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THE LANGUAGE –IN-EDUCATION POLICY:
Opportunities and Challenges of Implementation in a Suburban School.

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Research Report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Education (MEd) in the division of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative evaluation of how one state school interprets and makes a decision on the language medium to use as guided by the Language in Education Policy [LiEP] that advocates multilingualism in schools. The study asks how the LiEP ideal informs the language policy in the school, and establishes reasons parents give for choosing English as medium of instruction to be used in classrooms. Following Parlett and Hamilton's (1976) evaluation as illumination framework, this study outlines the language medium ideal expressed in LiEP and describes the actual Language Policy of the School in practice and how it accords with LiEP in guiding the medium of instruction. Data collection methods in this report included document analysis, classroom observations, interviews and questionnaires. The key findings from the data illuminate; parents of the learners in the school view the national language policy in a positive light that it is inclusive despite the challenges it presents to implementation. The findings reflected the decision makers' endeavour to strengthen their case that by choosing English as medium of instruction is not to contravene the policy, but a democratic right to benefit their children. Findings in the report suggest that the national language policy in South Africa is regarded a valuable document to guide the selection on the medium of instruction in schools, but raises issues that need to be addressed to make it play a more effective role in educational contexts.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that 'The Language-in-Education Policy: Opportunities and Challenges of Implementation in a Suburban School' is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted from have been acknowledged by way of a complete list of reference. This Research Report has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

_____

Eunice Ntombizodwa Magwa

Date: 15 February 2013

Place: Johannesburg

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LOLT	Language of Teaching and Learning
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
PANSALB	Pan South African Language Board

CHAPTER 1

1.1: INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to evaluate how one state school interprets and makes a decision on the language medium to use guided by the Language in Education Policy [LiEP]. LiEP advocates the inclusion of all 11 South African official languages as medium of instruction in schools and safeguards the democratic rights of parents with respect to the choice of medium. The LiEP in arguing for multilingualism and inclusivity provides an enabling framework for promoting linguistic diversity and respect for language rights in schools. Exploring in detail the policy in action, its practices, its challenges and successes in implementation is central to gauge the value assigned to it as a document to guide the selection on the medium of instruction in the school. This study focus on establishing how the LiEP ideal informs the actual medium parents decided to adopt in the school.

Illuminative evaluation as a form of naturalistic inquiry was selected because it uses a range of qualitative methods to explore a programme as a whole, describe and interpret rather than measure and predict (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976; Worthens & Saunders, 1987). It establishes the use (Basson, 1998), addresses and illuminates a complex array of questions (Parlett & Dearden, 1977) to test the extent of implementation. It advocates a flexible methodology to capture informant's views in their own terms, from their perspective, to present what actually happens on the ground.

1.2: RESEARCH AIM

The broad aim of this research is evaluative, that is to establish how closely the national language policy emphasizing the inclusion of all languages as medium of instruction in state schools, accords with what parents actually decide as the language medium for the state school selected for study. Evaluation studies intend to weigh the relative merits of a policy or

programme ‘ideal’ against what ‘actually’ happens on the ground, to gauge effects and assist decisions to refine and develop practice.

1.3: RATIONALE

This study will inform decision makers and users on the effectiveness of the policy in the context of implementation. It will present to those who have a stake in the policy what the policy is doing, who it is affecting, how it is influenced by various situations in which it is applied, what those directly concerned regard as its advantages and disadvantages, to reduce uncertainties and improve effectiveness.

The study will identify ways in which the policy might be improved by clarifying aim, content and structure. This will develop an understanding of how the policy is expected to provide the desired effects to decision makers and users. Once the policy intentions have been identified, the researcher can explore the extent to which programmes objectives are met by planned activities, and provide decision makers with information about the future development of the program.

Finally, this study will expand upon previously identified complexities around the question of language and the language policy. This may shed light to decision makers if certain conditions can lead to schools effectively implementing the policy. This information will raise the level of debate on which medium is best suited for use in primary schools, especially in a diverse province like Gauteng.

1.4: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The post 1994 democratic elections in South Africa led to the government undertaking a serious commitment to recognize all eleven South African spoken languages as official

languages. A Language Task Group committee was appointed to produce a framework for the development of a comprehensive language policy that would promote the development and respect of all languages in recognition of the culturally diverse nature of the country. The LiEP came into effect on the 14th July 1997. The language policy makes provision parents and learners to choose the medium of teaching and learning upon admission to state schools. The national language policy further grants children a right to be educated in their own languages as enshrined in the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) which explicitly affirms language rights through active promotion of a policy of multilingualism.

Given the linguistic diversity in Gauteng, maintaining this policy of inclusivity seems to present difficulties in schools. The decision on which medium of instruction is best suited for use in primary learning has been extensively debated. The debate revolves around the use of English or the child's mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Scholars, like Van Tonder (1999, p.3), Mda (1997, p.153), and Osborne (2007, p.1-12) argue that home language as medium of instruction has cognitive and cost-effective benefits as it develops critical thinking and effective thinking. On the other hand, Ramasamy (2001, p.1) and Mgqwashu (2007) argue that using a language other than one's own mother tongue as medium has beneficial or no detrimental effect on the cognition of a child.

The South African learner performance in literacy and mathematics when compared to other countries is below the level of competence. Only 2% of learners in Grade 4 could attain the top international benchmark (Gauteng Department of Education Systemic Evaluation 2006/2007; PIRLS Report 2006). The medium of instruction is perceived to be one of the contributing factors. As Dr Ramphele in her position as educationist and political activist stated in an article with Sunday Times (8 March, 2009) that the poor performance of South African primary school children in numeracy and literacy is in many ways a result of the medium of instruction used in schools.

In addition, educators in township schools state that they are under pressure from parents to use English as the medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase. If mother tongue is used

some of these parents remove their children to English medium schools (de Klerk 2002, p. 2; Lafon, 2010, p. 419; Ngidi, 2007, p.1). According to these scholars, black learners move to coloured, Indian and white schools. However, this has been a one-way process, white learners had not moved to township schools. Therefore, this evaluation specifically sought to respond to the research questions by synthesizing what is known about the problem and its proposed remedies, to develop new information about the program's efficacy and understand the implications of the national language policy.

1.5: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two questions are posed for response in this study:

1. How closely does the school language policy of Zibambele Primary School follow the Language in Education Policy on the medium of instruction in schools?

2. What reasons do parents give for choosing the medium of instruction in the school policy?

In Research Question 1 I focus on establishing how Zibambele Primary School decision makers grapple with LiEP in its ideal form. More specifically, I intend to establish what parents have decided as language medium, if their choice was made democratically, and how closely it accords with the national language policy. I focus on establishing if this decision is taken with the best interests of the learners at heart. I concentrate on the formalised policy as ideal; its intentions, objectives and desired outcomes. Thereafter, the actual practice in the school is described to get an understanding of the complex dynamics of the decision-making process. I also attempt to give a sense of whether the language policy ideal is captured in the school's language policy and practice.

In Question 2 I 'uncover' reasons parents give in their own terms for deciding to use the language medium for teaching and learning in classrooms. Their reasons will be elicited in their own terms through questionnaires and interviews with parents, the School Governing

Body, principal and teachers. The intention was to gauge the value the school and parents assigned to the medium of instruction as a vehicle to ensure effective teaching and learning of their children and implications thereof in the teaching of numeracy [mathematics] and literacy [language as a subject] in Grade1. The question sought to explore in detail the policy in action, its practices, and its challenges of implementation.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1: INTRODUCTION

The national language policy is a crucial document that guides the selection of the medium of instruction in schools. It advocates for multilingualism with special attention to the development of mother tongue as language of learning and teaching. However, despite the fact that all (eleven) languages spoken in South Africa are elevated to official status; English is favoured by parents as primary language of instruction for learners (Beukes, 2004; de Klerk, 2002; Osborn, 2007). The literature reviewed in this study provided secondary data that already exist in relation to policy intention and what actually happens during execution in the classroom, to highlight the desired effects for implementation. Accordingly this review will discuss the implications for use in schools and the potential language policies have to influence choices by decision makers. The review of the literature on evaluation as a method defined the term, explained the framework used in the study and what it may do to strengthen debates about the choice of medium in the school selected for study.

2.2: THE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY PROVISIONS ON MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Ideally a language policy is defined as a declaration of intent for the implementation of a mission statement and a vision usually undertaken by governments to influence if not change ways of speaking or literacy practices within a society (Emenanjo, 2002; Baldauf, 2004). The language policy therefore determines which languages should get status and priority in society by being labeled “standard”, “official”, “local”, “national” (Gacheche, 2010). Accordingly, language policies must be democratic enough to accommodate all the cultural diversities, all the linguistic varieties and all repertoires identified in any nation, argues Emenanjo (2002); Gacheche, (2010); Harlec-Jones (1998); H. Wang (2008) and Y. Wang &

Phillion (2009). Practically all countries of the world are multilingual even if not all are administratively multilingual or have language policies that are sensitive to their multilingual and multicultural complexion. Countries like China, UK, South Africa and Cameroon amongst others are success stories. China is a multi-ethnic country with 55 minority groups and has 120 mother tongues in minority regions (Y. Wang & Phillion, 2009), in London alone 172 different languages are spoken (Emenanjo, 2002), South Africa is a multicultural country with more than eleven ethnic groups and more than 11 languages spoken (van Tonder, 1999; de Klerk, 2002; Osborne, 2007) and, in Cameroon 15 national languages are used as medium of instruction and the country advocates for the "use of local languages as co-vectors of teaching and acquiring knowledge" (Albaugh, 2012). The European Union (EU) respects cultural diversity and is committed to the promotion of multilingualism and members are encouraged to be multilingual and be able to speak two languages in addition to their mother tongues (*Languages in the European Union*, 2013).

Most developing countries are characterized by multilingual societies yet foreign languages of instruction pervade a majority of education system (Gacheche, 2010). Despite the fact that early language policies in education encouraged the use of mother tongue as medium in schools, little recognition is given to local indigenous languages in the curriculum. The trend is observed in South African suburban schools, only English and Afrikaans is taught (Lofin, 2010). A growing body of literature demonstrates this. In several countries (Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Namibia, Ghana to name a few, the lingua franca for administration and scholarly purposes use a foreign language as medium of instruction. Mother tongue is used in the first two or three years of primary schooling (Albaugh, 2012). The Singapore Government for example adopted English among the other 3 languages spoken in the country; Chinese, Malay and Tamil (Wu Man-Fat, 2005).

According to Lafon (2010) political events and public policies have a huge and often decisive impact on language status and hence language attitudes. With independence from the colonization the interests of the states like South Africa, Angola, Burkina Faso to name a few were best served by using multilingualism as medium of instruction because that enabled the education system to be maximally effective. However, in contrast countries like Namibia and

Botswana supported the use of English as media of instruction. It was claimed that having English as the official language would facilitate unity (Harlec-Jones, 1998).

By bringing indigenous languages and culture in the education framework it was assumed it would acknowledge the linguistic capital of black learners (Lafon, 2010) who would then be seen as commanding a valuable expertise. It was assumed that this long overdue recognition would enhance the status of township and rural schools as well as trigger a gain in self-confidence among township learners. Rather, instead it facilitated the movement of black learners into ex-Model "C" schools where the medium of instruction is English.

However in contrast, in the United States of America there is a critical national requirement for skilled speakers of language other than English (Jackson et al., 2009). Reasons cited are for increased capacity for national security and diplomacy, increased capacity for international commerce and economic development, increased global perspective and knowledge for all Americans, increased capacity to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse U.S. Citizenry, increased capacity for scholarship and research. To achieve the desired outcomes United States of America has thus established the teaching of foreign language programs and provides incentives for learners to enroll and study a foreign language.

Some analysts reflecting on this history consider the choice of languages in South Africa should lie solely with parents and / or learners and not the prerogative of the government. Lafon (2010) further states that; "if the stakeholders themselves show no interest in African languages so be it". Neely (2012) concurs that English is now the global language of business and that more and more multinational companies are "mandating English as the common corporate language" in an attempt to facilitate communication and performance across the geographically diverse functions and business endeavours.

The South African national language policy values and respect the rights of individuals as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Policy predicates the right for each nationality group to develop its own culture and language. Although individuals are officially granted rights, research reveals discrepancies between policy intentions and what

actually happens during implementation (Wang, 2008; Ngidi, 2007; Emenanjo, 2002). Language policies are re-interpreted into structural priorities which indirectly influenced daily learning and teaching. Implementation is conducted based on the classroom and political realities (Wang, 2008). In other words, changes were mitigated by the local contextual factors. In support of the above statement Romaine (2002) concurs that policy implementers may experience challenges given the fact that "language rights do not guarantee power to reinforce them".

2.2.1 The South African Language in Education Policy: Advantages

The promotion and development of all South African official languages (Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu including San and Sign Language) is afforded high priority in the national language policy. The LiEP ensures that all South Africans have the freedom to exercise their language rights. Furthermore the language policy makes provision for parents to decide on the language of teaching and learning for their children in schools. In particular, policy supports democracy at work and the redress of past imbalances in its promotion of locally spoken languages.

In comparison to other African countries like Angola, Namibia, Ghana, Congo Brazzaville and Kinshasa, Botswana and Burundi, the South African national language policy is regarded the best policy (Dowouna-Hammond, 2001; Harlec-Jones, 1998)). In these countries language policies are not democratic but prescribe to nationals which language is to be offered in education from primary level. As Osborne (2007, p. 3) points out, LiEP is a 'noble' document and the best solution to a society in which language differences had continued to be preserved and been regarded as separate. LiEP gives explicit recognition to the spirit of national unity and the linguistic interest of the government.

In proposing such measures, the South African national language policy seeks to guarantee learners' rights to be taught in a language they best understand to grasp what is taught in the classroom. In this instance rote learning can be avoided and learners can be more creative

because they will have better understanding of the material presented to them by the teachers in the classroom. Van Tonder (1999, p.3), Mda (1977, p.153), and Osborne (2007, p.1-12) argue that the basic right to education cannot function equitably unless the learner is taught in a language he/she understands. One of the developmental areas for a learner that receives attention at school is "verbal expression" (Pieterse 2007, p.171). This is when a child learns to conduct logical conversation and translates his thoughts to words. According to Pieterse (2007, p.171) if a learner is unable to verbalize his /her thoughts, whether due to an inadequate vocabulary or because he has not mastered the required language structures, he/ she will experience difficulty in learning to read or express him / her in writing.

