that it is the school LOLT, and that the school/s was formerly white. Teachers also stated

that the school/s was Afrikaans medium. Parents provided the “mother tongue” reason and also that Afrikaans provided job opportunities and a chance to learn another language.

1.4 South African Indigenous Languages

Learner preferences placed South African indigenous languages other than Setswana at position three with twenty-three percent. The languages were placed fourth in both teacher and parent preferences, at twenty-three percent and fifty-five percent respectively.

The most common reason across all three groups was that home languages are important. The other reason provided by learners was that learning indigenous languages would help them understand speakers of other languages. Both teachers and learners stated that other languages must be given a chance, not just those that are dominant in the Province. Teachers and parents stated that indigenous languages were easy to acquire because they were close to the learners' home languages.

1.5 Foreign languages

Learner preferences put foreign languages at second position with thirty percent. These languages were placed at fifth position by teacher preferences, (nine percent). Foreign languages were not chosen by parents at all.

The only reason provided by teachers was that French was a widely spoken language. Learners also stated this reason. The most common reason provided by learners was travel, and the second was the beauty of the foreign languages, especially French.

Learners who chose languages they did not prefer ranked South African indigenous languages, especially IsiXhosa, as the least preferred (fifty-two percent), Afrikaans as second (twenty-six percent) and Setswana (twenty-one percent) third. The reasons cited were that the languages were difficult and Setswana in particular was not required in (some) former primary schools.

The above summary shows that English is the only language preferred as a subject that does not raise differences of ranking across all groups. Although the reasons provided differ slightly from one group to another, the choice of the language is unanimous. The main difference in preference is perhaps in Setswana, Afrikaans and foreign languages. Learner preferences reflect a major bias towards foreign languages, especially French, whereas parents prefer Afrikaans and teachers Setswana. This difference of choice can be partly attributed to the history of language in education policy in South Africa as illustrated in Chapter I. After the 1976 uprisings, although Afrikaans was taught as a subject in former DET schools, many learners did not like it because of its political stigma. Afrikaans was often referred to as the language of the oppressor. But since Afrikaans was the country's second official language, job opportunities were enhanced by competence in the language. Parents therefore still see the role of Afrikaans in light of increasing job opportunities for their children. The teachers who opted for Setswana stated that learners understand subject matter better when they are taught in the first language.

LANGUAGES PREFERRED AS LOLT's

Which language/s would you like your school to use as LOLT's and why?

In apartheid South Africa, all schools for African children had English as LOLT. White schools could choose between English and Afrikaans. The high failure rate in matriculation (grade 12 equivalent) final examinations has been attributed to the learners' poor command of English. The new LIEP allows schools to use LOLT's demanded by learners and their parents. This question was meant to investigate whether or not there has been any move to use other LOLT's in schools apart from those used in the past.

TABLE 4.1

LOLT's Preferred: Learners

N= 171

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	10	6%
ENGLISH	103	60%
AFRIKAANS	14	8%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	04	2%
SETSWANA/ENGLISH	16	9%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS	07	4%
NO RESPONSE	17	10%

TABLE 4. 2

LOLT's Preferred: Teachers

N = 22

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	01	5%
ENGLISH	09	41%
AFRIKAANS	01	5%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	02	9%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	04	18%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS	03	14%
AFRIKAANS-SETSWANA	01	5%
NO RESPONSE	01	5%

TABLE 4. 3

LOLT's Preferred: Parents

N = 20

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	00	00%
ENGLISH	17	85%
AFRIKAANS	02	10%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	01	5%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	00	00%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS	00	00%
NO RESPONSE	00	00%

English ranked highest as a preferred LOLT across all three groups of participants. Learner preferences made both English and Setswana medium

second, whereas teacher choice made English and Afrikaans second. As for parent preferences, Afrikaans was ranked second, and none chose Setswana at all. The parents' preference for English was 17 out of 20, or 85%.

The following tables represent reasons provided by participants for their preferences of LOLT/s:

TABLE 5. 1.

REASONS FOR LANGUAGES PREFERRED AS LOLT's: Learners

SETSWANA

1. Easy to understand/language in which I'm most competent	07
2. Important language	01
3. Most common language in area	02
4. Pride in own language	02

ENGLISH

1. Want to be competent in English	07
2. Easy to understand	25
3. To communicate with speakers of other languages	06
4. Most publications are in English	02
5. Best language/like the language	07
6. Travel abroad	01
7. Job opportunities	03
8. Mother tongue	01
9. Most commonly spoken and used language at school, in Province, country and the world	19
10. Must use at school/right thing to do	03

TABLE 5.1 (con't.)

AFRIKAANS

1. English & Afrikaans medium school	01
2. Former white school	01
3. Started school in Afrikaans	01
4. Mother tongue	09
5. Personal preference/want to know the language	01
6. More developed language	01
7. School LOLT	02

AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH

1. Competent in both languages	01
2. In a white school	01
3. LOLT at school	01

SETSWANA-AFRIKAANS

For all to understand and improve competence in both languages	01
--	----

SETSWANA-ENGLISH

1. Each language must be taught through its own medium	01
2. Both languages are easy to understand	02
3. Teacher preference	01
4. Like both languages	02
5. Code-mixing in both languages is common in home town	01
6. Pride in L1 and jobs through English	02

SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS

1. To accommodate all learners	05
2. So we can learn more than one language	04

NO RESPONSE

35

TABLE 5. 2

REASONS FOR LOLT PREFERENCE: Teachers

SETSWANA

Mother tongue for majority of learners	02
--	----

ENGLISH

1. Everybody needs to know English	01
2. Job opportunities	04
3. Textbooks are written in English	01
4. Most commonly used language in the school, Province, country and world	05

AFRIKAANS

Afrikaans medium school	01
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AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH

Most learners understand one of the two languages	02
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SETSWANA-ENGLISH

1. To make learners able to communicate with speakers of other languages	01
2. To curb underachievement by using Setswana, English for wider use	01

SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS

1. Each language must be taught through its own medium	01
2. Use any language that will maximize participation and Understanding	01

NO RESPONSE

04

TABLE 5. 3

REASONS FOR LOLT PREFERENCE: Parents**SETSWANA**

	00
--	----

ENGLISH

1. Learners understand easily when taught through ESL	05
2. Job opportunities	02
3. Need to know more than one language	01
4. Most commonly used language in the school, Province, country and world	08
5. Teaching and learning materials are in English	01

AFRIKAANS

1. Mother tongue	01
2. Job opportunities	01

AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH

Colored children must be taught in Afrikaans, and English for all other children	01
--	----

The reasons provided by participants were diverse and many. The tables above were an attempt to represent all the reasons given. English seemed to elicit the most reasons than any of the other languages. The following discussion is a summary of the LOLT preferences and the reasons given for the preferences.

2.1 English

As was the case with languages as subjects, all three groups of participants chose English as the preferred LOLT: learners sixty percent, teachers forty-one percent and parents eighty-five percent.

The three most common reasons stated by all groups were that: 1) English is the most commonly used language at school, in the Province and in the world, 2) English provides job opportunities, and, 3) most publications are in English. Parents and learners also stated that for learners, English was an easy language to understand. Given that English was the official LOLT at six of the seven schools, the preferences were not completely unpredictable. However, even at school VA, a Colored Afrikaans medium school, there were some learners who preferred English as LOLT. The third reason given that is different from those given for English as subject is that publications are in English.

2. 2. Setswana

Six percent of learners chose Setswana, placing the language at fourth position, and five percent of the teachers put the language at fifth position along with Setswana. None of the parents chose Setswana as preferred LOLT. As a result of this ranking, teachers gave only one reason for Setswana, mother tongue of some learners. Learners stated that it was easy to understand when they were taught in Setswana. They also cited pride in their language and that the language was the most common in the area as two reasons for their choice. Learners at school VD in particular stressed the importance of using Setswana to facilitate understanding. The fact that parents did not chose Setswana might be attributed to their belief that English and Afrikaans are still the gateway to job opportunities for their children.

2.3 Afrikaans

Learner preferences placed Afrikaans at third position with eight percent, teachers at fifth position along with Setswana (by five percent), and parents at second position (ten percent).