LiEP describes the process to be followed in the selection of the medium of instruction. It allows parents to make the decision when it postulates that "all South Africans have the freedom to exercise their language rights by using official language/s of their choice". However, serious deliberations have to take place and difficult choices and decisions made on the merits of what is best for the learners. This unique linguistic background allows for both policy makers and implementers to take necessary steps to ensure that policy benefits learners. It is thus imperative for school administrators, educators and parents to fully understand the principles and values embedded in LiEP. In view of the fact that the right to choose has been regulated in the legislation, it is imperative that parents, in choosing any of the official languages including English, are in line with policy ideals.

However, as Smith (1962, p. 112) points out, language is an instrument and vehicle of teacher-student interaction. From the first day of school the learner will be taught and will have to learn primarily through the medium used in the classroom. The learner needs to understand what is being said and ask questions about things he does not understand. Pieterse (2007, p. 171) argues that well developed language skills, particularly a well-established ability to speak fluently, are of the utmost importance and the classroom should be a place to celebrate, respect and build on what learners know.

The South African School Act (Act No 84 of 1996) has tasked the School Governing Bodies with the responsibility of determining the language policy of the school. They have to do this in consultation with the entire school community that they serve. In determining the language policy, the School Governing Body (SGB) has to conduct a thorough assessment that takes into consideration the socio-economic status of the school community to determine whether the school will be able to cater for the introduction of a language chosen as medium. The SGB also has to determine the staffing needs of the school because staff allocation conducted by the education department is based on the number of learners enrolled and not on the languages of the learners.

The SGB should also ensure that there are enough speakers of the language to be introduced and whether there is considerable interest in the community to have children taught in that preferred language. The policy also states that in determining the language policy of the school, the SGB must stipulate how the school "will promote multilingualism through using more than one language of teaching and learning and/or by offering additional languages as fully fledged subjects, and/or apply special immersion or language maintenance programmes, or through other means approved by head of the provincial Department of Education" (LiEP, 1997).

A study by de Klerk (2002, p. 9-10) reveals that 88% of the parents favour the maintenance of the home language alongside a second language such as English. According to her, despite the high levels of awareness of the importance of home languages, the practical reality is that there are inadequate literacy resources, funding is too low and while there are schools available to teach home languages most of these schools offer third-rate education as a result of under resourcing and an appallingly low level of trained teachers.

2.2.2 The South African Language in Education Policy: Disadvantages

LiEP advocates for multilingualism and promotes freedom of choice. Given the language rights for parents in schools and the diverse learner demographics in Gauteng schools, one of the limitations of LiEP is the cost effectiveness in maintaining its ideals. The need to promote mother tongue is a simple one, argues Mgqwashu (2007), for learners "learn best in the languages they know from their parents". It is in these languages that "they can best create and innovate". However this did not lead to the adoption of indigenous languages by its speakers as media in schools. People's attitudes when faced with a choice between languages influenced them to choose English argues Ngidi (2007). English is a language associated with socio-economic value; therefore proficiency in the language is of high importance. Hence Schiffman (1996) in Romainne points out that we cannot assess the chances of success of policies without reference to culture, belief systems and attitudes about language.

According to Gacheche (2010) an education system that fosters instruction mainly in the language of the dominant group greatly disadvantages minorities and marginalized communities, denying them the right to quality education. Conversely, supporting and maintaining dialects is as challenging within a single indigenous language due to the fact that meaning may be conveyed differently. One can only imagine scenarios in multilingual classrooms where a teacher is expected to cater for individual language needs as minority language speakers usually demand recognition of their languages too. Currently the education system is confronted with lack of resources to cater for all languages, unqualified or under qualified educators, overcrowding in classrooms, the constant curriculum changes which unsettle educators, to name a few to be able to implement (Mgqwashu, 2007).

Romaine (2002, p. 2) argues that a policy with such language rights does not guarantee that home language as medium of instruction will be maintained because implementation depends on individual decisions. The development and maintenance of language depends more on home language speakers than on what policy prescribes. Language survival cannot depend on

legislation alone for its main support (Romaine 2002, p. 2) since legislation can only provide speakers of the language with rights to claim some public space for their languages and culture. It is only a change of mindset that can improve the status of indigenous languages. Elevating the previously marginalised languages in a country whose society has been structured along racial and linguistic lines for many years is an honourable decision, states Mgqwashu (2007, p.1). However, the declaration of official inclusivity was more a corrective measure for the discrimination indigenous South Africans have suffered than a means to enforce language usage. As Strubell (2001, p. 268) in Romaine points out, "the way people bring up families- including the language they choose –is not for authorities to decide."

Toffelson (2002, p. 79) draws our attention to the complexity of the language policy as a document that purports to elevate all eleven South African languages to official status. This implies that all eleven spoken languages in the country have to be used as medium of instruction in schools and that every parent has a right to have his/ her child taught in the language of choice. However such rights may be limited by the impracticalities of implementation. State authorities employ language policies to govern the choice of medium; however, it is the teachers who are confronted with diverse languages in the classrooms. Jagger (1989, p.129) cites, "often in multilingual classes, as the year progresses, the task of teaching and learning disintegrates into a struggle to impose, correct or mainstream learners who may be confused by or uncomfortable with forms of knowledge."

Furthermore, Louw (1992, p. 2) points out that a policy treating all languages as equal amounts to a 'no policy at all' approach, and appears to be motivated by a 'do not know what to do' and 'let's not offend anyone' approach. This translates into an impossible policy to implement from a cost point of view since it would amount to having to facilitate education in all the spoken languages in South Africa. Taken to its logical conclusion, this would mean employing enough teaching staff to cater for every spoken language, build more schools and provide learning and support material for every learner in their home language which is tantamount to the government allocating the bulk of the budget to the department of education to cater for such needs.

It is clear that the current trend in the majority of schools in Gauteng is that parents choose English as language of teaching and learning for their children and not indigenous languages (Wits School of Education Report, 2009; Beukes, 2004; de Klerk, 2002). The views expressed by district offices, principals and heads of department make it apparent that language policy and its practice in the classroom remains one of the most complex and currently intractable challenges facing Foundation Phase education in Gauteng (Wits School of Education Report, 2009, p. 141). According to the report, in the predominantly multilingual schools studied there was little evidence to suggest that the school's language policies were informed and influenced by an accurate analysis of learner and teacher language background. Competence and skills are necessary in the teaching of any subject, inclusive of language of instruction (Percy, 2009) and teachers require training to teach different languages.

Scholars like Beukes (2004, p. 17), Mgqwashu (2007, p. 2) and the authors of the Wits School of Education Report (2009, p. 110) highlight the gaps in the national language policy in terms of teacher qualifications. These scholars point out that at present it does not appear that initial teacher training has fully covered the range of classroom language situations as recommended in the national language policy. They argue that if multilingualism is to be implemented as official policy, it is important that teachers themselves are 'certified' to teach more than one official language. The adequate training of Foundation Phase [Grade R to 3] teachers to be competent in their schools' language of teaching and learning and First Additional languages is a matter in need of attention as teachers clearly need good training in second language teaching as many of their learners are learning through a second language.

LiEP advocates for multilingualism whereas the Admission Policy [GDE Circular 34] sets guidelines for the admissions of learners in state schools. The placement of learners who have to progress from primary to secondary schools depends to a great extent on feeder zones and not on the medium of instruction used in both the primary and secondary school. In other words, according to the admission policy, priority is given to available space to accommodate learners in the school than to the home language of learners. This poses a challenge to schools

in terms of the proficiency of learners in the language used as medium of instruction in the secondary school.

Policy recommends that learners be taught in their home languages from Grade 1 to 2 and that in Grade 3 (LiEP: 2) home language be taught as an additional language. When such learners progress to Grade 4 they automatically convert and learn all subjects in English as medium of instruction. The expectations here are that learners have to cope with the work despite the language limitations. Learning and teaching materials are important tools to support the learning and teaching in the classrooms. However a shortage of materials to support indigenous languages has been noted (Mgqwashu, 2007). The Department of Education budget for learning and support material does not cater for all official languages. The per capita allocation for learners differs in line with the categorization of schools according to the quintile status. Quintile 1 to 3 schools are classified as schools in the poorest of the poorest communities. The national benchmark per learner in schools categorized by the Gauteng Department of Education as Quintile 1 to 3 (poorest of the poorest) is R829, 00 per learner per year (Budget Vote Address 2011). And in terms of the staffing one educator is expected to teach forty learners [40: 1] in Foundation Phase

Kitson & Merry (1997, p.7) argue that language is the central component of the classroom relationship and the basis for most interaction. The language used by teachers in the classroom is a major element of vital communication. Teacher-pupil talk is the medium through which learners encounter much of the curriculum. It is the medium for classroom organization, management and control, a medium for socialization into schooling and culture. As pointed out by de Klerk (2002, p. 1-12) it is clear that the attempt by the government to promote all eleven official languages and the rights of their speakers is a seeming impossibility, and there is increasing evidence that English is growing in its tendency to monopolise many areas of public administration in South Africa. As Romaine (2002) argues, “democratically weak languages need firm proactive policies in order to survive and thrive.”

Romaine (2002, p. 4), further states that what appears to be ostensibly the same policy may lead to different outcomes depending on the situation in which it operates. English remains the dominant language, and majority of parents feel it is the language that is key to the success of their children. Indigenous languages are perceived as having little to offer except in everyday communication between communities and family members (de Klerk 2002, p. 6). The same fate has been observed in African states like Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya and Zambia which made at independence declarations favours a multilingual approach with the objective of developing indigenous African languages and empowering people through their own languages. However as Osborne (2007, p. 2-3) states, "what these countries have achieved is hardly more than a label without legal implications".

The demand for English among learners and parents works against the implementation of inclusive multilingualism in education. As language issues can be politically sensitive and affect every one, decisions on languages "need to be acceptable to the majority" argues Kamwendo (2000, p. 4). In other words it is pointless to think that "grand declarations of policy …..would be effective if they are not tied to a – preferably existing- legal instrument with effective machinery for reinforcement" (Romaine, 2002).

2.3: MOTHER TONGUES AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

There is a critical national requirement for skilled speakers of languages other than English argue Jackson (2008). Language abilities are essential characteristics of a well-educated-citizenry. Martin (2004, p. 15) argues the importance of language as medium to "access education" for it is the cornerstone of success in a technological driven economy. Linguistic equity is thus needed in order to realize the democratic ideals of multilingualism. Viewed from this perspective, the importance of language as medium of instruction cannot be ignored.

Since the introduction of multilingualism, different types of concerns related to language teaching have been raised. For example Emenanjo (2002) mentions the fear of loss of African values with the dominance of English, the cultural gaps between generations which speak

different languages and the potential disharmony between mother tongue and English. Hence Webb (1996) points out it is of paramount importance that language policy makers take note of people's language attitudes and preferences so that their policy can reflect the needs of the people, and not the interests of any particular group.

Apart from many idiomatic phrases, a speaker has to know the "social conversions" for language use. These range from word definitions and grammatical rules to the processes involved in understanding the whole text, story or article argues Greene (1989, p. 13). Mgqwashu (2007) highlights the importance of using mother tongue as the medium of instruction. He states that "learners learn best in their own language, the language they know from their parents". Lu (2002, p. 8) concurs that mother tongue education can best serve learner's needs for acquiring commonsense knowledge, educational knowledge and technical knowledge.

However, Ramasamy (2001, p 5) encourages us to look at both sides of the coin. He argues that educating a child through a medium other than his own mother tongue may either beneficial or detrimental effects on cognition. He further argues that although the balance is certainly in favour of mother tongue as medium of instruction as a pragmatic approach, in a pilot study conducted in schools in Hong Kong, learners taught in English scored better than learners taught in their mother tongue on measures of "nonverbal intelligence" and three dimensions of "verbal creativity", namely fluency, flexibility and originality.

My argument here is that there is a significant implication that can be drawn from the two approaches; the cognitive benefits for learners who are taught in mother tongue and cognitive benefits of learners taught in structured second language but under appropriate conditions. As Greene (1989, p. 17) argues, language is defined as having two main functions, external communication with other people and internal representation of own thoughts. Language shapes our thoughts. Walkin (1982, p. 159) explores the importance of linguistic knowledge required for effective communication and provides an integrative overview of how the components of the language systems combine together to convey readily standardized

meaning to others. Each of these theories is important for they show how the meaning of language is represented in communities.

South African language policy is regarded as being one of the most progressive legislations in the world (Osborn, 2007; Beukes, 2004; de Klerk, 2002), however many schools in Gauteng are not implementing it (Wits School of Education Report, 2009, p.157). According to this report school data show that Gauteng is linguistically an extremely diverse province in terms of languages spoken in the province. The majority of learners (75% in Grade 1-3) are not learning through their home languages and do not have an opportunity to learn their home language either as subject or as First Additional Language. The research suggests that in the Foundation Phase at least, Gauteng has not yet implemented effective ways of addressing the stated aim to promote multilingualism. The lack of common home language in the school, the constant changing demographics due to the migration of people to cities to look for greener pastures complicates implementation (Wits School of Education Report, 2009, p. 153).

Nevertheless policy favours mother tongue as the medium of instruction in the first four years of primary schooling and on the same note allows for flexibility in terms of language choice as it states that learners can learn with a language of their choice 'where it is reasonably practical' (LiEP, 1997). This gives parents the prerogative to decide the medium of instruction they want for their children. de Klerk (2002, p. 2) warns us to carefully examine assumptions that parents who send their children early on to English schools have willingly abandoned their mother tongue in exchange for English. It is not the case, she states, but may be due to pressure from "elite" parents to make the decision. Parents are looking out for their children's future and their decision is based on what is best for them. Lemmer in de Klerk (1996, p. 20) also cautions us that language in education policies designed to redress former racial inequality "may universally unintentionally create new class stratifications". Moreover, the proposed equal treatment of indigenous languages embodied in the Constitution often means their decline in practice in the light of their impotency to compete with the popularity of perceived advantages associated with English.

We are also cautioned by Mgqwashu (2007, p. 3) against making "unrealistic assumptions" that in reversing the past injustices incurred by speakers of the indigenous languages through introducing indigenous languages as medium of instruction at all levels of education in South Africa "will result in economic development and improvement of living conditions for all". To keep up with the constantly changing economic, social, technology and political world trends, it is important for decision makers to view the language policy and its impact on teaching and learning in schools seriously. For, many learners in primary schools who are not taught in their home languages, the medium may end up a barrier to learning and deny learners access to education (Wits School of Education Report, 2009, p. 125). Children develop a sense of the order of the academic world and their place within it, their status relative to the teachers and peers, the nature of the tasks they face, and the relative legitimacy ascribed to their cultural and linguistic resources (Wits School of Education Report, 2009, p. 165).