The teacher who chose Afrikaans as preferred LOLT gave only one reason for the choice, that the school was Afrikaans medium. Two learners also used the same reason. Both parents and learners cited mother tongue as a reason for their choice. Other reasons that learners gave were that the school/s was former white, the LOLT's were Afrikaans and English and that some of them began their education in Afrikaans. Parents stated job opportunities and that Afrikaans was the second most common language in the country after English, they still believe that both languages are a gateway to jobs for their children. However, learners and teachers know that there is a choice between Afrikaans and English with regard to access to jobs and that English is more likely to yield more job opportunities than Afrikaans. In the North West Province, most businesses are still owned by white Afrikaners; therefore the parents' preference for Afrikaans reveals this bias.

2.4 Setswana and English

This is a second place position by learners at nine percent. Teachers placed the option at position four with nine percent. Parents did not choose this option as preferred LOLT.

Learners gave more reasons than teachers for this option. The two main reasons teachers gave were that learners need to communicate with others,

and that Setswana will maximize understanding and English would be used for wider communication. Learners stated competence in both languages, teacher preferences, they liked the languages and that code mixing in both languages was common in the town. In former DET schools in particular, the unofficial use of Setswana and English as dual medium was common. Teachers recognized the importance of learners mastering the language of central examinations but also acknowledged the fact that mother tongue facilitates learning.

2. 5 English and Afrikaans

Learners placed this option at fifth position by only two percent but teachers put it at second place by eighteen percent. Both teachers and learners stated that learners understood both languages, and learners further said that the school was white and the two languages were school LOLT's. This is true mainly for MB, a dual medium school and VC, a parallel medium school where the Afrikaans teacher in particular used English to help the learners understand the Afrikaans texts. Although VC is a parallel medium school, and MA and VD are English medium, teachers recognized the importance of using languages other than the official LOLT's to help the learners to understand subject matter.

2. 6 Setswana, English and Afrikaans.

Although only four percent of the learners chose this option, fourteen percent of the teachers chose it, ranking it in third place. Learners stated that the three medium policy was determined by the school and teachers said that any

language should be used to teach to maximize learning. This use of a multiple language approach, although rare in the seven schools, is the ideal that the new LIEP is striving for. For three language policy schools such as the former DET schools, the use of a number of languages will be easy to execute since most learners come to school competent in at least two local languages.

The results presented above show that there is a common inclination towards English as a preferred LOLT. The differences become visible with the second position languages. While learners prefer Setswana and English, teachers chose Afrikaans and English, and parents chose Afrikaans. The most noticeable distinction among the three groups is that parents did not opt for Setswana as LOLT. This difference reflects the inherent common ground between teachers and learners that parents do not share. Learners and teachers are in the actual site of teaching and learning, and they usually know what strategies are more effective than others, and this influences their options and brings their choices closer. The use of different languages even at experimental level is a good sign that a multilingual policy is possible in schools. The changes effected especially by schools MA and VC, even though they are limited, are a sign that the principles set out in the LIEP document can be realized.

LANGUAGE PREFERENCES FOR EXTRA-CURRICULA AND NON-CURRICULA ACTIVITIES

Which languages would you like your school to use for the following activities; Assembly, sports, PTSA meetings, and letters to parents?

This question was meant to elicit responses about language choices and preferences for wider communication at school for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities. The two activities chosen for this presentation and analysis of data are Assembly and letters to parents. All public schools in South Africa have morning devotions where important announcements are made to the entire school and some form of Christian worship, such as singing hymns, saying prayers and reading the Scripture, is performed before announcements are made.

Letters to parents are an important part of the schools' communication with the communities. These letters include invitations to meetings, information about changes made in the schools, requests for permission to take children on educational excursions, reminders for payment of school fees, or any other reasons the schools may have to communicate with parents.

TABLE 6. 1.a

Languages preferred for extra-curricula activities: Learners

N = 171

Assembly

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	14	8%
ENGLISH	107	63%
AFRIKAANS	06	4%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	06	4%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	19	11%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS	02	1%
NO RESPONSE	17	10%

TABLE 6. 1.b

Letters to Parents

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	47	27%
ENGLISH	74	43%
AFRIKAANS	14	8%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	10	6%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	08	5%
	04	3%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS		
SOUTH AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES	02	1%
NO RESPONSE	12	6%

TABLE 6. 2. a

Languages preferred for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities: Teachers**N = 22****Assembly**

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	00	00%
ENGLISH	05	23%
AFRIKAANS	03	14%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	07	32%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	07	32%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS	02	9%
NO RESPONNSE	00	00%

TABLE 6. 2.b

Letters to Parents

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	04	18%
ENGLISH	05	23%
AFRIKAANS	03	14%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	06	27%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	02	9%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS	02	9%
NO RESPONSE	00	00%

TABLE 6. 3. a

Languages preferred for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities: Parents
N = 20

Assembly

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	06	30%
ENGLISH	04	20%
AFRIKAANS	05	25%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	05	25%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	00	00%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS	00	00%
NO RESPONSE	00	00%

TABLE 6. 3.b

Letters to Parents

Language	Respondents	Percentage
SETSWANA	08	40%
ENGLISH	05	25%
AFRIKAANS	04	20%
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	00	00%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	03	15%
SETSWANA-ENGLISH-AFRIKAANS		
NO RESPONSE	00	00%

The following tables represent the reasons that participants gave for languages they preferred for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities:

TABLE 7. 1. a

REASONS FOR PREFERRED LANGUAGES: Learners

Assembly

SETSWANA

1. Understand best in Setswana	15
2. Mother tongue of most learners	03
3. Most preferred by learners	02
4. Protect learners with limited English	02
5. Everybody must learn it	01

ENGLISH

1. Easy to understand	39
2. Most commonly spoken and used language	10
3. Increase opportunities for proficiency	12
4. English medium school	05
5. Other (personal preference, language of priests)	04

AFRIKAANS

	0
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SETSWANA-ENGLISH

1. Accommodate all learners	03
2. Personal preference	01
3. Both languages are LOLT	01

AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH

So that everyone can understand	02
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NO RESPONSE

71

TABLE 7. 1. b

Letters to parents: Learners

SETSWANA

1. Not all parents know English	15
2. Not all parents are educated	08
3. Most commonly used language	08
4. So that parents can understand	06
5. Other (do not like English)	01

ENGLISH

1. Parents understand English	22
2. Most commonly used language	07
3. English medium school	05
4. So that parents can learn English	03
5. Most parents are educated	01

AFRIKAANS

Mother tongue	01
---------------	----

SETSWANA-ENGLISH

To accommodate all parents	01
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AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH

1. English and Afrikaans medium school	01
2. To give parents a language option	01

ALL LANGUAGES PREFERRED

1. Depends on the language of the parent	04
2. Accommodate speakers of other languages	02
3. To represent the languages of learners	01

NO RESPONSE

84

TABLE 7. 2. a

REASONS FOR LANGUAGE/S PREFERRED: Teachers Assembly**SETSWANA**

	00
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ENGLISH

1. Most commonly spoken and used language	04
2. Improve competence in English	01

AFRIKAANS

1. Learners speak Afrikaans	03
2. Language of community	02

AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH

1. Staff members are both English and Afrikaans speaking	02
2. School policy	01

SETSWANA-ENGLISH

1. Two languages that most learners know	04
2. Both learners and teachers feel at ease using both languages	03

NO RESPONSE

02

TABLE 7. 2. b

Letters to Parents: Teachers**SETSWANA**

1. Not all parents understand English	01
2. L1 of most parents	02
3. Most members of the community are illiterate (i.e. meaning not literate in English)	01

ENGLISH

Most commonly understood language	05
-----------------------------------	----

TABLE 7.2. b (con't.)

AFRIKAANS	
Language most understood by parents	03
SETSWANA-ENGLISH	
To accommodate all parents	02
AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH	
1.Schol policy	01
2. Most parents know only these two languages	01
3. Languages spoken by teachers	01
4. Parents speak either or both languages	03
ALL LANGUAGES	
To accommodate all parents	02

TABLE 7. 3. a

REASONS FOR LANGUAGES PREFERRED: Parents

Assembly

SETSWANA	
1. Easy to understand	01
2. Religious activities best carried out in L1	02
3. Dominant language in school	03
ENGLISH	
Most commonly spoken and used language	04
AFRIKAANS	
1. Language of community	03
2. Teachers' choice	02

TABLE 7.3.a (con't.)

AFRIKAANS-ENGLISH

1. To accommodate everybody/avoid communication breakdown	04
2. Priests speak both languages	01

TABLE 7. 3. b

Letters to Parents: Parents

SETSWANA

1. Most dominant L1	04
2. Lower grade children can read for parents	02
3. Some parents have limited literacy (i.e. meaning illiterate in English)	02

ENGLISH

1. Most parents understand English	03
2. Setswana only might exclude some parents	01

AFRIKAANS

1. Language most understood by parents	03
2. Lower grades children can read for parents	01

SETSWANA-ENGLISH

1. To accommodate all parents	02
2. Give parents language options	01

NO RESPONSE

01

The two main activities chosen for this question were Assembly and letters to parents. Both activities were chosen because they were the most common among all schools. For instance, not all schools have sports activities, but all

schools have Assembly and write letters to parents at one point or the other during school terms.

3.1 Assembly

3.1. 1 English

Sixty-three percent of learners chose English as a preferred language for Assembly, placing the language at position one in their list of options. Teacher preferences placed English at number two by twenty-three percent, and parents at position three by twenty percent.

The most common reason among all three groups was that English is the most commonly used language. Another reason cited by both learners and teachers was that using English at Assembly helps to improve the learners' competence in the language. Learners also said that English was easy to understand.

3. 1. 2 Setswana

Setswana was the third option for learners by eight percent and first for parents by thirty percent. Teachers did not choose the language for Assembly. Fifteen of the learner respondents said that Setswana was the language they understood best. Parents also said that learners understand best in Setswana and that the language was the learners' mother tongue. Since learners at some schools also participate in leading Assembly, some of them said that Setswana is the language they prefer to use at Assembly. Two learners even said that the language is used "to protect learners with limited English."

3. 1. 3 Afrikaans

Four percent of the learners chose Afrikaans placing the option at number four, tied with the Afrikaans and English option. Teacher preferences put Afrikaans at third position by fourteen percent, and the language was placed second by 25% of parent preferences.

There were no reasons given for the learners' choice. Both parents and teachers stated that Afrikaans was the language of the community. Teachers also said that learners spoke the language and parents said teachers determined the language of use for Assembly.

3.1. 4 Setswana and English

Eleven percent of the learners chose the use of both languages and made the option third on their list. This option was first position for teachers since thirty-two percent chose it along with Afrikaans-English option. None of the parents chose this option.

Both teachers and learners said the two languages are the ones learners know best. Teachers also said that both teachers and learners feel comfortable using these languages.

3. 1. 5 Afrikaans and English

Only four percent of the learners chose this option, the fourth in the list of preferences. Teacher preferences placed this option at number one by thirty-two percent. Twenty-five percent of the parents chose Afrikaans and English, second position in their options.

Learners and parents stated that the two languages accommodated all learners. Teachers said that staff members were both Afrikaans and English speaking, and also that the option was school policy.

3.2 Letters to parents

3.2.1 English

Learners placed English first (forty-three percent), teachers (twenty-three percent) and parents (twenty-five percent) placed it second. The most common reason cited by all groups was that English is the most commonly used language. Twenty-two learners stated that parents understood English. Both learners and teachers said that the use of English would help parents learn or improve their competence in the language.

3. 2. 2 Setswana

Setswana was placed first by parent preferences at forty percent. Eighteen percent of the teachers chose the language, placing it at third position.

All three groups cited the example of limited literacy as a reason for using Setswana. It should be noted here that participants equated literacy with competence in English. So, what was referred to as "not educated" and "illiterate" actually meant "not competent in English." Both teachers and parents said that the language was the most dominant L1. One teacher said that "Most members of the community are illiterate," and eight learners said that not all parents were educated. One teacher and fifteen learners said that not all parents understand English.

3.2. 3 Afrikaans

Afrikaans was placed third position by both learner preferences and parent preferences, eight percent and twenty percent respectively. Fourteen percent of the teachers chose Afrikaans placing the option at number four. Learners stated mother tongue as a reason for their choice and both parents and teachers said that Afrikaans was the language understood by most parents.

3.2.4 Afrikaans and English

Only learners and teachers chose this option, five percent and fifth position for learners, and twenty-seven percent and first position for teachers. The main reasons given by both learners and teachers was that the school/s was English and Afrikaans medium and that parents understood either or both of the two languages.

3.2.5 Setswana and English

This option was placed fourth by learner preference and parent preferences, six percent and fifteen percent respectively. Nine percent of the teachers chose the option placing it at number five. All three groups said that the option would accommodate all parents.

3.2.6 All languages

Seven learners and two teachers said that all parents should be accommodated by the use of all languages that parents prefer and use.

OPINIONS ON THE NEW LIEP

In the final part of the survey the participants were requested to give their opinion about the new Language in Education policy. A total of one hundred and nine learners responded to the question, sixty-two did not respond. Fifty- nine learners were supportive of the new policy, forty-nine were not supportive and one was neutral. The learners that supported the policy said it would give them the opportunity to make their own choice of LOLT's and languages as subjects. Some learners also said that the new LIEP would help them substitute Afrikaans for other languages. The learners who were not supportive of the policy said too many languages would result in high failure rates, and that there would not be enough teachers to teach different languages. Of the twenty-two teachers involved in the study, two did not respond and one said he did not have any idea about the new LIEP. Nine teachers said they believed the policy would work but ten were not supportive. All twenty parents responded to this question. Three parents were non- supportive and twelve were supportive. One said successful implementation depended on the level of commitment from government but that English was a must. A summary of the results is presented below:

TABLE 8: Opinions on LIEP

	Supportive	Non-supportive	No response
Learners	59	49	62 + *
Teachers	09	10	03
Parents	17	03	00

*Neutral (the department should decide)

01

Supportive Comments

The following comments were made by participants who were supportive of the new LIEP and thought that it would work:

Learners:

1. It is important that learners be given a choice of languages, and numbers should determine the meeting of demands.
2. The new policy will serve the new South Africa well because of the different racial groups.
3. African languages will take over from Afrikaans.
4. Multilingualism improves communication across linguistic boundaries.
5. The policy is positive, moral and it is bound to succeed.
6. School will lose African learners if it doesn't teach African languages.

Teachers:

1. The implementation of the policy is possible if the government provides guidelines.
2. Learners must be taught that despite the importance of English, other languages must not be undermined.
3. The number of demands made must determine language policy in schools, and demands must be met.
4. Every school must teach at least one indigenous language, learners are very adaptable.

5. English must be taught for its international status, but indigenous languages must be promoted and protected to preserve the origin of the people.
6. There should be more commitment from the government, the policy is possible since the three language policy has worked, also the dominant regional languages can be taught at all schools in the region.

Parents:

1. All children must be taught in their mother tongue to ensure deep insight into subject matter.
2. Mother tongue must be taken to the school and extended.
3. Learner choice must be met at all cost, and the government must live up to its promises.
4. Available teachers must be used to maximize resources.
5. English is not readily accessible to the masses.

Non-supportive comments:

Learners:

1. English should be the only LOLT because post-school education requires English.
2. The demand of English is too high; so other languages will not be chosen.
3. Too many languages will result in high failure rate, so only one or two languages, preferably English and Afrikaans, should be used as LOLT.
4. There will be a problem of finding teachers.

Teachers:

1. Single medium is more practical and English provides job opportunities.
2. English and Afrikaans are more pragmatic options, providing for four or more languages would be cumbersome.
3. English should be the only LOLT because it accommodates everybody, more English teachers should be trained.
4. Parental demands for English will put indigenous languages at a disadvantage.
5. The policy is not practical, the department puts too many stumbling blocks and bureaucracy in the implementation of the policy.

Parents:

1. The policy is not practical because non-dominant languages will not be easy to use as LOLT.
2. The policy is short-term and not cost-effective.

The responses given by participants to this part of the survey were characterized by supportive or non-supportive opinions. Learners who were supportive of the new policy said that choice of language of education was a right. They all said that options would increase their opportunities to learn other languages, help them communicate across language barriers, and promote and preserve the language, history and culture of indigenous people. Some learners said that the use of mother tongue would improve their chance of academic success.