The language used by teachers in the classroom is a major element of vital communication, the "classroom discourse", as Cortazzi (1997, p. 139) argues. This discourse frames learning. Teacher-pupil talk is the medium through which learners encounter so much of the curriculum. It is the medium for classroom organization, management and control, a medium for socialization into schooling and culture. According to Cortazzi there are good reasons for teachers to teach in a language learners understand because "children in their primary phase are still acquiring their mother tongue, and in many case a second or other language". This means that they are still developing areas of grammar, pronunciation, and most clearly vocabulary, but more than this they are developing sociolinguistic skills of appropriate use and their awareness of language itself. They are developing the ability to reflect on the language and deliberately master it. Altwerger & Ivener (1997, p. 73) concurs by stating that if a learner's home language is included in the curriculum and learning environment, learners learn that this language is respected and valued. It is vital then for the teacher to present an appropriate model of language so that learners will understand and be able to benefit in classroom interaction. The aims of the language policy should be particularly noted with regard to pursuing multilingualism and granting rights to learners to learn through their home language.

2.4: ENGLISH AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Central to a discussion on language policy implementation in South Africa is the "complex" if not paradoxical status of English, argues Beukes (2004, p.7). The continuing state of inequality among languages points to the difficulty of achieving 'respect for all languages' states Mda (2004, p. 129). In the policy all languages are equal and are to be treated as such, but in reality, English still occupies a dominant position and it is held in high esteem by all who aspire to be successful socially and economically (de Klerk, 2002; Mda, 2004; Beukes, 2004; Osborne, 2007). A sociolinguistic survey by PANSALB (2000, p. 187) confirms the position of English as the language of power. As pointed out by e Klerk (2002, p. 89) language parity is still a seeming impossibility, and the increasing evidence, ironically, that English is growing in its tendency to monopolise many public areas of public administration in South Africa, and in many other multilingual contexts such as business and schools.

Al-Sutan in (2009, p. 12) argues that knowing or mastering English language is of paramount importance, however, it should not be to the extent of submerging cultural identity. According to him, by making English the medium of instruction we will be killing our own languages. Conversely de Klerk (2004: p. 2) raises critical and practical realities about the current linguistic nature of South Africa. She argues that the functional deficiency and low levels of development for indigenous languages in terms of corpus, status, and prestige in the area of education commerce, science and technology increases demand for English to access what people see as essential for success.

From a linguistic point of view, there is no evidence to challenge the notion that all languages and dialects are equal argues Edwards (1983, p. 68). It is possible to hold up examples of some vocabulary or structures in one language or dialect as arguably superior to those of another. For instance, some people might claim that English is more precise than other languages because it makes distinctions between the progressive and habitual it is equally possible, however, to find counter examples in other languages. Whereas no one language is

superior from a linguistic point of view, there can be no doubt that some language varieties are socially superior to others (Edwards 1983, p. 68).

Harley (1995, p. 379) examines a number of methods that have been used to teach second language. He explores Berlitz and Krashen's (1982) critical hypothesis of bilingualism in second language acquisition. He defines second language acquisition as a process whereby a child or adult has already become competent in a language and then attempts to learn another. He distinguishes between four traditional methods; the direct method with emphasis on conversational skills, the audio-lingual method which emphasizes speaking and listening, the immersion method that teaches a group of learners exclusively through the medium of foreign language and lastly the submersion where the learner is surrounded exclusively by speakers of the second language. In his argument he states that normally the conditions are such that it is more difficult learning the second language than the first. The learning of English is important, but then so, also, is the maintenance and development of one's mother tongue argues Mills:

> if the balance is right, the expectation is that each language will feed off and enhance the other, to the benefit of the learner in terms of language, cultural sensitivity and cognitive functioning. (Mills, 1993, p. 5)

Language shapes our thinking (Greene 1989, p. 66), and the relationship between language and thought is a complex one. People cannot understand language without knowing something about the context in which an utterance occurs. They use the general knowledge about the world to make inferences about what meanings a second language speaker or writer conveys. This involves a lot of high level knowledge about the world (schemas), events which are likely to occur and social conventions for different types of communication. Hence, by developing a greater understanding of the complex language structures that exist in the classroom, teachers can be helped to gain insight into learning relationships they create and the effects they have on children's learning (Kitson & Merry, 1997, p. 7). Teachers require skills to teach in multilingual classrooms (Percy, 2009) as when they are placed in schools where children have different cultural backgrounds from their own they struggle to provide quality education. Second or third language speakers of English face problems in learning and

teaching in English as a result of interference from the first language. Percy (2009) argues that the learners will require initial teaching coupled with remedial teaching.

It is clear from the above viewpoints that the status of English is strengthening and influences the choice of language in schools.

2.5: EVALUATION - ILLUMINATION AS EVALUATION

Evaluation methods are distinguishable from other research methods in terms of their purpose, which is to establish whether specified activities, systems, are effective or not. They are used to assess how far certain programmes are actually achieving the objectives set for them (Breakwell and Millward, 1995). Usually evaluation focuses on determining the worth or value of educational and social programs, policies, and personnel judged according to appropriate criteria with those criteria explicated and justified. House (1993, p.11) concurs that evaluation research is a form of "applied research which aims to produce information about implementation, operation and ultimate effectiveness of policies and programmes designed to bring about change". Evaluation may on occasion go further and attempt to establish why objectives are not achieved and inform whether what is happening is producing the expected results.

Early critics of the use of evaluation research were quick to point out that while such traditional methods may make it possible, under certain conditions to determine whether or not a particular programme had an impact, they offer little insight into the social processes which actually account for the changes observed. Conventional approaches are capable of showing the extent to which a consistent programme has reached its goals, but rarely why the observed results occur and what processes intervene between input and output (Clarke 1970, p. 2).

According to Parlett and Hamilton (1976, p. 1) illuminative evaluation unambiguously stands within the anthropological paradigm. It takes account of the wider contexts in which education programs function. Illuminative Evaluation's primary concern is with description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction. Within a three-stage framework; observation, further inquiry and explanation, the investigation focuses on issues that emerge.

Illuminative evaluation is about discovering and understanding why things happen the way they do. It is about gathering information, establishing and comparing theory and practice and bringing together case and method to find match and mismatches to adjudicate worth. In illuminative evaluation the researcher describes and interprets for the reader to appreciate. The researcher observes and doesn't assume. He / she unravel the whole process and describe it as vividly as possible. What the school values, impacts on the innovation especially the illumination, for it doesn't assume uniformity but acknowledges diversity (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976). Traditionalists in education assume there is no change in the intentions and implementation of the curriculum, but in evaluation we believe curriculum changes when you get to the classroom. Curriculum evaluators identify gaps, make informed decisions, work with evidence, and go out there to find data to make adjudications of worth to give to stakeholders concerned where to improve.

Basson (1998) points out that we evaluate the curriculum in an endeavour to optimize the use of a facility and inform decisions about use. He argues that evaluation aims to establish the "us" to which users put on the programme in the classroom, and make suggestions about the usage as approach to curriculum. More specifically he states, a programme is evaluated to establish "what users do with it, what worked with the implementation and what form it take" (Basson, 1998).

Clarke (1970, p. 4) quoting House (1993, p. 3) asserts:

> evaluation serves important legitimating, information, and control functions for governments in advanced capital societies.

This is nowhere more apparent than in the field of state education where concern about standards of schools and the introduction of new policy initiatives create a demand for a more systematic approach to evaluation. The focus of an evaluation, he states, will determine what kinds of information the evaluator needs to collect. Decisions as to what methods will be employed can only be made once the object of an evaluation [pupils, teachers, schools, colleges, curricula, educational programmes and policy initiatives] has been identified. As regards to school performance evaluation, there are four major sources of information: research findings; performance indicators; self evaluation and inspections.

Parlett and Hamilton (1976) argue that understanding, establishing issues, interpreting, bringing out the match and mismatch between the intentions and implementer, leads to objectivity that will yield reproducible and justifiable results. Illumination in evaluation takes into consideration the programme participants among others. And since educational objectives are to produce certain desirable changes in the behaviour patterns of users, evaluation is the process for determining the degree to which these changes in behaviour are actually taking place. As Patton (1976) notes:

> evaluators need to be sophisticated about matching research methods to the nuances of particular evaluation questions …and have a large repertoire of research methods and techniques available to use on a variety of problems".

For the policy under review (LiEP), in depth evaluation is important and necessary to establish a match and mismatch between policy ideal and what actually happens in classrooms, and thus judge the degree of failure or success of the school policy in practice.

Evaluation is also important to establish how closely the policy plan is actually achieved in the school and reasons parents give for the choice of language of instruction. This approach highlights the strengths that the program may have that may also facilitate implementation. It will also highlight weaknesses that may need to be improved for the effective implementation of the program. As Chen (2004, p. 134) notes, program evaluation in general should facilitate

stakeholders' search for appropriate actions to take in addressing problems and improving programs. The possible disparities between "theory" and "ideal" and between practice and reality bring out the matches and mismatches against what is intended by policy and what actually happens in the school. In-depth evaluation is important and necessary towards this end. Patton (2002, p. 10) defines programme evaluation as the systemic 'collection' of information about activities, characteristics and outcomes of the programme to make judgement about the programme, improve its effectiveness and/ or inform decisions about future programming. This is what distinguishes illuminative in evaluation from other evaluation approaches in terms of their purpose. Illumination in evaluation establishes whether specified activities, systems and physical arrangements are effective (Parlett & Hamilton, 1975 & 1997, Fetterman, 1995).

2.6: CONCLUSION

The literature reviewed in this study highlights LiEP's ideal and its contribution to guide decisions on the choice of medium in state schools. The discussion examines advantages LiEP may have to guide the selection on the medium of instruction in schools. The literature reviewed also highlighted significant limitations that national language policies may have that impede implementation. Language rights do not guarantee power to reinforce them. Current debates on which medium of instruction, mother tongue or English is best suited for teaching and learning in primary schools and its implications were also reviewed. However, there appears to be an increase in studies that support the teaching of learners in a language they best understand and are proficient in. Literature on evaluation to define the term was discussed to explain the framework used in the study and what it may do to strengthen debates about the medium. The design is described in Chapter 3. The following chapter show how policy plan is actually interpreted and achieved.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1: INTRODUCTION

For this study to yield information that can be rich and enlightening, information that may provide new leads or raise questions that otherwise might never have been asked, this study employed multi-methods as data gathering tools. The different methods were combined to produce different but supporting ways of collecting the data. As Denscombe (2005, p. 132) agrees that "seeing things from different perspectives and the opportunity to corroborate findings can enhance the validity of the data". The data collection tools included the following; document analysis, classroom observations, semi-structured one -on -one interviews and semi-structured questionnaires.

3.2: DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The conceptual framework of this study locates the program evaluation with program theory and theory driven evaluation as identified by Chen (2004). Theory driven evaluation uses the action model and change model to address contextual factors and planning and implementing issues that are greatly interested to stakeholders. Program theory is defined as a set of explicit or implicit assumptions by stakeholders about what action is required to solve a social, educational or health problem and why the problem will respond to this action. The purpose of theory-driven evaluation in this study is not only to assess whether a program works or does not work, but also how and why. This information is essential for stakeholders to improve their existing or future program. As a basis for designing theory –driven evaluation, systematic configuration of prescriptive assumptions and descriptive assumptions underlying the program were taken into consideration. Descriptive assumptions "change model" (Chen, 2004, p. 18) deals with what processes are expected to happen to attain program goals. Prescriptive assumptions "action model" (Chen, 2004, p. 18) deals with what action must be

taken in a program to produce desirable results. Theory- driven evaluation uses the action model and change model to address contextual factors and planning and implementation issues that are greatly interest stakeholders.

The conceptual framework selected will thus give full information from the implementation. Similarly the information from the change model can be used to improve the implementation. Policy intentions and practices are the concrete measurable aspects of these goals that will gauge the effects and render judgement on failure or success of the policy in action. To reach goals programs require a focus which will clarify the lines the evaluation design should follow. More specifically, program theory must be explicit. This depicts the broad context within which this study locates the evaluation of the program in study and the different stages of the evaluation including the interpretation of the effectiveness of the program based on Chen's (2004, p. 21) program theory.

3.2.1 Research Site

This research was conducted from 2008 to 2009 at Zibambele Primary School [a fictitious name] in Gauteng. The school was chosen because it was a state school and many of the learners spoke at least one of five of the official languages of South Africa. The languages referred to were 486 learners speaking Setswana, 157 speaking isiZulu, 126 isiXhosa, 81 Sesotho and 71 Afrikaans. The school was also chosen because of the class size. The number of learners enrolled in Grade 1 was 129 which were sufficient to source information from the parents on the choice of language of instruction. The school was also accessible to the researcher as it was within a walking distance. The criteria for selecting the site were important because the site present an opportunity to explore how the national policy of inclusivity was actually achieved in the school.

3.2.2 Purposive Sampling

The research was conducted in Gauteng West District (Krugersdorp, Randfontein, Kagiso, and Westonaria) and involved Parents, Educators, the School Governing Body [SGB] Chairperson, and the school Principal. The reason for including these informants was for the rich experience they had concerning LiEP and medium of instruction as well as powers to influence the choice of the medium of instruction in the school. One hundred and thirty four [134] informants participated in the collection of the data. They are the parents of learners in the three Grade 1 classes [all 129], the school Principal, the Head of Department in the Foundation Phase, the School Governing Body (SGB) Chairperson and two Grade 1 educators. All informants were chosen based on the fact that they had appropriate knowledge and experiences on the subject of study and were likely to provide the type of information that the researcher needed to answer the research questions. They were chosen because they were vested with powers to decide on the medium of instruction to be used in the school. Teachers were chosen because of their qualifications and experience to teach in a multilingual classroom in the Foundation Phase. I chose Grade I educators because educators teaching in this grade experience difficulty as learners experience formal teaching and learning for the first time and are expected to learn to read and write.

Participants were also chosen because they could be persuaded to adopt the results of the study in their own setting.