Learners who were non-supportive of the policy said that many languages would result in high failure rate, the demand for English was too high, there would also be problems of finding teachers to teach the different languages, and that English only or English and Afrikaans only should be used as LOLT.

The teachers who were supportive of the policy said that there was a need to protect indigenous languages and teach children that although English is practical as LOLT, indigenous languages are equally important. The teachers also said the government needed to be more committed to the policy than it appeared to be. One teacher stated:

The policy is possible with guidelines from the Ministry. Learners fare better academically through a medium they understand well (Teacher 4)

Of the ten teachers that were not supportive of the policy, eight said the English only medium is the best solution. The teachers said that parental demand for English would put indigenous languages at a disadvantage. One teacher said: "The new LIEP is mere lip service, English is the unofficial only medium of instruction" (Teacher 6). Another teacher (Teacher 17), said:

The policy is not practical since the Ministry of education in the Province puts too many bureaucratic stumbling blocks in the introduction of other languages. There are too many procedures to follow and it takes too much time to try and introduce other languages

Only three of the twenty parents in the study were not supportive of the new LIEP. All three parents said that the policy was neither cost- effective nor long term. Parent 5 said non-dominant languages would be too difficult to use as LOLT's. Parent 20 said that the policy had serious financial implications and that

the ministry was already understaffed with policy experts, especially language in education experts.

The pattern that emerges from the above responses reflects different perspectives from learners, teachers and parents. Learners seem most concerned about educational and academic success. Teachers point to practical implications of the Language in Education Policy in the classroom and seem concerned with issues of implementation in terms of teaching strategies, classroom management and curriculum design, particularly in light of insufficient educational resources, limited textbooks, large classes, inadequate supplies and other day-to-day, practical issues. Parents seem to view the language in education policy issue from a more philosophical and ideological vantage point somewhat outside the confines of the school and classroom. They locate language issues within the broader context of social and political realities in South Africa.

Some of the comments made by participants were:

Learners:

Schools must use English only as LOLT because universities use English (VA 002)

If schools teach many languages, there will be a high failure rate (VA 003 and MA001)

Teachers:

Taal van onderrig moet bepaal word deur die meerderheid kinders in die skool. Indien dit bv. 4 verskillende taalgroepe in een skool is, is dit onprakties om elke groep sy eie taal onderrig te gee- dit raak die hoeveelheid onderwysers by 'n skool asook die handboeke. Vakhandboeke is grootliks in Engels en Afrikaans- veral by tersiere inrigtings (Teacher 5)

(LOLT must be determined by the number of learners in the school. If for example, there are 4 different language groups in one school, it will not be practical to offer each group its own language as LOLT – this has implications for the number of teachers at the school as well as textbooks. Subject textbooks are mostly in English and Afrikaans –especially at tertiary institutions.)

Parents:

Go ka kgonega, the feeling of freedom for using your own language is important. Cognitive development is hampered by using a second language. All this is because of apartheid.

(Go a kgonega = it is possible)

(Parent 16 – university graduate, high school teacher)

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

The second major methodology used in this study was classroom observation. A total of fourteen grade ten teachers were observed over a period of ten weeks, from the last week of January through the last week of March. Each teacher was observed once a week for one school period in the same class for five weeks. Seven of the fourteen teachers were science and mathematics teachers and seven were language teachers. The following table represents the distribution of teachers per subject.

TABLE 9:Observed Teacher per Subject

SETSWANA	ENGLISH	AFRIKAANS	MATH	SCIENCE	BIOLOGY
01	04	02	03	03	01

The main purpose of the observations was to determine what LOLT/s was used in classrooms. The pattern that emerged from the observations can be divided into four categories, 1) English only, 2) Setswana and English, 3)

Afrikaans and English, and 4) Setswana, English, Afrikaans and Flaaitaal (a variety of speech spoken in townships, usually, but not exclusively by males, young and old, somewhat akin to U.S.Ebonics).

A total of eight teachers used only English as LOLT for all five lessons observed. This group of teachers was not restricted to teachers from English medium schools. One teacher was in fact from a former DET school.

One of the teachers who preferred the English only approach was observed at school MB, an Afrikaans-English dual medium (two languages are used interchangeably during lessons) school. She was an Afrikaans speaking teacher of English. She taught English First Language to a class whose home languages ranged from, Setswana, to English to Afrikaans. In fact, the majority of this grade ten class was Setswana first language speakers. The first two lessons that were observed were literature. The teacher read aloud from the text and the learners were supposed to follow in their texts. The teacher explained a few phrases and expressions while she was reading. Only English was used in the class. There was limited learner to learner interaction, so very little Afrikaans or Setswana was heard even in murmurs. The third lesson was an oral presentation by the learners, and the last two were writing lessons. This teacher did not volunteer to do the survey but she said that the learners were not allowed to do any code mixing in class because they were taking English as a First Language.

Four teachers in the English only category said the schools where they taught were English medium schools and therefore they were expected to teach

in English. Three of the teachers said they did not speak any local language, and one teacher was Afrikaans speaking and taught at an Afrikaans English parallel medium (two or more LOLT's in one school, but not used interchangeably). One of the three teachers at the two English medium schools taught Physical Science. Although the teacher had lived in the town for over ten years, she said she did not speak any of the local languages and could therefore not use any in class even if she wanted to. But her main reason for using English only was that the school was an English medium school, so she was following school policy. All her classes were held in the sparsely equipped laboratory. There was very little interaction in class in spite of its small size. Learners spoke mostly English among themselves and a few smatterings of Setswana. The fifth lesson, which was meant to be review for the next test, was even less interactive than any of the previous lessons.

Of the remaining three teachers who preferred the English only approach, two taught at a former DET school and one taught at an Afrikaans medium Colored school. Both teachers at the DET school had different mother tongues from their learners. However they spoke Setswana as a second language. The one teacher said he felt comfortable teaching in English because his competence in the learners' language was limited to conversational Setswana. In fact, the only time he spoke Setswana to the learners was when he introduced me. The second teacher said he made a conscious effort to teach in English because his classes were the only opportunity the learners had for exposure to English. The town was predominantly Setswana and Afrikaans; as a result some learners'

experience of English was limited to use at school. The third teacher who also expressed the same sentiment as the second teacher, said that although he spoke the learners' language, Afrikaans, he felt that both learners and teachers needed to use English more extensively than before. He said that since government documents were mostly in English, the school needed to extend its language use to English.

Two of the fourteen teachers used Setswana and English in their lessons. The one teacher was at a former DET school and the second teacher was at an English medium school. The first teacher was a Physical Science teacher who taught mostly in English but explained concepts and processes in Setswana. She also allowed learners to use Setswana when they discussed among themselves, but they were to use English only when they responded to her questions. In her survey, she also said that learners needed to practice English so that they could be able to answer questions in the end of the year examinations that will determine promotion to the next grade.

The teacher at the English medium school who used Setswana and English to teach her class said that she personally preferred to use Setswana only but said that some learners came from primary schools where the LOLT was English and also that there was no option for indigenous languages. Some of the learners that took Setswana as an option did so only after they failed English First Language. The policy of this school (MC) is that if a learner fails a language that s/he takes as L1, s/he does not get promoted to the next class. As a result, the teacher used English to explain concepts to learners to maximize

understanding. In one of the five lessons observed, she gave the English translation of “ Puosebui and Puopegelo”, the Direct Speech and the Reported Speech. The teacher used standard Setswana in class as much as possible. In fact, she did not use any Setswana dialect. Code switching was from standard Setswana to standard English. The teacher said that she wanted to instill a sense of pride in the learners.

The third category to emerge from classroom observations of the pattern of language use was the use of Afrikaans and English as LOLT's. Two teachers at Afrikaans and English medium schools used this approach. Although the two schools use both languages as LOLT's, the one school uses parallel medium (learners in the same grade using different LOLT's as determined by learner choice) and the other uses dual medium (two LOLT's used simultaneously and interchangeably in one class). The Mathematics teacher at school MB used both English and Afrikaans to teach Mathematics. For instance, she would articulate a mathematical expression while she was writing it on the board and would say the first term in English, the second in Afrikaans and the third in English:

“Sodra jy dieselde terme het, moet jy eers met die grouping of the like terms begin. Se nou jy het eks minus y and x plus y, you first group the like terms, dan kan jy die res van die terme uit die hakkies los.”