3.2.3 Documents

The Language in Education Policy and the School Language Policy were the source of documents used to evaluate whether the Zibambele Primary language policy followed the national language policy. The documentary material provided the national language policy 'plan' and how it emphasizes inclusion of all languages as medium of instruction in state schools. The School Language Policy outlined how the school interprets the Language in Education Policy and how LiEP influenced decisions on the language medium to use as adopted by parents. Content analysis of the national language policy provided useful

information on policy goals and intentions. The content analysis of the school language policy provided information on the value the school assigned to policy as an important document to guide the selection of the medium of instruction. The analysis of the documents explained in-depth policy intentions and gave a detailed and accurate picture of what was happening in the school, and how policy is understood and implemented. I also looked at the school vision and mission, teaching and learning aids as well as signage in the school to learn what I could about the medium used and how it supports curriculum delivery. The analysis provided a comprehensive understanding on what the school valued and why.

While it was important for the evaluator make use of the data derived from the documents, limitations were also recognized. The documentary information was treated with caution, taking into consideration that they may not constitute an independent and objective record of events and circumstances (Clarke, 1970, p. 85). With the permission of the School the documents were photocopied for further interpretation.

3.2.4 Non participant Observation

Non participant observations extended over six months from June to November 2008. I conducted observations in three Grade 1 classrooms that had a teacher-learner ratio of 43:1. The Grade 1 classrooms were selected with an aim to get a broader picture and capture in detail the policy in action, its practices, its challenges and successes in the context of implementation. 24 lessons in total were observed, 12 Literacy and 12 Numeracy. The duration of the lessons observed ranged from 1 hour to 2 hours depending on the intensity of the concept taught and how learners responded to the information. The observations started before the actual teaching and learning process, the reason being to acquaint myself with the school's social and cultural dynamics and to gain firsthand experience of daily lived experiences. The classroom arrangement was similar in all classrooms observed. The tables and chairs were arranged in rows and learners sat in pairs facing the chalkboard. A carpet was laid in front of the classrooms next to the teacher's table where learners assembled when a new concept was introduced.

Observations were conducted to understand the unique patterns of circumstances, pressures, customs, opinions and work styles which suffused the teaching and learning that occurred in the classrooms. As Shepard (1992) argues:

> in order to ascertain the real meaning of people's behaviour in a particular situation it is of utmost importance that the researcher study and know the customs, lifestyle and cultural contexts of the respondents in a culture-sensitive manner.

Teacher-pupil interaction took place. Instructions and class rules were discussed, teacher will teach the concept, questions and answers will be clarified and class work given to learners to reinforce what was taught. A sample of learners work was collected to ascertain whether learners could grasp what was taught.

To broaden the data collection and get an opportunity to observe the educator and learner, educator and parent relationship in a more relaxed atmosphere I attended two related school events, an award giving ceremony and an end of year school concert. Observations in this instance highlighted evidence pointing to English as preferred medium of communication. Through the observations I managed to unravel and capture the viewpoints of informants as accurately as possible in both the human activity and the physical setting. However, during the process I assumed a total observer role to maintain a high level of objectivity in the interpretation of the data. Studying the 'natural' and the everyday setup was undertaken to gain additional insight into the manifestation of reality in the phenomenon. Clarke (1970,

p. 79) explains that evaluators should be sensitive to the various ways people behave and how they interact in different physical settings. To minimize investigator bias and allow for verification of the data, information was captured in field notes in a chronological description of what happened. Data gathering expanded beyond the immediate observation, they contained a comprehensive account of the respondents themselves, the events taking place, the actual discussions and communications and the observer's perceptions and feelings. The notes are a record of what the observer saw and heard. However, the mere presence of the researcher in itself altered the originality of the situation observed. The researcher was

employed by the Gauteng Department of Education as district official whose main role was to monitor and support educator and learner performance in schools. This may have in way intimidated the educators observed.

3.2.5 Semi-structured one on one Interview

I conducted semi-structured one on one interviews with the school Principal, the School Governing Body Chairperson, the Foundation Phase Head of Department [who was also teaching a Grade1 class] and 2 Grade 1 educators to 'uncover' reasons in the participants' own terms for deciding to use the language for teaching and learning. The aim was to get a detailed picture of the participants' beliefs, perceptions or accounts about the policy so as to gauge the value the school and the parents assigned to the chosen medium as vehicle to ensure effective teaching and learning of the learners. The purpose was also to confirm the information that emerged from the document analysis and observations so that I could corroborate data. Interviewing is research method widely used by evaluators to obtain as accurate a view as possible of how stakeholders feel about a variety of aspects of a programme (Clarke, 1970, p.71). One on one interview promoted a dialogue with each participant to gain a detailed picture of participant's perceptions and accounts.

Open-ended questions were used and they revolved around reasons behind the choice of the medium. Questions were posed in a specific order however the order at times varied within the context of an individual interviewed. For example, when T3 was reluctant to divulge information I probed to elicit more information by encouraging the respondent to expand on her response and was able to follow up on certain interesting avenues that emerged in the interview as participant gave a fuller picture. There were also occasions during the interviews when I probed deeper into the topic to get justification for a response. However the interview had its limitations. My personal status as an official from the department of education had a bearing on the amount of information the interviewees were willing to divulge. There were times I noticed that respondents felt awkward and defensive in their responses. Whenever this was the case I assumed that the information they supplied was what they saw fit was what I

expected of them. With the permission of the respondents, the discussions were captured in field notes and on a tape recorder as an accurate record for interpretation.

3.2.6 Semi-structured Questionnaires

One hundred and twenty nine [129] semi-structured questionnaires were issued to all Grade 1 parents in the school. The questionnaires had open and closed questions as well as twelve Yes or No questions whereby respondents were to choose between predetermined responses. The questionnaire also had three multiple choice questions whereby respondents had to select a response most appropriate to them in terms of what they perceived to be the best medium of instruction for their children and give reasons why the choice is perceived to be at the best interest of their children. The instrument also had one open-ended question to generate salient information on reasons not covered in other questions but pertinent to the choice of the medium of instruction

The questionnaires were administered to establish what parents decided as language medium, to establish if their choice was made democratically and how closely the decision accorded with the state Language in Education Policy. The responses enabled the researcher to weigh up alternatives in a way that called for judgement about the value assigned to English as medium of instruction in the school. It is worth mentioning that the questionnaires included factual information requiring a Yes or No response.

With the support of the School Management Team all one hundred and twenty nine (129) questionnaires were returned to the researcher, although 7 (5%) of the 129 respondents were unable to provide all the information requested. For some unknown reasons respondents skipped some questions/statements.

Gradually as data yielded little or no new information on the subject matter I ended the data collection. Contact with the school to seek clarity on certain aspects in the data was maintained.

3.3: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The issues of validity and reliability are relevant to qualitative research and to my approach. Guba & Lincoln (1981, p. 103) point out that meeting the tests of rigor is a requisite for establishing trust in the outcomes of the inquiry. Data was corroborated to check if they strongly related to each other, if the pieces of information fit and make sense and if the facts were consistent. In the process I re-evaluated my data collection methods as I compared old data with new data so as to accurately validate what the school does with the program (Parlett & Hamilton 1976, p. 89). Validity was addressed in various ways for example, the content analysis of the national language policy and the school language policy to identify the formalised plans and statements constituting the ground practices.

Ongoing self-reflections in memos and discussions with the informants throughout the course of the study helped me identify and account for my findings. I kept an open mind as a government official and attempted not to allow my role to cloud my judgment. The inclusion and exclusion of data was done on the basis that the content was relevant and responded to the research questions.

The second issue addressed was to test the reliability of the data collected from observations to analyse the interdependence of learning and teaching. I was most concerned with testing the credibility of the findings with regard to what actually happened in the classrooms during teaching and learning. Another way to establish adequacy of inferences that can be drawn to reach useful conclusions was through repeated observations and documentation of day-to-day activities. Interpretations of various sources from which the data was drawn were done, that was, testing the researcher's perceptions against those of participants. Data that emerged was supported by evidence that constituted the findings of document analysis, interviews and questionnaires.

With regards to interviews I followed the standard guidelines for establishing good interview practice that is; setting up interviews, formulating questions and recording responses. Interviewing the 2 educators, the school Principal, the Foundation Phase Head of Department [HOD] and the chairperson of the School Governing Body provided a picture of events in the respondents' own words and terms. Face to face encounters allowed for maximum rapport between interviewee and researcher, and ensured that respondents were heard. This also helped to verify earlier tentative findings. Guba & Lincoln (1981, p. 187) state that interviewing has many advantages with respect to data collection. Among its strengths is that there is less chance of misunderstanding between the inquirer and the respondent than in other approaches. My audio recordings were transcribed word by word after each round of interviews. The transcripts were given to the participants for member checks. Using the constant comparative method, the interviews were compared to each other to determine the similarities and differences. The data was then sorted out to coherent patterns or themes. For example how respondents recounted events and their reaction to them, how they made a point and how they articulated their response on each theme. From the questionnaires that were administered to all parents who had children in Grade 1 in the school to solicit first hand views and issues for instruction from those directly involved with the actual selection of the medium, emerging views that covered reasons, beliefs and customs that supported their decision on the medium of instruction .

3.4: DATA CODING AND ANALYSIS

Given the relatively small sample, data analysis was done manually. The first step was to read the raw data to analyse it for similarities and differences. The data was then organised into codes. The process of coding was about me asking questions about the data as a basis for the study in question. The detailed codes came more or less directly from the informant's words. Others were the evaluator's summary of what the informant seemed to be referring to or describing at a particular point. The codes were then organised to categories and themes according to patterns that emerged that is; parental knowledge of the language policy (PNLP); parental views on multilingualism (PVM); reasons why parents choose English (RWPCE).

From this first level of analysis, responses were captured to develop numerical data to establish accuracy in the data. From each question a summary was and developed. Tables were developed capturing the responses under the three themes in one column and the source of responses in the others. The analysis provided key concepts for describing the user's view of the programme. This involved reducing the volume of raw information, sifting through the data for significant data from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed. The analysis was also a process to bring order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. This provided the main source of data to establish how closely the Language in Education Policy was achieved in the school and the reasons parents gave for the language medium argued for in the school policy. The responses enabled me to weigh up alternatives in a way that called for judgement about value assigned to medium of instruction used in the school. Themes were also determined for each research question and those themes were compared to each other for future analysis. Each line in the transcript was given a unique line number so that parts of the data could be identified and located precisely.

The data on observations facilitated ongoing testing of emerging perceptions and ideas and enabled evaluator to make sense of the information and what needs further clarification. The analysis involved many levels from the moment I selected a problem to study through to the final stages of the study. Daily summary notes were developed and patterns of emerging issues were identified and analysed at the end of each visit.

The documentary materials were a subjective source of data because they did not reflect a straightforward objective description of social reality. But by presenting a particular interpretation of events they helped to construct a version of reality which helped me to corroborate the information with the questionnaires, interviews and observations. The content analysis revealed the priorities portrayed by the school through the text and the values conveyed. This data was measured against the frequency of relevant words and ideas, positive and negative views on issues and the proximity of ideas within the text and its logical associations. The appendices give examples of such information sourced from the school.

3.5: CONCLUSION

The purpose for using the qualitative research techniques is to add to the strength of findings in this study. Method used to collect data included document analysis, non participant observations, one on one interviews and semi structured questionnaires. Key issues and patterns of "cause and effect" (Parlett & Hamilton 1975, p. 83) emerged as data collection progressed. These issues and patterns were reviewed against the policy ideal and actual practices on the ground so as to place intentions against what happened. The process sought to answer the research questions. Supporting data from analysis of documents, non participant observations, semi-structured one on one interviews and semi-structured questionnaires corroborated the findings and heightened the validity of the study. The conceptual framework of the research was presented and it revealed that the analysis and interpretation of the effectiveness is complex and dynamic. It allows for continual consideration of ideas from different sources as provided by Chen (2004). In the next chapter the data obtained is described and analysed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1: INTRODUCTION

This study to evaluated how the national language policy's plan and ideal in emphasizing inclusion of all official languages as medium of instruction in state schools is actually achieved at Zibambele Primary. The study also established reasons parents give for choosing the language medium argued for in this study and actually used in classrooms. The study focused on establishing the extent to which the school policy on the medium of instruction is guided by the LiEP. More specifically the study intended to establish what parents have decided as medium in the school and if their choice was made in the spirit of democracy and how it accords with the national language policy.

4.2 : LiEP, SCHOOL LANGAGE POLICY AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

4.2.1 The Language in Education Policy ideal and the Actual School Practice

4.2.1.1 Policy ideal

The national language policy contains a formalised plan which clarifies policy goals, objectives and desired outcomes. Each objective, goal and desired outcome included details of specialized specifications of intentions in terms of teaching arrangements to promote multilingualism, development and respect for all languages in recognition of the culturally diverse South Africa. LiEP advocates for home language instruction in support to the teaching of all languages of learners in the Foundation Phase. It also grants opportunity for people to exercise their democratic rights in choosing the medium of instruction to be used in the school. In accordance with the national language policy this right is vested with the parents

and the School Governing Body but control mechanism is put in place to ensure that this right is:

> exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism (LiEP 1996).

In the perspective of the parents LiEP is regarded as a positive model of language policy and planning. Parents indicated to understand the importance of using mother tongue as medium of instruction as one parent responded in the questionnaire that:

> by my own experience, if you master your home language you are better able to learn other languages because you will be having a point of referral and you'll better understand the new language, then you can speak/ read with meaning.'
>
> [Questionnaire, Participant 61]

As the policy's inherent plan is to grant 'official status' to all languages spoken in the country, policy was endorsed and adopted in a different form at Zibambele Primary School. By choosing English an official language as medium, parents were exercising their democratic rights endorsed by the language policy. With respect to establishing the extent to which the school policy is guided by the national language policy on the medium of instruction the research findings established that parents at Zibambele Primary decided on English as medium of instruction democratically. Matching the ideal in the LiEP with the actual practice in the school suggests that the national language policy informs the school language policy, and more specifically the decision by parents to decide on the medium of instruction for the school. However, the school language policy stops short of a literal interpretation of the policy to instruct learners in each of the 11 languages in the policy but at the same time preserves it valuing the spirit of inclusion of all in teaching and learning through the medium of English.

The school language policy recognises the constituent elements emphasized in the national policy and interprets the national language policy for implementation in the school. Each objective, goal and desired outcomes constituted in the national language policy details

idealized specifications of intentions in terms of medium of instruction to be used in state schools. In this instance the Zibambele Primary School language policy reveals that the endorsement of the individual rights in the national policy influenced this school's decisions on the choice of the medium when it stated that the medium of instruction in the school is English and Afrikaans because it is what parents have decided upon. Broadly speaking given the current parents' decision to choose what's at the best interest of their children to succeed in life, the school language policy is guided by these individual language rights and means of communication in education where everyone has the right to receive education in the official language of their choice in public educational institutions. But this did not mean that parents had abandoned their home languages …of those who responded to the questionnaires indicated the decision to choose English as medium for their children does not mean they do not want their children to know and understand their languages and culture.

The evidence is quite strong in the school, pointing to English as medium and supported by the school language policy stating English and Afrikaans as medium, so the extent being argued for is fairly considerable. By examining the findings this study has established that in choosing English and not mother tongue parents were exercising their democratic rights to choose what they believed is best for their children and simply not an act to contravene policy.

4.2.1.2 The actual practice in the school

4.2.1.2.1 Observations

For this discussion focus was drawn on establishing what actually happened in the classroom where policy is implemented with respect to policy promoting multilingualism to get an understanding of the complex dynamics of the decision making process leading to parents deciding on the language medium to use. The findings are based on what was established and interpretations of what actually happened in the classrooms observed. The object of classroom

observations was used to capture classroom practices during the teaching and learning of Numeracy and Literacy through the medium of English.

The core of classroom practice was to understand how policies reflected in the actual classroom practice in the teaching of Numeracy and Literacy in Grade1 through the following; the interaction between the teacher and the learners. This interaction was related to how the teacher engaged the learners during teaching and learning. It also looked at the lesson structure in terms of the content and skills to be taught and how learning built higher order thinking using language as vehicle to access learning. The interaction is also related to classroom management, teaching strategies and values, as well as the use of teaching and support materials.

In each of the three Grade 1 classrooms observed learner enrollment was 43 learners per class. English was the medium of instruction used in all classes for the teaching and learning of both Numeracy and Literacy. Home languages were not used at all in the classrooms as teachers could not speak the learner's home languages and thus learners were not afforded opportunities to use mother tongue in the classroom for their learning, but were compelled to speak English despite their poor command of the language. What was also noted is that all signage and learning and teaching support material used to re-enforce and consolidate learning were in English.

Teaching of Literacy and Numeracy included the formal programme of lessons in the timetable. The lessons were to teach the following skills and knowledge in Numeracy; number line, addition, subtraction, counting, equal sharing, word sums, place value and measurement and to teach the following in Literacy; parts of the body, phonemes, spelling, words and sentence structure, continuous and past tense, as well as commonly used prepositions (and, but). The approach used to teaching the concepts was traditional. Most of the talking was done by the teacher and learners would listen and answer questions to test their understanding. The opportunities to learning did not include group activities to encourage discussions which are a necessary condition for learning and internalizing information.

The classroom culture focused on enabling effective teaching and learning. Teacher- learner attitudes were open and both learner and educator related to one another with respect. Discipline was strongly maintained in two of the classrooms; Ms. Van Wyk's [Grade 1A] and Mrs Breytenbach's [Grade 1B] while in [Grade 1C] Mrs Smith's [fictitious names] class the learners were very noisy. They did not pay attention to the teacher and chatted among themselves in their own home languages. To capture the learner's attention Mrs Smith had to shout loudly at the learners. During follow up interviews Mrs Smith agreed to experiencing challenges with maintaining discipline in the classroom since the learners in her class struggled to understand instructions.

The styles of behaviour and the general quality of teaching and learning in the classrooms were satisfactory in Ms. Van Wyk's and Mrs Breytenbach's classes but not with Mrs Smith's. Here the teacher [Mrs. Smith] displayed frustrations and would proceed to the next lesson without checking if the learners understood the concept taught. She mostly (90% of teaching and learning time) would not give learners an opportunity to grapple with the new information so as to internalize it, but rather would tell learners all the required answers and they would just copy the answers to their workbooks. Overall the educators had to adapt and simplify the content of the lesson to suit the learner's language needs but nevertheless knowledge and the understanding of the content by the learners were gradually achieved.

Ms. Van Wyk and Mrs. Breytenbach were in touch with the learners and engaged them through probing questions to gauge the level of understanding, Mrs. Smith however displayed frustration towards the learners when they struggled to understand and contextualize knowledge of what was taught because of the medium of instruction used (English) was poor. The educator concerned displayed an inability to make sense of teaching in a multilingual class as all the learners came from backgrounds where English is not spoken at home. When the Mrs. Smith was unable to use the medium as means to transfer knowledge, she resorted to doing most of the talking; reading for the learners and expected them to 'parrot' read after her. She indicated it was challenging for her to teach in multilingual classrooms because she was only trained to teach Afrikaans speaking learners and had no prior experience to teach in such schools.

The level of teaching and learning varied in the all three classrooms observed. The observations distinguished where the educators were positioned. The two educators were in touch with the learners. They managed to use English as medium to engage learners actively and critically with knowledge, including disciplinary knowledge and problem solving skills. The observations distinguished how English as medium was used in the classroom to bring the curriculum to life.

During observation teachers demonstrated a high degree of openness and flexibility. Learners were free to ask questions, however, their poor command of English made it difficult for them to ask critical questions. Ms. Van Wyk and Mrs. Breytenbach [Grade 1A and Grade1C] made provisions for an open discussions and creativity. In one of the Literacy lesson whereby concepts of sentence structure were taught Ms. Van Wyk asked the learners to close their eyes and use their imagination to think about 'anything'. She then asked the learners to open their eyes and tell the class about what were they thinking. One of the learners responded that she 'was thinking of a boy riding a bicycle'. Every child was given a turn to inform the class about what come to mind. Learners were then requested to construct sentences from the discussions.

As far as teaching and learning activities were concerned, evidence show that educators had influence in the way the curriculum was delivered. The manner in which educators used medium of instruction to ensure adequate learning was not strong enough in terms of content because content had to be simplified to suit the level of the learners. The learners' work also was not sufficiently challenging. Activities were more of completion of worksheets; questions and one/two word answers. During the period the observation took place opportunities to demonstrate language development and skills were very minimal. Teachers planned well in advance for their teaching; worksheets were prepared, word cards and pictures prepared alphabets freezes pasted on the chalk board and walls; however some learners (30%) still struggled to work independently. They constantly demanded teacher support. Teachers had thus to find ways to meet the challenge of teaching linguistically diverse learners while maintaining acceptable standards of learning.

As Skinner (1998) observed that in an open society students are encouraged to find knowledge for themselves and become actively involved in the process of acquiring it. The development of knowledge he argues help us understand that the starting point should never be an isolated school subject, but a real life problem that stimulates these learners to solve them irrespective of subject boundaries.

From the performance perspective, learners tended to do better in Numeracy than in English as a subject and steadily improved as time passed. This may be attributed to the fact that Numeracy required more of mental calculations to extend their thinking skills and their number knowledge. Tasks were repeatedly explained. Repetition was a crucial element for learners to understand the instructions, however attaining the ideal of instruction through the medium of English was particularly difficult. This contributed to slowing down the process of teaching and learning and resulted in educators not completing the syllabus for the year.

In all the lessons observed, English was used predominantly and mother tongue the language that the learners understood better was not used at all educators in all Grade 1 classes. This confirmed that the school language policy developed by parents guided the medium of instruction in the school but was not congruent with national language policy in terms of inclusivity. Classroom instructions, motivation and sympathetic gestures about wrong responses were given in English. The prominence of English as medium was democratically decided by the school communities.

The findings indicate that the position given to English as medium of instruction throughout the grades observed is high and uncontested. This is reflected in the preference for English by the school and parents. Also, no teacher in the school speaks any of the learners' home languages and therefore Numeracy [Mathematics] and Literacy [Languages] were taught in English, a foreign language to the learners. In overall terms, the actual medium of instruction adopted by parents was guided by policy ideal in terms of the right to choose. However, while Literacy and Numeracy concepts required to be presented in a manner that was developmentally appropriate, where teachers provided opportunities for learners to master

learning and take responsibility for their own learning, the medium of instruction used in the classroom proved in most instances to be a barrier to learning.

According to the participants, it was challenging and demanding to teach learners whose home language was not the medium of instruction used in the school. Communication appeared to be a big concern as all participants battled to get the children to understand the concepts taught. One educator Mrs. Breytenbach said:

> It is best if learners are taught in mother tongue in Grade One because you do not need to struggle trying to explain concepts. You will immediately start teaching. [Interview 4, lines 15-16] (See appendices v)

However, methods employed by Ms. Van Wyk and Mr. Smith surpassed the language inhibitions.

In Literacy lessons, emphasis was on the development of literacy skills. All classrooms observed were print rich learning environments. The environment was immersed with a variety of English written texts (posters, displayed learners work, alphabet charts, picture friezes, reading cards, word cards and flash cards), which was a necessary condition for learning. Teaching and learning in two of the three grades observed Ms. Van Wyk and Mrs. Breytenbach classrooms began with demonstrations and discussions of pictures whereby learners were offered multiple opportunities to see, hear, witness experience and explore actions and artifacts. However, the engagement with the material, that is, discussions and the amplification were done in English.

What came through in the lessons, despite the learner's low levels of understanding was that the interaction encouraged learner participation. It provided a variety of language activity within the lesson. For example:

> Mrs. Smith was teaching phonemic awareness and she used pictures to introduce the vowel 'o. The teacher had pictures depicting alphabets

lined up on the chalkboard. Amongst the lined up pictures was a picture of a 'Letter Land' character 'Oscar Orange'.

Mrs. Smith asks the learners what the letter stands for, pointing at the letter

Thabo answered it is 'o' [pronouncing the letter wrongly]

Mrs. Smith: 'Ow' for Oscar Orange [correcting the learner and referring the learner back to the picture.]

Mrs. Smith: What else do you see in other pictures?

Nomsa: A bone.

Katlego: Home.

Mrs. Smith wrote all the answers on the chalkboard each time stressing the sound 'o'. Learners had to read and spell the words repeatedly and at the same time copy and match the words to the pictures. They responded to all questions asked as the teacher prompted them to interact with the pictures. [Observation 3, O8 08 2008]

(See appendices x)

It was important for the teacher to use a variety of material within the lesson to achieve the intended aims. Through lots of repetition, sympathy towards wrong answers, praising of correct responses, the manner in which teacher spoke to learners prompted learner to use the 'medium used' productively. For example; learners could follow instructions in the completion of allocated tasks.

The consistency of the language demonstration supported the meanings being transacted and in some way new knowledge in the form of language structure was internalized. Learners were allowed to make mistakes. The educators expected mistakes for learners to develop conventional forms of knowledge. Opportunities for the use and practice of English were provided to develop the language skills. The educator guided and showed learners how to

write sentences and let them develop own sentences using the vocabulary she had equipped them with. For example:

> One of the learners who could not use the word 'ear' in a sentence asked the teacher how to develop a sentence using the word. Mrs Van Wyk responded by saying: 'No, you must try'. Encouraging the learner find answers to the problem at hand.[Observation 9, 4 September 2008]

Exchanges like these served the purpose of sharing information about the language and the degree of control. The teacher supplied missing bits of the child's approximation. Learners supplied the educators with examples of what they were currently capable of doing.

The 12 Numeracy lessons observed focused on the recognition, description and representation of numbers and their relationships. They focused on counting, estimations and calculations with competence and confidence in solving problems. Learners had to perform calculations involving addition and subtraction for numbers to at least one hundred. The lessons contextualized and introduced the skill to recognize the power of symbols and created opportunities for learners to develop related knowledge and skills. What was crucial in the teaching and learning process was to lay a solid foundation for number concepts in Numeracy. However, learners in the beginning experienced various challenges due to lack of exposure to English at home and in the community. Each educator expressed frustrations in their attempts to help learners understand. They raised complaints that:

> Ms. Van Wyk: in the beginning children cannot understand. I have to explain more than once, three, four times. Then try to get someone who can speak their own language. [Interview 2, 21 09 2008]
>
> Mrs. Smith: I use lots of repetition. Instructions are said in different ways. I try to explain on a one to one level.[Interview 3, 23 09 2008]
>
> Mrs. Breytenbach: I always have to teach language and vocabulary for the specific content which slowed down the pace towards the completion of the planned work schedule [syllabi] for the term. [Interview 1, 20 09 200] (See appendices v)

Nevertheless, the different methods used to reinforce learning gradually yielded positive results. The learners could count from zero to one hundred, and could describe the numbers by the indication of showing the relevant number using their fingers. They could solve some of the practical problems. For example, learners could fill in the missing numbers in a number line and could use the number line for subtracting to show they have grasped the number value. The educators tried their best to link new knowledge to prior knowledge. They used a lot of supporting material to explain concepts until learners understood. Learner participation improved although content did not meet the required standard in terms of the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards to be achieved. The requirement of the Learning Outcome was for "learners to be able to recognize, describe and represent numbers and their relationships, and to count, estimate, calculate and check with competence and confidence in solving problems" (DoE 2002a, RNCS). Having to over explain themselves in trying to transfer the knowledge and skills to learners, which was time consuming for them they had to adapt knowledge to simpler forms. This resulted in lessons not challenging enough to stimulate cognitive development.

However, the good relations and respect between teacher and learner enabled Ms. Van Wyk and Mrs Breytenbach to overcome most challenges to order lesson flow. This classroom atmosphere provided learners opportunities for tactful interventions.

Mrs. Smith had no control over what happened in her class. Her methods of teaching were teacher–centered. The educator experienced serious challenges in maintaining discipline to position learners to be in a receptive state for learning. Most of teaching time was spent on educator screaming at the learners to maintain order. Learners lost interest in the learning process and teaching and learning was rhetoric and meaningless. Learners could not follow what was taught but nevertheless were given tasks to complete.

Although the transmission of knowledge was a challenge for the educators, they reflected high expectations for learners, and they used their expertise to impart knowledge. Since learners were second language speakers of English, lots of repetition and different methods yielded positive results. To enhance communication and for the purposes of achieving intended outcomes, Ms. Van Wyk and Mrs. Breytenbach had to apply different methods. A knowledge perspective on learning environments also highlighted the importance on reflecting the extent they took to help learners understand versus the acquisition of disconnected sets of facts and skills as effective learning requires high levels of children's participation. Furthermore, in all classes observed the teachers' competence in English met the needs of the lesson and learners; however the teachers' use of the language in the classroom did not inspire higher order thinking skills. In most lessons, rote learning took place. Communication was limited to a lot of repetition and to questions and answers. It is nevertheless noted that despite the inhibition resulting from the medium used in the classrooms impediments resulting from language, possibilities offered to learners to have equal access to classroom interactions and teaching processes played an important role to support the learning.