(As long as you have similar terms (in an expression), you must first group like terms. Say for instance you have $x - y$ and $x + y$, you first group the like terms, then you can leave the rest outside the brackets).

Whether she was giving actual instruction or admonishing the learners, she used both languages. All five lessons observed were on factorization. The fifth class was a preparation for a forthcoming test. Learners were allowed to ask

questions in both English and Afrikaans and they could do code mixing and code switching between the two languages at any given time in class. In her survey she said that she used dual medium because that is school policy and African parents wanted their children to be taught in English, and Afrikaans parents wanted theirs to be taught in Afrikaans.

The teacher at the Afrikaans-English parallel medium school used English and Afrikaans to teach Afrikaans lessons to first language Setswana speaking learners. Although the policy of the school is parallel, not dual medium, the teacher said it was important for the learners to understand especially literature since it was mostly that part of the final examinations in which the learners did not do well. She used English to give synonyms for Afrikaans words that learners did not know. She also allowed the learners to respond to her in English. In her survey she said:

Ek gebruik maksimum taalwisseling in my klas om seker te maak dat leerlinge die woordeskat so wel as idees en konsepte begryp.

(I use maximum code mixing so that I can maximize the learners' understanding of vocabulary as well as ideas and concepts)

The mathematics teacher at the Afrikaans medium school used only Afrikaans in her classes. The learners were allowed to use any language in buzz groups but they spoke Afrikaans only to the teacher. Although the teacher teaches English as well, she said that she limited her use of English to the English class. She did not do any code switching or code mixing in her English class.

A fourth category of LOLT use was the one where the teacher used all three languages offered at school in his Afrikaans classes. The teacher taught literature, grammar and writing. The interaction in class was such that the teacher spoke Setswana, English, Afrikaans and Flaaitaal (African township language, also referred to as Lingo) to the learners when he explained grammar points, phrases and vocabulary. The learners, however, were expected to answer in standard Afrikaans only. For instance in the literature lesson observed on February 09, the teacher asked the class the meaning of "vroedvrou" (midwife):

"Se my, mense, wat is 'n vroedvrou, eh, wat beteken vroedvrou? Vroedvrou mane, okay, e re ke le fe clue, Sakkie se ma is swanger, jy verstaan, bar, en sy makeer 'n vroedvrou om haar te help want die kind is op pad, amper."

(Tell me guys, what is a midwife, what is the meaning of midwife? Midwife, man, okay, let me give you a clue, Sakkie's mother is expectant/pregnant, you see, pregnant ("bar" in Flaitaal), and she needs a midwife to help her because the child is on its way, almost)

This is followed by a murmur of "oohhh," then some of the learners say the word in Setswana and others in English, in a murmur though. The teacher then says,

"Ja, julle weet nou, midwife, maar ons se in Afrikaans vroedvrou".

(Yes, you know, midwife, but it is "vroedvrou" in Afrikaans)

In his survey, this teacher said that the reason he used other languages in his lessons was to maximize understanding. However, he said that the learners were allowed to respond only in standard Afrikaans to improve their competence and to prepare them for examinations. So, although the two teachers at school MA both used other languages to teach science and languages, they did not

allow the learners to use languages other than English for content subjects and Afrikaans for Afrikaans.

Previous school language policies put a stigma on code mixing and code switching. Critics of this technique, such as Titlestad (1998), believe that learners end up not mastering any language when this strategy is used in instruction. However, this instructional strategy enhances understanding and therefore needs to be researched. Although only one teacher out of the fourteen involved in this study used this technique, two other teachers in the extra classes I observed (by request) at this teacher's school used three to four languages in class to emphasize a point or to provide comic relief.

Classroom observations were an integral part of this study because they revealed what teachers actually did in real situations. What teachers seemed to believe about their use of English as LOLT was more often than not slightly different from the actual use in class. Except for the eight teachers who explicitly said they made a conscious effort to use only English, the rest of the teachers used, to a varying degree, code switching in their lessons.

Extra-curricula Activities

All schools held assembly at least three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The researcher was introduced at assembly at all schools except school VC. Schools had slightly different policies with regard to who conducted assembly. At schools MA, MB, MC, learners participated in leading assembly. The principals introduced the themes of the day and the learners led devotions. At MC, learners did a short drama with an AIDS

awareness theme and one on the dangers of drug abuse. At both MA and MB, learners chosen to lead assembly read the Scriptures and led the prayers. The learners at school MA used Setswana for short sermons and Sesotho and IsiXhosa for prayers. Hymns were sung in Setswana, English, Sesotho and IsiXhosa.

Teachers led assembly at all "V" schools except when there was a priest from one of the local churches. At school VA and VC, Afrikaans was used almost entirely for prayers and announcements. At VB only English was used and at VD hymns and prayers were conducted in the teachers' choice of languages. Most hymns were in Sesotho or English. Even though the announcements at VD were done in Setswana on most occasions, the researcher was introduced in English.

Language use for sports training and music practice depended on the teachers and the medium of the schools. At MA, there were no sports activities at the time of observation but the choir practice was in Setswana. Wednesday afternoons are generally reserved for sports practice. At least two field observations were conducted at all schools except VC and VB. The former school did not have any African learners participating in sports, and the latter did not have any sports activities. At MB, the teacher-coaches used either Afrikaans or English depending on the language the learner-players used. At VD, soccer and music were the most popular extra-curricula activities. The music teacher was the English teacher observed in class. Although he used a lot of English, he occasionally used Sepedi, his mother tongue to encourage or admonish the choir

members. Both soccer coaches spoke Setswana and Flaaitaal to the players. At MC, the coaches were foreign teachers from African countries so they spoke English to the learners. One coach did try to speak Setswana to the total amusement of the players.

Language use for extra-curricula activities reflected the medium of the school in most cases, but at the two DET schools, Setswana was used more than any other language.

Non-curricula Activities

The elections of school governing bodies were observed at three schools. At two schools, MB and MC, although parents turned up, they did not form a quorum so the elections were postponed. The elections at MB were scheduled to take place on March 03, 2000, but the number of parents who turned up did not meet the required 115 to form a quorum at this 460 -learner population school. At both MB and MC, the principals were chairmen of the proceedings. At MB, the principal stated the reason for the meeting in English but prayed in Afrikaans. The introduction of the presiding officer was done in both English and Afrikaans. The presiding officer apologized for the use of two instead of three languages. At MC, the elections were scheduled for March 16, 2000 at 6pm. A similar process like the one at MB was followed but every procedure was done in English even though 90% of the 960 learners were African and Setswana first language speakers.

The VA SGB elections took place on March 20, 2000 and the procedures were in Afrikaans. The presiding officer was a Setswana first language speaker

but he spoke to parents in both English and Afrikaans. There were at least four Setswana speaking parents who participated in the elections.

A PTSA meeting was observed at MA on March 18, 2000, at 1pm. The reason for holding the meeting on a Saturday was that most parents work during the week and some come from villages outside Mafikeng. Saturday afternoon meetings maximize the possibilities of attendance since village funerals are held in the mornings and most parents work half day. The meeting was well attended and the researcher was introduced to the parents and to the school district manager. All procedures were conducted in Setswana. Both learners and parents participated actively in the discussions. Teachers gave reports of projects they intended to pursue during the 2000 academic year and sought help from parents. The vice principal gave his report and the principal translated it into Setswana. One teacher used English and Setswana code mixing by repeating every sentence he made in English in Setswana almost automatically. Parents asked a lot of questions, all of them in Setswana although some of them code-switched between Setswana and Afrikaans.

The other schools, VB, VC and VD had already held their SGB elections and did not have any non-curricula activities planned for the duration of the study. Also, the VC SGB was all white, all Afrikaner, so the possibility of attending one of their meetings was remote because of racial tensions in the town and particularly at this school.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study revealed the following about the four research questions:

- 1). What are the participants' preferred languages as subjects?: The results indicate that English remains the language as subject choice for schools irrespective of their former or current LOLT. The second choice differed depending on the participants. Learners preferred French, teachers preferred Setswana and parents preferred Afrikaans. Therefore what the participants preferred and what was offered before the new policy is the same. The exception is school VC which previously did not offer Setswana as a subject.
- 2). What are the participants' preferred LOLT?: English was the most preferred LOLT according to the results of this study. The type of school did not affect the choice of English as preferred LOLT. As with the choice of language as a subject, English seemed to be preferred for two major reasons: 1) it is the most commonly spoken and used language at school, in the Province and in the world, and 2) it provides job opportunities.
- 3). What are the participants' preferred languages for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities?: Learners preferred English for both Assembly and letters to parents. The most common reason the learners gave for preferring English for Assembly was that the use of English would increase their opportunities to learn the language. The most common reason used for preference of English for letters to parents was that most learners believed that most parents understood English and therefore the schools should communicate with them in English.