4.3: REASONS PARENTS GIVE FOR ENGLISH AS MEDIUM

4.3.1 Interview Data – Parents, Teachers, Principal and Chairperson's Reasons on the Language Medium for the School

4.3.1.1 School Governing Body Chairperson

The SGB chairperson expressed in her own way expressed very clearly that she does not see value of indigenous languages. She stated that: "English is what we want" [Interview 3, 15 10 2008]. She felt indigenous languages have nothing to offer except in everyday communication. Another observation is that in spite of their constitutional rights as parents to

choose mother tongue for their children they saw no importance of pushing for the promotion of multilingualism. She felt if parents wanted their children to be taught in mother tongue 'they would have taken them to township schools'. The respondent expressed no conviction that policy is best suited for the needs of their children, and therefore they are not obliged to comply as parents. In her opinion children would be 'disadvantaged if taught in mother tongue'. She felt it was important that 'her child knows English'. She associated English with better opportunities in life.

Based on the findings, responses indicate a partial match between policy ideal and practices in the school. Policy promotes multilingual teaching whereas parents do not want their children to be taught in their home languages but want them to be taught in English. A need for a better education and committed teachers was also mentioned. Parents felt English medium schools offered their children quality education. The SGB Chairperson felt her child will be disadvantaged if not taught in English. She stated:

> it is important that my child knows English so that he can get a better job. English is an international language, without it you have limited chances. [Interview 3, 15 10 2008] (See appendices iv)

She also stated that she wants her child to have a bright future because:

> out there you must know English well to get a good job. [Interview 3, 15 10 2008] (See appendices iv)

Challenges were also raised with the SGB Chairperson about the difficulties educators encountered in teaching learners who are not first language speakers. It was indicated to her that educators reported challenges due to medium used in the classrooms that extra measures had to be taken to support learning. The measures included: repetition, using all available resources they could get hold of, sometimes even asking maintenance staff to translate certain concepts. But she indicated that for parents, English is what they want. She agreed to the fact that:

> children struggle to learn in English but they do come around. [Interview 3, 15 10

2008]

The interviews explored the value assigned to English in the school policy as medium of instruction. Although parents did not see value in mother tongue as medium that can be used for the teaching and learning of their children in the school they were grateful that LiEP granted them freedom of choice. Here then LiEP is regarded as a valuable document for it does not prescribe.

When asked about their children's performance in Literacy and Numeracy, parents reported satisfaction on their children's competence and progress. The SGB chairperson commented that her son is in Grade 3 and:

> can read and do sums. [Interview 3, 15 10 2008]

The informants viewed English as a language that prepared children for the future. This future demanded people who are proficient in English to meet the socio-economic needs in world.

Evidence also revealed that in terms of powers delegated to SGBs to recommend recruitment and staffing, employment of educators was based on educators who were qualified to teach in English and Afrikaans, the languages offered in the school. From the parent's point of view the school was only interested in promoting English as medium in the school language policy and actually used in the classrooms is school than multilingualism. Although the participants understood the importance of mother-tongue teaching, they still viewed English as the best choice for it had far-reaching socio-economic implications for their children. Generally, the desire for parents was for their child to master English was great, and no respondent showed regrets for choosing English above mother tongue.

4.3.1.2 Principal

The school Principal when asked about what influenced the selection of the medium of instruction in the school, he responded by saying that:

> parents want their children taught in English, even black parents bring their children to the school because they want them taught in English. [Interview 1, 09 08 2008] (See appendices iv)

It was noted that the principal valued the LiEP for granting language rights. His stance was a clear indication the school policy was in line with what LiEP prescribes in terms of the right to choose. In his opinion policy ideal was captured in the school language policy because the medium of instruction was democratically chosen and no parent in the school adopted mother tongue as medium to use for teaching and learning. The Principal indicated that if any parent would so however in future request home language as medium they will be:

> referred to the district. [Interview 1, 09 08 2008] (See appendices iii)

However, the principal expressed views that implementing the policy is a challenge because of the learner demographics in the school where ninety percent of the learners speak indigenous languages at home but their parents have chosen English as the language of instruction. His decision was motivated by the decision/wish/expectation of parents. According to him, there is no dominant language spoken in the school which makes it difficult to decide on the medium of instruction thus choosing English as it caters for the diverse linguistic profile. The Principal concluded that multilingual teaching was impossible in this model of school.

The principal also indicated that an educator is an important element in the process of the transmitting knowledge. Yet as a result of learner demographics, recruitment and staffing posed a challenge since none of the teachers employed in the school could speak any indigenous language. Basically recruitment of educators was not based on learner home languages to cater for multilingual teaching but on the language the school could offer. The Principal made it clear that the school supports multilingualism but were unable to support the ideal. From the perspective of the principal, learner demographics in the school [50% Setswana, 15% IsiZulu, 12% IsiXhosa, 7% Sesotho, 6% Afrikaans, 10% others] created a logistical problem that made it impossible for employed staff to cater for every home language. Table 1 gives an overview of the learner demographics in the school.

Table 1 – Distribution of learner home languages in the school

	Learners according to home language and grade: (MALE AND FEMALE) NO LEARNER MUST BE DOUBLE-COUNTED IN THIS TABLE													
Grade	**Afrikaans**	**English**	**IsiNdebele**	**Sepedi**	**SiSwati**	**Xitsonga**	**Tshivenda**	**Setswana**	**IsiXhosa**	**IsiZulu**	**Sesotho**	**Sign Language**	**Other**	**Total**
Pre-Grade R														
Gr R														
Gr 1	11	10		3			2	57	16	13			1	129
Gr 2	10	9	5	8			3	74	17	14				147
Gr 3	10	15	3	4	1		2	59	9	22				129
Gr 4	11	1	1	11		2	6	67	21	26				157
Gr 5	9	3	2	6	2	1	1	77	21	28				157
Gr 6	11	2		2	2	2	3	79	19	31				164
Gr 7	9	1		4		1	1	70	70	23			2	157
Gr 8														
Gr 9														
Gr 10														
Gr 11														
Gr 12														
Total	71	41	11	38	5	6	18	483	126	157	81		3	1040

(*Source: Department of Education 10th Day School Survey 2008)*

The human and physical resources available to the school did not match LiEP demands. As much as the Principal valued the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction for learners in the Foundation Phase, he raised concerns about lack of resources and asked:

> where will the school get manpower to teach all eleven languages because educators employed cannot speak all eleven languages as expected by policy? **.** [Interview 1, 09 08 2008] (See appendices iii)

Consequently, he felt obligated to protect the staff because he did not want his staff to feel displaced because they could not speak:

> native languages. [Interview 1, 09 08 2008]

Careful examination of the data indicated a partial match to this point.

4.3.1.3 Educators

From the analysis of the educator interviews, it is evident that the educators understood what policy prescribed in terms of recommended media for instruction. The three teachers understood the constitutional rights of learners to language choice. However, as much as the educators expressed frustrations in teaching learners who had no background knowledge of English, they still felt that English was the best choice than mother tongue for teaching a multilingual classroom. As one of the educators indicated that:

> it is best that children are taught in their own language……but parents brought them to an English language school so that they can understand English. I believe children must be taught in English'. [Interview 3, 20 09 2008] (See appendices v)

Each participant expressed very clearly in their own way how difficult it is to teach in a multilingual classroom. The participants mentioned a number of factors that contribute to making their task more difficult. The main reason given for these difficulties was the fact that a lot of these children do not speak English as mother tongue. It was noted it is particularly difficult when the children could not read and write in English at all which meant that teachers needed to adapt and simplify the learner's tasks to a lower standard.

Communication appeared to be a major concern as all of the teachers mentioned the struggle they have with getting learners to understand the concepts they taught. Even when repeating and allowing learners to translate they were still not sure whether the translation is correct or not. Educators said that they had to use other methods to get through to the learners, f or example, using pictures and a lot of repetition.

Time allocation was another challenging factor as it was not enough for the educators to address each subject as required by the school time table. Trying to help learners understand English so as to prepare them for higher grades was a serious challenge, however with persistence the educators manage to get through to the learners. While the participants were honest about their efforts, it emerged that they were not specifically trained to teach in

multilingual classrooms, and they did not receive such developmental training from the Department of Education.

On a more positive note, the participants acknowledged that while the actual teaching might be a challenge, their commitment and the efforts usually produced good results in a long term. They said by the time learners reach higher grades they were better positioned than learners who had started to learn in the medium of English later at a higher grade.

As much as the language in education policy is a 'noble' document that espouses to embrace democratic language rights of individuals, the evolving culture, society, and circumstances in South Africa result in the rapid change of survival needs. It may appear that by choosing English and abandon mother tongue in exchange for English the school community is self-centered. But needless to say, from the parent's perspective it is a conscious, bold and beneficial act. The SGB chairperson in agreement during interviews when asked if she values multilingual teaching she responded by saying that she:

> valued the principle of multilingual teaching but as much as she wanted child to know her roots and language she wanted her child to be taught in English because knowing English will provide better opportunities to get a better job. [Interview 3, 15 10 2008] (See appendices iv)

In terms of classroom practice, each of the three educators expressed their challenges in teaching in multilingual classrooms. They highlighted difficulties in having to cater for the different learning needs of the learners who came from different cultural backgrounds. They expressed frustrations on how they found it difficult to relate to them. None of the educators could speak the learner's home languages, they were all Afrikaans speaking. They indicated, being unable to speak the learner's home languages was a problem because it minimized verbal communication between educator and learner and impacted strongly on effective teaching and learning which made it difficult to achieve outcomes as intended. However:

> repeating and repeating instructions, using gestures and pictures assisted in making a difference.[Interview 3, 22 09 2008]

Educators mentioned their own training, experience and personal competence as source of coping although one educator was on the brink of quitting. Problems with implementing the policy of multilingualism were mentioned and educators indicated they required support from the district officials and training.

4.3.2 Questionnaire Data - Reasons for the Language Medium for the School

4.3.2.1 Parents

In their own terms parents give reasons for choosing English as medium of instruction in the school. Taking into consideration the parent's responses that they would like their children to know their cultural home language; however they indicated that they cannot choose mother tongue over English as medium of instruction because they fear that reduced exposure to English will entail incompetence in the language and thus reduce the children's opportunities to positions of power. As one parent acknowledging:

> it is best if learners are taught in mother tongue in Grade 1 because you do not have to struggle to explain concepts. [Questionnaire 2, 12 08 2008]. (See appendices vi)

The school signifies the importance of cultural identity and maintenance of mother tongue however for economic and educational reasons the school communities would rather establish a support programme for those learners who experience learning barriers due to the language of teaching than teach them in mother tongue to facilitate better understanding of concepts.

The social transformation, the dynamic culture and the constant changing needs from generation to generation that is; moving away from the ancestors' way of doing things to following more of the western culture widens the gap between what is regarded as a language portraying identity and culture and a language that is believed will give users an opportunity

to be regarded as socially relevant. Generally parents reported no regrets for choosing English as medium for the teaching of their children. One such parent indicated:

> 'it is my responsibility to talk English at home with my children so that it may be easy for them than children who are not speaking English at home'. [Questionnaire 12, 12 08 2008] (See appendices iv)

Based on LiEP's ideal to promote multilingualism, it is evident to note that parental language rights supersede the principle of multilingualism. Parents who speak neither English nor Afrikaans send their children to English medium schools so that their children master these languages. The data from the questionnaires recorded parent's reasons for choosing English as medium and affirmed that the decision to choose English was a democratic exercise.

Questionnaires revealed that parents are well informed about the policy plan and ideal. 95% of responses from questionnaires indicated parents had knowledge of LiEP. Table 2 shows the responses.

Table 2- Parental knowledge on LiEP

SECTION A	**Yes**	**No**	**No response**	**Other**
1. In the school where your child attends, the learners are children who speak multiple languages (Former Model C School)?	84	10	4	0
2. Is English is the only medium of instruction offered in the school?	55	41	2	0
3. Do you have knowledge of the Language-in-Education Policy?	74	19	2	3
4. **If your respond to 4 is Yes**. Are you in favour of multilingualism as medium of instruction for multiple language learners in your school?	52	34	2	0

5. Are you are aware of your rights as a parent to choose the language of teaching and learning for your child?	75	22	1	0
6. Were you then involved in the selection of the medium of instruction for your child in the school?	45	45	8	0
7. Are you opposed to your child being taught in the Foundation Phase in his/her home language?	31	60	7	0
8. When registering your child were you informed of the medium of instruction?	75	22		1
9. **If Yes to 8**: Would you, regardless of the challenges your child may experience as the second or third language speaker believe that English as medium of instruction is good for your child?	77	9	12	0
10. Does the school satisfy your intention of the best education for your child?	93	4	1	0
11. Are there any support programmes for children who are not first language speakers of English in the school?	55	28	15	0
12. At the moment are you happy about your child's progress in Mathematics (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy)?	85	10	2	1

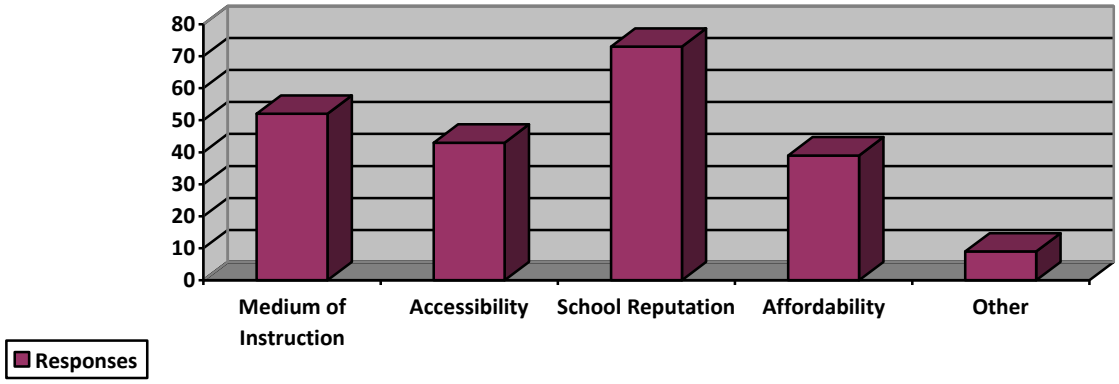
The responses indicate parents are well informed about their parental language rights and exercised the rights in choosing English. In contrast parents were not against the principle of teaching in home languages in the Foundation Phase but they preferred English as language of teaching and learning for their own children. The data indicates support expressed towards multilingual instruction (53%). Parents indicated that know what they want. This is verified where 79% of the respondents, regardless of challenges grade 1 learners experience as second and third language speakers of English in the classroom, believe English as medium is good for their children.