This could have resulted from the fact that the majority of the learners were children of professionals. (Although the survey questionnaire did not ask for socio-economic data, the status of the learners could easily be inferred from the type of school they attended. Unlike in the United States, all schooling in South Africa requires fees. These fees are much higher at former white schools than at former DET schools).

The teachers chose the Afrikaans-English, and Setswana-English combinations for Assembly. The reason they gave was that both teachers and learners would feel comfortable using these languages. For letters to parents teachers chose the Afrikaans-English option. The most common reason the teachers gave was that parents could understand either or both languages. The teachers assumed that since Afrikaans and English were former official languages, the assumption is that everybody learned one or the other.

Parents in turn chose Setswana for both Assembly and letters to parents. The most common reason they gave for using Setswana at Assembly was that it would be more meaningful for learners to have religious activities in their home language, in this case Setswana. Most parents believed that writing to parents in Setswana would curb the problem of limited literacy in English.

4) What are the participants' opinions about the new LIEP?: Most learners believed that the new policy would work and that it was necessary for them to have the right to choose languages they preferred. Learners who were not supportive of the policy expressed concern for academic performance. They believed that the more languages added to the curricula, the higher the failure

rate would become. Teachers were concerned about practical implications of the LIEP. The majority of the teachers said the policy was not practical because of the many constraints that they were already facing, especially with regard to human and material resources. Parents were more supportive of the policy and said that learner needs must be met at all cost. The results revealed mixed feelings about the LIEP, supportive and non-supportive.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions and implications drawn from research results, and suggestions for further research.

SUMMARY

The main aim of this study was to ascertain the language practices and attitudes of learners, parents and teachers in the Mafikeng and the Vryburg districts of the North West Province, South Africa. The study was carried out in order to establish the feasibility of the new LIEP and to determine whether or not there have been any changes in language policies at different schools since the introduction of the new LIEP. The new policy gives learners the right to receive instruction in the language of their choice and to choose the languages they prefer as subjects.

The historical development of language in education policy in South Africa since the establishment of formal schools in the eighteenth century has been wrought with problems of linguistic inequalities. The first formal schools in the country were missionary schools, and the language policy of these schools made English the most important LOLT even if indigenous African languages were allowed as LOLT's in the first four grades of school. The material benefits associated with English competence, such as job availability, made the use of African languages almost valueless. Both Roy-Campbell (1998) and Brown (1992) argue that missionary schools devalued African languages by the "colonial bilingualism" that recommended the use of indigenous languages but

continued to use English as a sole LOLT and placed higher value on English competence than on any other language.

The post-apartheid language policy aims at elevating the status of indigenous languages, promoting multilingualism, and increasing access to education through the use of mother tongue instruction. Pule (1997, p. 33) states that:

The Constitution looks at four basic issues concerning multilingualism: redress, equality, non-discrimination and access, and we feel that these four major principles of our Constitution should be passed on to our learners, so that policy and practice can be brought together.

The new LIEP was meant to translate the principles of the Constitution into practice in education. The position of the indigenous languages in language in education policies is therefore crucial in measuring whether or not the new LIEP is being effectively implemented.

The literature reviewed in this study indicated that problems of post-colonial language in education policy are common in Africa. The usual practice is that colonial languages, such as English and French continue to be used by new governments as official languages. This “inheritance” situation occurs even though the majority of the population in different countries generally do not have competence in or access to the colonial languages. Such is the case in South Africa, where only about twenty-five percent of the country’s non-English first language speakers are competent in English (Webb 1998). However, the literature review also demonstrated that the use of mother tongue instruction could be successful if governments and communities were committed to the promotion of these languages. Two such examples of policy implementation

success are reported in the study by Boothe and Walker (1997), and Gfeller and Robinson (1998).

The research literature reviewed in this study focused on studies of language attitudes and practices of teachers and learners. The present study added a third dimension, parents. Further, this study, unlike previous research was conducted at schools and in classrooms. Arthur (1997) stated that there is a need to study the actual sites of language in education policy implementation, that is, at schools.

Data collected from surveys were classified into four parts: 1) languages preferred as subjects and reasons, 2) languages preferred as LOLT's and reasons, 3) languages preferred for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities and reasons, and 4) opinions about the new LIEP. The number and percentages of respondents were given in tables, and the level of preference for each language was established. For the question on the LIEP, the arguments that were supportive of the policy were distinguished from those that were not supportive of the new policy. Observations were done in classrooms to determine what languages the teachers used as LOLT's. Extra-curricula and non-curricula activities were also observed to establish what languages the schools used for these activities.

The results of the present study indicate an overwhelming support for English as a preferred language as a subject across all three groups of participants. The most common reason for this preference was that English is the most commonly used language at school, in the Province and in the world.

Setswana was a number two option only for teachers, third for parents and fifth for learners. In spite of the different rankings of Setswana by participants, the most common reason given for this option was that Setswana was the most dominant language in the Province. Other South African indigenous languages including IsiXhosa, were placed third by learners and fourth by parents and teachers. Learners placed foreign languages, especially French, number two. Afrikaans was the fourth option for learners, third for teachers, and second for parents. The language was chosen because it was said to increase job opportunities.

English was also chosen as a preferred LOLT across all three groups. Three most common reasons for this preference were that: 1) English was the most commonly spoken and used language at school in the Province and in the world, 2) English provides opportunities, and 3) most publications are in English. Although Setswana is the most dominant language in the Province, only a few learners and one teacher chose it as LOLT, and no parent chose it.

For extra-curricula and non-curricula activities, learner preferences made English the highest option, teachers made Setswana and English, as well as Afrikaans and English, the highest preference, and parent preferences ranked Setswana highest for Assembly. Preferences for letters to parents also differed slightly. Learners chose English, teachers chose the English-Afrikaans option, and parents chose Setswana. The English option chosen by learners was selected because learners believed that parents understood English. The

English and Afrikaans option and the Setswana and English options were chosen because the participants felt that parents must be given language options.

Sixty-two out of 171 learners did not comment on the new LIEP.

However, of the 109 that responded, fifty-nine were supportive, one was neutral, and forty-nine were not supportive of the policy. Nine out of twenty-two teachers were supportive of the policy; ten were not supportive. Two did not respond, and one said he had no idea what the policy meant. Seventeen out of twenty parents supported the policy and only three were not supportive of the policy.

Learners who were supportive of the policy said that it would realize their right to choose languages as subjects and LOLT's. Those who were not supportive considered the negative academic impact of a multilingual policy. They felt that they would not do as well in other languages as they would in English. Teachers who were supportive of the policy said that it would enhance academic performance and elevate the status of African languages. Those that were not supportive said the actual implementation of the policy would cause confusion and it would not be cost-effective. Parents said that all measures must be taken to maximize the learners' success at school and that their (learners) preferences must be met at all costs. The three parents who were not supportive of the policy said that the policy was not practical because it was not long term, it was not cost effective, and non-dominant languages would be difficult to use as LOLT.

Classroom observations revealed a four- category pattern of language use by teachers. One category used English only, a second used English and

Afrikaans, a third used Setswana and English, and a fourth combined a number of different languages.

To a large extent, the medium of the school determined the language/s used for extra-curricula and non-curricula activities. For example, English only schools used mostly English for these activities.

The main conclusion drawn from this study is that learners, teachers and parents still consider English and Afrikaans the most important languages in the Province and indeed in the country. Therefore, the power of these languages seems to remain in spite of the option given to schools by the new policy to introduce African languages in their curriculum.

Some theorists believe that the new language policy will be a threat to English. Ntlhakana (2000, p. 14) cites De Klerk as one of those who believe that English will be threatened by the new policy:

De Klerk sees the future prospects of English in South Africa as 'bleak' due to factors such as: the recent changes in educational policy which gives schools the freedom to choose the medium of instruction (According to DeKlerk) "Some schools may opt for two or more indigenous languages and discontinue the teaching of English entirely."

The second factor that Ntlhakana cites as a contributing factor to the apparent threat to English is that it is no longer compulsory for matrics (grade 12) to pass the language of instruction in order to gain university exemption. So, English is no longer a requirement for university admission. The author states that this waiver is just a temporary measure meant to increase the number of African students at university. Like De Klerk, she believes that the "choice" of English will be inevitable. Contrary to what linguists such as De Klerk think, this

study demonstrated that in spite of the choices given in the LIEP, English is by no means “threatened.” In fact, the changes that occurred in the two former Afrikaans medium schools increased the power of English. One of the two schools introduced Setswana and English, the other introduced English only.

The results of the study also indicated that the options inherent in the LIEP did not seem to be well understood by participants. The general conception of the policy is that schools would be expected to teach all eleven languages all at once, rather than offer only those languages chosen by stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The new LIEP in South Africa is radical in many ways because it is aimed at elevating the status of all indigenous languages. It is therefore difficult for many people to conceptualize a situation where all languages would be taught in one school, especially since they have a history of only two or three languages being used during the apartheid years. This is clearly a misinterpretation of the policy. The policy states that language options should be offered where it is practicable, and where the number of demands, thirty-five learners at high school, satisfies the option. The policy does not say all eleven languages must be used at one school.

The conclusions and implications discussed below stem from the findings in this study and the researcher’s own view on the LIEP based on the research results.

Based on the results from the study, and the fact that the researcher had to explain to participants what the policy entailed, there is a need to educate

stakeholders about the provisions of the LIEP in order for them to make informed decisions. In the North West Province, there have already been two instances of demands for mother tongue instruction for two languages, IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa. In 1996, the AmaNdebele of Nkosi (Chief) Zibi demanded that their children be taught in IsiNdebele because it is their mother tongue. The then MEC for Education in the Province instructed that this demand be met. In 1999, the AmaXhosa in the Matolong area of Taung also demanded IsiXhosa as a language as a subject to be taught in their schools. At the time of this study, the office of the MEC was still working on this demand.

In spite of the above examples that were covered by the Province's broadcasting television, however, not all participants were aware of the provisions of the LIEP. Teacher 14 said he had no idea what the policy entailed. As Smitherman (2000) states, there is a serious need to educate the population about social policies that affect their lives directly. A program such as "Puo Dikolong" (Languages in Schools) by the English Language Information Centre (ELTIC) can be extended to all provinces to raise the consciousness of stakeholders about the important role they play in formulating language policy in school. (Pule 1998, p. 33) says this about the role of the ELTIC project in helping stakeholders to formulate language policy in education:

These principles (in the new LIEP) are specified as parameters, but there is not enough guidance for people to formulate policies themselves. The devolution of power involves empowering people to be able to do things for themselves. However, the principles can be misinterpreted and misused. Our aim, therefore, is to assist schools to be able to formulate policy in an informed way.

Pule then goes on to outline the three phases of their program: 1) workshops to inform participants about the content of the policy; 2) teaching teachers and other stakeholders research skills so they can carry out needs analysis to determine attitudes and preferences, and finally; 3) helping participants to draft and re-draft the individual school language policies. Accessibility of information is crucial to the realization of the new LIEP. As Teacher 4 stated:

(Dit) kan werk as almal weet wat om te doen. Leerders moet 'n begrip vir die taal van onderrig toon

((It) can work if everyone knows what to do. Learners must have a thorough understanding of the language of learning and teaching)

It is crucial to raise the consciousness of the participants to the pedagogical implications of mother tongue instruction. The participants' responses indicated that they believe that learners could only learn through the medium of English. This reflects the legacy of Fundamental Pedagogics. Teacher education programs in South Africa were for a long time based on the principles of this philosophy of education. These principles were based on the notion that separate is equal, that African children were fundamentally different from white children and therefore the quality of their education was designed to reflect these apparent differences. While white children were taught in their mother tongue, African children were forced to learn through second, third, or fourth languages. The decline in the quality of education for African children was blamed on their inability to grasp concepts in English, and not on the fact that they were taught in a language that was not their own, took the same examinations as children taught in their mother tongue, English, and yet were

expected to yield the same results. It is also important to note that as Mabokela (2000) observes literacy in South Africa is only associated with English.

Therefore when the teachers say "Most members of the community are illiterate," they imply that they cannot read and write English.

The use of English as the sole LOLT in schools for African children also contributed significantly to the negative attitudes towards indigenous languages. Since teacher education is in the process of being re-evaluated and transformed, training institutions should re-examine the role of mother tongue instruction in teacher education programs.

As two teachers in the study suggested, in order to help realize the eleven language policy, regional languages must be used as languages as subjects to curb the feeling of being overwhelmed by the number of languages. Except for the Gauteng Province where all eleven South African languages are represented, all the other provinces have only three or four dominant languages. In the North West Province for instance, all four dominant languages and Sesotho can be accommodated in at least three schools per district. In the Northern Cape during apartheid days, there was one school in Kimberley that offered four languages: Setswana, IsiXhosa, English and Afrikaans. This can be done in the North West Province. One of the two universities in the North West Province has been offering IsiZulu for a number of years. The two universities can collaborate in adding two more indigenous languages, IsiXhosa and Sesotho to prepare teachers to teach these languages. One teacher said that the realization of the policy is made difficult because the department responds by employing language

coordinators instead of well- trained teachers to meet the demands in schools. It is important that provision of teachers to meet demands for indigenous languages should be taken as seriously as providing teachers for English and/or Afrikaans.

One of the reasons given for the failure of the LIEP is that there are no human resources to meet the demands for indigenous language teachers. The scarcity of resources depends on where and how the ministries are recruiting staff. All former Historically Black Universities (HBU's), the so-called Bush Colleges, taught indigenous languages. Since these institutions were meant to train personnel for homeland governments, they offered languages spoken in those homelands. In fact, not many university undergraduates chose English as a major because it was more difficult to get through first year of English at most of these institutions than to pass other Arts and Humanities courses. The complexion of university English department staff, to this day, demonstrates this fact. The researcher's undergraduate alma mater had its very first African teacher of English at its main campus in 1990, after thirty years of existence. There is a wealth of suitably qualified indigenous language teachers all over the country.

Some participants believed that most publications were in English. Although this is true, the historical factor of the experiment with the use of indigenous languages in schools in 1974 in particular proved that materials can be published in indigenous languages to teach all school subjects. Indigenous languages were developed by apartheid design to run Bantustans. In fact,

between 1973 and 1975 there was a massive production of textbooks in indigenous languages used from the then standards five and six (grades seven and eight). This project was summarily abandoned towards the end of 1974 and Afrikaans took over again. Therefore, if the whole standard six syllabus could be taught in indigenous languages, then, how are they incapable of teaching it now? If the entire Bantustan budget (*tekanyetso-kabo*) could be explained in Setswana, and words like "allergies" (*dikganano*) and "traffic" (*pharakano*) could have equivalents in Setswana, IsiZulu and IsiXhosa, what level of development is needed for these languages? It is the attitude of textbook publishers that sets the languages at a disadvantage, not the level of complexity or inadequacy of the languages. For instance, the current M-Net (a private television broadcasting company) awards have been extended for the past five years to include awards for books written in African languages. However, books in these languages are ranked lower than both English and Afrikaans books. The winning prize for the category of African languages is less than half the prize given English and Afrikaans books. M-Net's policy of linguistic discrimination is quite blatant in this regard. Unless the attitude changes, the notion that African languages are insufficient to convey complex thoughts will continue to be perpetuated.

Most participants who were supportive of the new LIEP lamented lack of commitment from government. Teacher 17 said that the government created too many obstacles for the introduction of other languages. There was too much bureaucracy involved in the request for additional languages. The Provincial Ministry of Education needs to be aware of the implicit and explicit hindrance of

the realization of the policy. However, the two language groups that have already made their demands heard and met will serve as a precedent for others who want to make the demands. Further, one teacher at school VA who advocated English only even for extra-curricula activities said that documents from the Provincial Ministry are written in English. So everybody has to use the language. The teacher believed that teachers and learners at this Afrikaans medium school dominated by first language speakers of Afrikaans, should speak English so that they do not misunderstand government documents. However, according to Constitutional provisions, the government owes it to the people to make information accessible to them in whatever official language they require. So the actual practice of government seems to violate the provisions of the Constitution in this regard.