This indicates that the choice of English as medium of instruction in the school was democratic and was taken with the best interest of learners at heart and to enhance education. This was demonstrated when 85% of the parents indicated to be 'happy about their children's performance in Numeracy and Literacy'

Reason to establish what influences parental choice, 98% indicated that the choice of school is influenced more by the reputation of the school and the medium of instruction offered. The breakdown of responses is presented as in the table:

Table 3- Data for selecting the school

Question B1: The major reason that influences your choice of a school					
	The medium of instruction	Accessibility from home	The school has a good reputation	You can afford the school fees	Other :
Responses	**52**	**43**	**73**	**39**	**9**

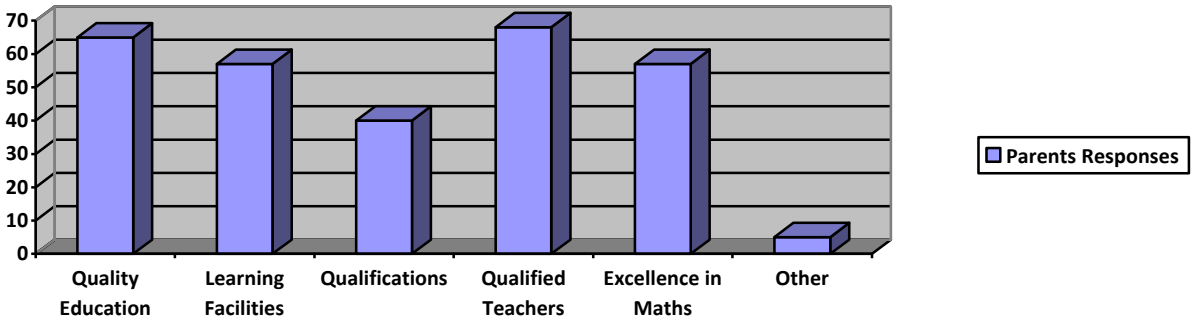


73 of the 98 parents 73 indicated that the major reason that influences the choice of a school for their children is a good reputation. The medium of instruction turned to be the second choice. Out of 98 parents, 52 chose the school on the basis of the medium of instruction. These findings warrant that good reputation is associated with English as medium as a result

distance and affordability are not regarded as important. Parents will sacrifice everything for their children to get the best education.

Table 4 – Parental views to what is regarded as crucial for the education of their children

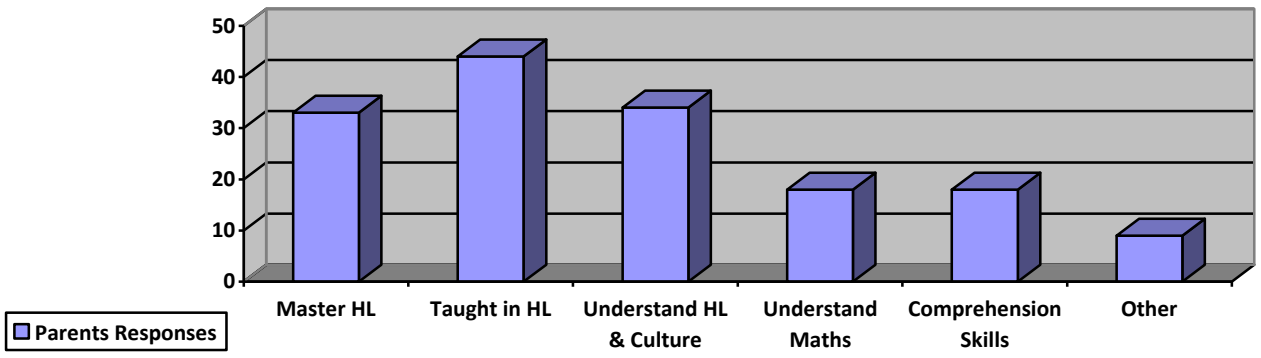
Question B2: Issues crucial to parents for their child's education						
	High quality education	Better learning facilities	Qualifications that are internationally recognized	Well qualified and committed teachers	My child grasping concepts and knowledge in Mathematics	Other
Responses	**65**	**57**	**40**	**68**	**57**	**5**



From the parental point of view, what is crucial for the children's education are qualified and committed educators followed by quality education. This indicates that parents want value for money. The choice of school was not only based on English, but also on a good school. Educators are regarded as key stakeholders to ensure that quality education is provided for their children. Teaching in mother tongue is rated low. This indicates that according to parents the success of their children does not depend on mother tongue teaching, but on quality teaching. On analyzing this data one can see value assigned to English as medium.

Table 5- Parental responses to what is regarded less important

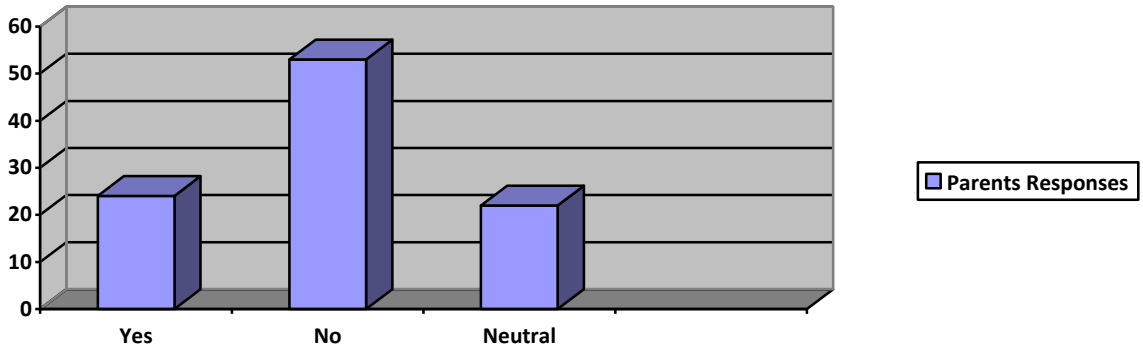
B3.The following issues are not important for my child's education						
	My child to masters his/ her home language	My child taught in his/her home language	Teachers teaching my child understand my language and culture	My child grasping concepts and knowledge in Mathematics	My child reading with meaning and writing for a purpose	Other:
Responses	**33**	**44**	**34**	**18**	**18**	**9**



I note from this data that that the majority of parents do not regard home languages as important that it can be used as medium of instruction for their children. The findings also reveal that parents do not regard the infusion of culture and home language within the curriculum. They see no point for their children to master their home languages or understand their culture.

Table 6 – Parental views on LiEP and multilingualism

Do you believe that teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase should be in the language learners know and understand best from home?	
Yes	**24**
No	**53**
Neutral	**22**



The above data show that majority of parents believe that teaching and learning should not be in mother tongue but in English. They believe English is the only language that can provide opportunities for their children because it is a language that is internationally used. However, it is also clear that there is a positive attitude to using mother tongue as medium but when it comes to choosing, English is supported. Analysing the above data one could argue that the value assigned to English as medium of instruction to ensure the effective teaching and learning of the learners and implications thereof in the teaching of Numeracy and Literacy in Grade 1 is high. From the responses in the questionnaires what emerges is that English is favoured above all other languages and that parents see no value in mother tongue teaching. Policy promotes multilingual teaching but at the same time guarantees democratic rights in terms of the selection of medium of instruction in schools to parents. The necessity of proficiency in English is connected to the increasingly global competitive economy thus parents consider English as condition for better opportunities for future success for their

children. Parents also believe that the use of English as medium in early grades facilitates learner's smooth adaptation to English medium education in higher grades. This suggests that English remains the most important language in South Africa precisely because the continuing status of English in the world has increased preference throughout the education system.

4.4: FINDINGS

The qualitative results of this study are constant with those who argue that the language policy is a 'noble document' (Osborne, 2007) as it affords all South African languages an equal status despite the fact that it is impractical to implement in terms of the cost implications if every school is to offer all home languages of learners enrolled. The results from the qualitative data in response to how the school language policy followed the national Language in Education Policy on the medium of instruction suggest a range of explanations. LiEP advocates for multilingualism and inclusivity and grants parents a right to choose the medium of instruction they prefer for their children. The Zibambele Primary School language policy clearly specified that English was the chosen medium of instruction because it was the language parents have democratically chosen as medium in the school. Based on policy ideal and plan to pursue multilingualism as an approach to language in education, the practices at Zibambele revealed that the school language policy in is in line with what LiEP accords in terms of protecting individual rights on the language of choice. Findings indicated that parent's decision on the medium was not intended to flout the legislation but an informed decision believed to be at the best interest of the children. According to parents' response in the questionnaires exposing children to English at an early stage advanced the children's proficiency in the language and thus the school language policy was aimed and designed to cater for such needs of learners in the school.

The usefulness and importance of English as a much desired language in the school is evidenced by parental support of its use as medium of instruction. Although it is generally true that language serves to develop a person's identity and is not just a method of

communication (Altwerger 1997, p. 174), parents believed that it is their sole responsibility to teach their children mother tongue themselves as it was the language spoken at home and also to instill cultural values to their children and not the school. Questionnaires revealed that parents did not see much value in mother tongue other than for communicating purposes. It is also true that the use of mother tongue facilitates quality education; however parents indicated that the reason for sending their children to Zibambele an English medium school was more to do with the fact that the medium of instruction used is English and that was what they wanted for their children, to be taught in English as early as in Grade 1. To parents, the exposure to English at an early age entails competence in the language and thus increases the child's opportunity to better positions of power and success.

The current trends in South Africa promote proficiency in English. Interviews for a job are conducted in English, globalization requires the knowledge of English, it is also the language used in the workplace and as the school principal indicated, it is the language that enables communication between people of different cultures. People who are proficient in English are therefore in a better position to get employment than people who struggle to express themselves in the language. Parents associated the good reputation of the school with the medium of instruction offered. They were satisfied with the performance of their children in the school despite the fact that the learners were struggling to grasp concepts taught because of the medium of instruction used.

A partial match was identified in relation to the formalised national language policy ideal, its intentions, objectives and desired outcomes against the actual practices in the school. In this case the findings indicate that the language policy of Zibambele Primary with respect to the medium of instruction offered is informed by LiEP on language rights as LiEP fully grants such rights to parents of learners in the school. However as LiEP advocates for multilingualism in schools its ideal seemed partially captured in the school language policy, as stated by the school principal that the medium used in the school was English and Afrikaans [two official languages out of twelve] and not the home languages of the majority learners in the school. These findings brought to light how LiEP is interpreted and informs decision makers at Zibambele to guide the selection of the medium of instruction in the

school. Generally, LiEP makes provision for the selection of the medium of instruction in schools.

The finding further highlighted unique and special realities which characterized practice and reality in the context of policy implementation. Policy in operation differed from classroom to classroom as it was reinterpreted by each teacher to suit the particular needs of the classroom situation. Depending on individual teachers' experience, personal styles of teaching, how learning material was used and how teachers adapted themselves to cope with the multilingual classrooms when using English as medium of instruction and how the support structures in the school managed resources to meet the requirements of learners, it indirectly impacted on the 'ideal' pre-specified in the original plan. As Romaine (2002, p. 1) argues that the same policy may lead to different outcomes depending on the situation it operates.

While a number of learners struggled with the medium of instruction, the quality of education was in a way compromised as educators adapted content knowledge to meet the needs of such learners. The findings illuminated that the value assigned to English as medium of instruction by the school decision makers was very high. The social-psychological and material environment in which teachers and learners worked together matched except in cases where the quality of the concepts taught was compromised because of difficulties educators experienced in their attempts to transfer knowledge to learners. And since the policy 'ideal and plan' were to produce desirable results in terms of providing quality education, a partial mismatch was identified. The mismatch was identified when learners were disadvantaged in terms of basic comprehension of the subject matter taught. A match to what actually happened in the classrooms was identified in the relation to the organization and practices of instruction to the response of the learners despite their low levels of understanding. The interaction with the teachers encouraged learner participation and provided a variety of language activity within lessons.

Finally an important explanation in this study relates to the relative merit and worth of the national language policy as a valuable document to guide the selection on the medium of instruction in schools. This illuminative evaluation brought some light on the extent to which the school policy of Zibambele Primary School language policy is guided by the national Language in Education Policy that promotes multilingualism and inclusivity as medium of instruction in schools, and reasons parents gave for choosing the medium of instruction used in the school. From the interpretation of the data and the explanations provided for, findings reveal that the language policy is the most progressive policy in the world (Osborne : 2007) as it demonstrates democracy at work as it does not impose but give rights to individuals to choose. The indication is that policy is open to all because it gives rights to decision makers to choose suitable medium of instruction for their children. Decision makers can derive immense benefit from it because somehow provision is made for individuals to choose the preferred medium of instruction.

4.5: CONCLUSION

The research questions in this study sought to explore in detail how Zibambele Primary interprets LiEP and make a decision on the language medium to use. The study evaluated how the policy ideal informed the school and reasons parents give for the language medium argued for in the school policy. It is clearly evident from matches and mismatches that most data gives an idea how the school makes sense of LiEP and decide on the language medium to use. Document analysis, observations, interviews and questionnaires unraveled the comprehended beliefs and practices (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976) in the school. Following Parlett & Hamilton's (1976) illuminative framework this study outlined the language medium ideal expressed in LiEP and described the actual policy of Zibambele Primary and how it is guiding the actual medium of instruction parents decided to adopt in the school. The actual LiEP's ideal is actually partly captured in the school language policy and practice in terms of language rights to choose the medium of instruction believed to be the best for the learners.

There is general acceptance and positive support towards multilingualism as medium in the school, however, the actual practice in terms of preference is English. I can therefore argue that irrespective of the partial mismatches and matches LiEP is successful in the hands of decision makers. I can then reasonably conclude that the decision to choose English was made democratically and this accords with the LiEP. Also, the decision was taken with the best interest of learners at heart and to enhance education. The qualitative approach in this study provides for this evaluation only a superficial indication of the effectiveness of LiEP, which leaves room for other researchers to continue with the study and take it further.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1: INTRODUCTION

The recommendations made in this section are in response to the research questions and the explanation of its findings as described in Chapter 4.