Researchers influence government decisions, and their research should therefore yield reliable information. Mparutsa, Thondlana and Crawhall (1992, p. 239) observed that questionnaires that have been used to elicit attitudes are structured in such a way that they elicit cliched and stereotypical, almost predictable responses. Interpreters of research reports in government must be able to examine such possibilities. The researchers also state that in a study of attitudes, contradictions are bound to occur. In this study in particular, conflict of preferences between Afrikaans and Setswana was evident. Slabbert (1998, p. 36) and Mparutsa, Thondlhana and Crawhall (1992, p. 239) state that these contradictions and conflicts are inevitable. A consensus can be negotiated among participants if all demands cannot be met. Researchers, especially those

that advise governments on policy issues must make an effort to obtain, to a very large extent, reliable, corroborated information. Large scale research should be conducted to establish the language preferences of, and the potential demands made by stakeholders so that resources can be allocated to schools to meet these demands. The schools should not be caught unprepared and the government should make provisions for meeting demands and satisfying preferences that are not catered for in the LIEP. For instance, in this study, the learners' overwhelming preference for foreign languages above official languages should be considered.

The language provisions in the Constitution and the LIEP document need to be revisited. Both documents state that any two official languages should be offered by schools. This statement undermines the attempt to promote indigenous languages in that the pattern that emerges is that schools still use the apartheid policy of English and Afrikaans. There is very little if any attempt in the schools to add an indigenous language to the school language curricula. The chances of English and Afrikaans remaining dominant languages in the North West Province and indeed in the country seem inevitable. The clauses in the Constitution, the School Act, and the LIEP document have to be re-evaluated. As one teacher said: "English is an unofficial only official language." The Provincial government should therefore use its power to promote the use of indigenous languages in education, commerce and the law. While there is a need to acknowledge the international status of English, the Constitution and the LIEP guarantee the promotion of indigenous languages. However, the

"practicality" option minimizes the chances of indigenous languages being promoted. The results of this research points out the overwhelming support for English. The question is, would participants have responded differently if they understood the provisions of the LIEP?

The participants' preferences for English in this study must be acknowledged. The international status of English accounts for the participants' choices. However, given the fact that only twenty five percent of Africans, the largest population group in South Africa, is competent in English, the continued dominance of English serves to perpetuate inequalities. The government has an obligation to meet the language demands of the population but it must also live up to its promises of eradicating linguistic inequalities. Therefore it should not maintain the dominance of English at the expense of other languages.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1. Further research should be conducted on a bigger scale to determine language in education attitudes and to compare these across the privileged and the non-privileged schools and school communities.**
- 2. Research is needed in higher education language policy. Decisions that parents and learners make at high school will have a long- term effect on their tertiary education.**
- 3. The language attitudes of potential employers also need to be researched. Learners get the false notion that English and**

Afrikaans are the only two languages that can guarantee them jobs, especially in the media industry.

- 4. Survey and evaluate programs for training language education teachers at tertiary institutions.**
- 5. Conduct research on the distribution of resources for the development, teaching and promotion of the eleven official languages.**

This study set out to investigate the language attitudes and practices in the North West Province to determine the feasibility of the new LIEP. The reasons given for the preferences for languages and the views about the feasibility of the new LIEP shed light on the challenges of language in education policy implementation in the Province. Further, at least two former single medium, single race schools have now changed to all race, dual and/or parallel media. Still, there is a serious need to inform the stakeholders about their options and their right to choose the languages they prefer. The pedagogic implications of mother tongue instruction have to be emphasized in teacher preparation programs and in in-service training of teachers. The notion of the insufficiency of indigenous languages must be eradicate by introducing the socio-linguistic approach to language policy and planning as a sub-discipline of Language Studies and Linguistics at university and training colleges. The government needs to put more commitment to policy implementation by setting an example. For example one learner respondent in the study said: "Nobody important speaks IsiXhosa" – the President of the country's mother tongue – and

another learner respondent said “ I prefer English because the President of the country speaks English.” Mateene (1996, p. 1) says this about African leaders and their post-colonial language use:

The relationship between the exercise of power and language can not be overlooked. Political power and domination are not exercised in the language of those who are dominated. It is therefore quite normal that a change of political power be accompanied by a change of language. It is a sign of dishonesty and disappointment on the part of leaders who use African languages in their campaign for election. After being elected, they restart using a foreign official language, not known by the people who voted for them

The development of Afrikaans was a deliberate effort by the National Party to promote the language. Massive financial resources were poured into the development of Afrikaans. The present government can do the same for African languages if it really wants to live up to the Constitutional provision of “promoting previously disadvantaged languages.” If the government does not aggressively make provision for the practical implementation of this part of the policy, the eleven official language policy will remain a document, never to be realized in South Africa.

APPENDIX A

Letter of Request

P O Box 1915
Mafikeng 2745
16th January 2000

The Principal
..... High School
Mafikeng/Vryburg

Dear Mr. X

PERMISSION TO DO DATA COLLECTION AT YOUR SCHOOL

I would like to request your permission to collect data at your school for at least five visits in the first quarter of the school year.

I am currently doing research in education policy as part of my studies towards a Ph.D. in Language Policy and Planning at Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI USA.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Tumelontle Thiba

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this research is to find out how the language in education policy is implemented in schools in the North West Province, South Africa. The research will focus on the opinions of learners, teachers and parents about language in education issues. The study is conducted by the researcher as part of the fulfillment of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Language Policy and Planning, in the Department of English, at Michigan State University.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are requested to fill in the questionnaire to the best of your ability. You can withdraw from participation at any point if you wish to do so. Your withdrawal will be without penalty. You are also free to fill in only the part that you want to respond to. The time required for participation in this study is 20 minutes or less.

Your name and the name of your school will be kept confidential. Any information that you do not wish the researcher to use will be protected. Please ask questions at any stage while you are filling in the questionnaire or at a later stage. You could also direct your queries to Professor D. Wright, Chair of University Committee on Research involving Human Subjects, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA. Telephone: 091 517 355 2180

Thank you for your participation

Tumelontle Thiba

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I have read and understand the above.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION SURVEY

Please cross the statement that is most appropriate for you.

Part I: Bio-data

- 1. Gender:** **Male** **Female**
- 2. Home language:** a). Setswana. b). IsiXhosa. c). Afrikaans. d). English
e). Other/s _____
- 3. Other languages that you speak:** a). Setswana. b). IsiXhosa. c). Afrikaans.
d). English. e). Other/s _____

Part II

Please cross the most appropriate answer for your school.

- #### 4. Which languages are taught at your school and why?

Setswana

Reasons _____

b). IsiXhosa

Reasons _____

c) Afrikaans

Reasons _____

English

Reasons _____

5. Which language/s does your school use to teach and why?

Setswana _____

IsiXhosa _____

English _____

Afrikaans _____

6. Which language/s would you like your school to use to teach and why?

Setswana _____

IsiXhosa _____

Afrikaans _____

English _____

Other/s _____

7a Which language/s would you want your school to teach and why?

Setswana _____

IsiXhosa _____

Afrikaans _____

English _____

Other/s _____

or

7b. Which language/s would you not like your school to teach and why?

Setswana _____

IsiXhosa _____

Afrikaans _____

English _____

Other/s _____

8a. Which language/s are used for the following activities and why?

- a). Assembly** _____
- b). Sports** _____
- c). PTSA meetings** _____
- d). Letters to parents** _____

Which language/s should be used for the above activities and why?

- a). Assembly** _____
- b). Sports** _____
- c). PTSA** _____
- d). Letters to parents** _____

8b. Which language/s should be used in your final examinations and why?

- a). Setswana** _____
- b). IsiXhosa** _____
- c). Afrikaans** _____
- d). English** _____
- e). Other** _____

Part III

9. Comment on the language in education policy at your school in the next five years.

Thank you for your participation.

Ms. Thiba.

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