5.2: RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- LiEP advocates for multilingualism and grants the right to choose the language of learning and teaching to individuals. Parents exercise this right and choose the most preferred medium, English as medium of instruction for their children in schools. This is whilst the educators are not equipped to face the challenges of multicultural classrooms. As argued by Beukes (2004) & Mgqwashu (2007) LiEP is a noble document but has gaps in terms of teacher qualifications. Teachers are not trained and developed to teach in multilingual classrooms. To be successful in multilingual and multicultural classrooms, teachers need to be empowered with basic knowledge of managing such situations. Decision makers in schools should set aside a budget to ensure that educators in the school are well trained to be able to cope. Educators also should be encouraged to acquire proficiency in relevant South African languages popular in their schools. Recruitment should also give preference to suitably qualified multilingual staff.

- Viewed from the perspective that the issue of which language is best suited for learners in the Foundation Phase is highly debated, mother tongue has an important role to play in the socio-cultural identity of individuals. Ramasamy (2001) argues that pragmatically mother tongue teaching is the best approach. Therefore parents should

not only see the advantage in career options that may be available to their children if they get educated through the medium of English but should motivate that the dominant mother tongue in the school is taught along with English but at a second or third language level.

5: 3: CONCLUSION

This research attempted in a small measure to contribute to our understanding of ways in which the national language policy is beneficial to intended users to improve the quality of education.

The goal of reporting evaluation findings in this study is to enable the decision makers to understand the questions the research sought to respond to, the methods that were used to answer them, the strength and weaknesses in the study design and execution and efforts made to compensate for the weaknesses, the findings in the study, how conclusive they are. The execution of efforts made to compensate for the weaknesses was to corroborate the findings, take the data back to the informants for member checks and to test how conclusive they were, whether or why they were important, and how the decision maker can find them useful.

The research conducted in this study does provide evidence that the language policy of Zibambele Primary is in line with what the national LiEP accords on language rights. Data in the findings confirm that the language policy of Zibambele Primary is guided by LiEP on the medium of instruction. To be more specific, English as medium of instruction was not prescribed but a democratic choice by parents themselves. Therefore LiEP's ideal seems captured in the Zibambele Primary School's language policy and practice. Reasons were elicited in the parent's own terms to gauge if the medium of instruction is regarded as a vehicle to ensure effective teaching and learning implications thereof in the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in Grade 1. The value assigned to English as medium is high because a match was found between policy ideal and what actually happened in the classrooms and therefore the national language policy is a valuable document that guides the selection of the medium of instruction at Zibambele Primary School.

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(iii)

Interviews [09 08 2008]

Principal

1. ***Question:*** Governance and management refers to the need to make management accountable to the people to whom the management systems and structures have been set up. How do you go about doing that?

Answer: In this school the management is inclusive. The School Governing Body, the School Management Team, Educators and Grade Heads are all given room to make inputs.

2. ***Question:*** What is the learner population in this school?

Answer: It is plus, minus one thousand and forty eight learners. 10% is coloured, 90% black and 1 learner is white.

3. ***Question:*** Taking into consideration the reality of the diverse learner demographics in the school, what informs the selection of the medium of instruction?

Answer: Well parents want their children taught in English. Even black parents bring their children to this school because they want their children to be taught in English because English is a business language.

4. ***Question:*** Are these decisions made in consultation with the parents?

Answer: Yes. We have a language policy. In our language policy it is stated that in this school the medium of instruction is English and Afrikaans. Well the policy of the school is English and Afrikaans.

5. ***Question:*** What are other reasons for the school to choose English as medium of instruction with respect to policy informing the medium of instruction in schools?

Answer: Basically parents. You see my staff is integrated with blacks but can speak only English. I don't want them to feel displaced because they cannot teach native languages.

6. ***Question:*** Is the school in general in support of the promotion of multilingualism?

Answer: Yes, but we cannot promote it.

Follow up question: May you perhaps Sir elaborate at to why not?

Answer: Parents want English.

7. ***Question:*** How does the admission of learners at the school affect the medium of instruction used in the school?

Answer: There is no preference given. Admissions are conducted on the basis of list A and B. We comply with policy in terms of Feeder Zones. Even if children cannot speak English they are admitted. From nine to ten months later learners can speak the language.

8. ***Question:*** What happens if a learner seeks admission in the school and the school does not offer the choice of the learner's medium of instruction?

Answer: We refer such learners to the district. If they insist they are taken.

Follow up question: Then are such the learners catered for in the school in terms of language choice?

Answer: They are told on enrollment that this school can only offer English and Afrikaans. If they are taken they will have to comply with the school language policy.

9. ***Question:*** How is this aligned to the school language policy?

Answer: The language of teaching and learning in this school is English and Afrikaans. On admission parents are informed. In the admission form it is indicated.

10. ***Question:*** How do you address language issues in Grade 1 classrooms in the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy as there is no dominant learner home language?

Answer: Learners in Grade 1 are taught in English. It is the teacher's responsibility to help learners understand English. English is the policy of the school and parents want their children taught in English.

11. ***Question:*** What do you think is the ideal situation for the medium of instruction to be offered by the school as per the Language –in-Education Policy?

Answer: At this stage English is most wanted by parents because it is the international language. World out there demands English.

12. ***Question:*** Should it be English or mother tongue?

Answer: English.

13. ***Question:*** How does that affect the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in the Grade1 classes?

Answer: Teaching in the classrooms is stressful at times, but teachers are coping. The experience helps them to handle the learners. The problem is when learners are admitted for the first time in the school to do Grade 5 to 6, but bridging courses are done for them.

The problem is not that big now because parents are encouraged to speak to their children in English. Media like the television teaches the learners English so learners understand English at an early age.

14. ***Question:*** Does English as the language of teaching and learning in the school promote the achievement of desired goals in the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy that is to read for meaning, write for a purpose, solve problems and investigate as per requirements of the curriculum expectations in Grade1?

Answer: Learner achievement is normal. We do have learners who are achieving and those who do not like any other school. Language of teaching and learning plays a small role. Discipline is more important and is the problem than language of teaching and learning.

15. ***Question:*** Do children have options regarding the language of teaching and learning in the school? Why?

Answer: No. There are eleven languages promoted by the policy. It's impossible to teach all at once. Where will we get the manpower to do that?

16. ***Question***: What measures do you have in place as a school to ensure that you adhere to the policy?

Answer: We do have a language policy in place. The Gauteng Department of Education knows the school language policy. It was submitted .The School Governing Body was informed. Parents also when given application forms. Learners are encouraged to speak the language every time even during break and during sports.

17. ***Question:*** Staff establishment. What informs teacher recruitment in the school? Does it respond to learner needs when it comes to the medium of instruction, and why?

Answer: Yes, but not directly. The language policy of the school informs recruitment. Employment is on the basis of English and Afrikaans. The emphasis is on the fact that educators can speak English or Afrikaans. If we can get one who can speak three to four languages it's a bonus.

18. ***Question:*** What support structures and programmes do you have in the school for teachers and learners to support the teaching and learning of Literacy and Numeracy to multilingual learners?

Answer: Learning material is such they can make use of it to support learning. In staff meetings the Head of Department support educators.

19. ***Question:*** How is your parental involvement in supporting their children who are second language speakers of English?

Answer: It is still like before, the problem is still there. The illiteracy level of some parents…. And the levels of income are also improving and now assisting. But there are those who cannot because level of their education matches level of Grade threes.

20. ***Question:*** What challenges have you encountered in your attempt to implement the Language-in-Education Policy? What have you done to overcome them?

Answer: Teachers in the school do not understand all the eleven languages as expected by policy. Courses for the staff to understand Tswana and Sotho the dominant languages in the school were done but were not successful. The duration was short. Teachers need longer term to be exposed to the languages. And there are more than eleven languages, it's difficult. Solving Numeracy outcomes lies not in the language but the outcomes themselves. The department should rather look at promoting the school's language policies than the national Language-in-Education Policy. Different groups, it's their responsibility to promote their own language and not the school.

21. ***Question:*** In your opinion teaching for all learners in Grade 1 in the medium of English should remain the adopted decision despite different home language backgrounds in the school? Give reasons to support your statement.

Answer: Yes. To achieve the outcomes of certain learning programmes we need one language. I think mother tongue is important but that responsibility does not lie with the school; otherwise the department must take these learners to relevant schools. But that creates islands and the child is not integrated with other languages learner speakers.

(iv)

The School Governing Body Chairperson [15 10 2008]

1**. *Question:*** In this school the medium of instruction is English in Grade 1. What informed your selection of the language of teaching and learning?

Answer*:* The language of teaching is informed by the needs of parents. In this case they want their children to be taught in English.

2. ***Question:*** Do you as a person value the principle of multilingual teaching in schools? Why?

Answer*:* Yes I do, but it depends on the parent. In my case as much as I want my child to know his language I want him to be taught in English.

3. ***Question:*** As a member of the School Governing Body, in your experience what are the challenges facing the selection of English as the medium of instruction in the school?

Answer*:* Well English is what we want. Sometimes children struggle to learn English but they will come around.

4. ***Question:*** In your opinion, will the children be disadvantaged by being taught in a language other than English?

Answer*:* Yes. It is important that my child knows English so that he can get a better job. English is an international language, without it you have limited chances.

5. ***Question:*** Who decides on the languages of learning?

Answer*:* The school has a language policy. On registration one is given the language policy to explain the language of teaching and learning in the school. Anyway parents know prior that in this school children are taught in English. That is why in the first place we want our children to be learned in this school.

6. ***Question:*** How do you contribute towards the development of multilingual learning in the school?

Answer*:* We want our children to be taught in English. If wanted them to be taught in their languages we would have taken them to township schools where home language is taught.

7. ***Question:*** What role do you as parents play in ensuring that the learning processes of learners in Numeracy and Literacy in Grade 1 in the medium of English satisfy schooling intentions?

Answer*:* We support the teachers by helping with homework. When a child struggles and the teacher invites you to the school we always encourage parents to come listen.

At home we talk to the children in English so that they can learn to speak the language. The TV makes it easier because programmes are most of the time in English.

8. ***Question:*** What made you choose a school that use English as medium of instruction for teaching and learning from Grade1 for your child?

Answer*:* I want my child to have a bright future. Out there you must know English well to get a good job.

9. ***Question:*** Are you happy about the child's progress in Numeracy and Literacy and the way it is offered in English? Why?

Answer*:* My son is in Grade3. He can read and do sums.

10. ***Question:*** How often do you visit the school to get report on your child's progress in Numeracy and Literacy?

Answer*:* Every end of term we are called to the school to get progress reports. In the last term learners who have done well are rewarded. They are given certificates, trophies and prizes.

11. ***Question:*** In cases of financial hardships where you cannot afford to pay school fees for your child in this school that is using English as medium of instruction, and have to take your child to a non fee school, would you prefer to take your child to a non fee school that is using English as medium of instruction for the teaching of Numeracy and Literacy in Grade1?. Why?

Answer*:* Yes I would take my child to a school that is teaching in English. The earlier the child start to learn in English the better it is for them. When you enroll a child at Grade 4 or more the child is usually demoted to a lower class because their English is poor and they do not understand.

(v)

Educators Interviews [20 09 2008- 23 09 2008]

1. ***Question:*** At your school are you faced with children who speak multi-languages? Is the medium of instruction English?

Answer*:*

T1: Yes, the medium is English and Afrikaans

T2: Our school is a parallel medium school. We teach in English and Afrikaans

2. ***Question:*** According to the class statistics how many learners do you have in your class who are second and third language speakers of English?

Answer*:*

T1: Majority is black and two coloured. There are no whites.

T2: We have about 92 % black and 8 % coloured but mostly Setswana speaking.

3. ***Question:*** How do you and your colleagues cope with this in your day to day teaching especially in the teaching and learning of Literacy and Numeracy?

Answer*:*

T1: We cope well because we are bilingual most of us. But for the learners the first term is difficult because some learners do not come from prep schools so they don't know English for they come from home straight to an English class.

T2: In the beginning it's not easy but I try to find a way to make learners understand**.**

4. ***Question:*** Were you trained to teach through the medium of English?

Answer*:*

T1: No I was trained to teach in an Afrikaans school. But since I started teaching I taught in an English school.

T2: I don't have a problem because I have taught in a multilingual class before.

5. ***Question:*** Do you have any experience to teach English second or third language speaking learners in general?

Answer*:*

T1: Well for the eight years I have been teaching I have gained experience.

T2: I was trained to teach in Afrikaans.

6. ***Question:*** How do you feel about teaching children who find it difficult to comprehend in English, and how does that impact on your teaching of Literacy and Numeracy?

Answer*:*

T1: In the beginning children cannot understand. I have to explain more than once, three four times. Then try to get someone who can speak their own language.

T2: I use lots of repetition. Instructions are said in different ways. I try to explain on a one to one level. Individual explaining helps.

7. ***Question:*** What teaching methods work best for you?

Answer*:*

T1: Repetition and lots of repetition. The common solution is to use pictures, illustrations. For example like using a picture of a dog eating a cake. From that picture they can read what is happening. There are no problems when teaching Maths. All concepts are the same even in different languages. But for me is giving instructions in different ways. It works for me.

T2: Its not is easy, it's a challenge. Reading is a problem. That is a lack. If there is a problem its' reading. Individual teaching helps, walking around the class trying to make them understand.

8. ***Question:*** How do children in you class differ from your expectations when it comes to the medium of instruction offered in the school?

Answer*:*

T1: English is not their mother tongue so it's not easy for them to understand but like I said I find ways to make them understand though its time consuming and frustrating at times.

T2: I do as much as I can.

9. ***Question:*** Are you familiar with the Language- in -Education Policy? What does it say when it comes to medium of instruction in Grade1 in the teaching of Numeracy and Literacy?

Answer*:*

T1: Yes I am. It promoted teaching in mother tongue. But here in this school parents know we teach in English and Afrikaans, so when they brought their children here they know we offer English and Afrikaans. By the way children who come to this school are not staying around here; they come from far because their parents want them taught in English. They come by taxis. Parents put so much effort for them to be taught in English.

T2: Yes. It says that it is best that children are taught in the language they understand best. But we are an English and Afrikaans school. I believe it is best that children are taught in their own language because it's only a few who understand the language so they struggle a bit but parents brought them to an English language school so that they can understand English. I believe children must be taught in English because it's an international language.

10. ***Question:*** Do you as an educator have any say towards the selection of the language of teaching and learning in the school?

Answer*:*

T1: Parents want their children to be taught in English. So we teach in the language they want.

T2: No***.*** Management of the school decides.

11. ***Question:*** What kind of support do you get from the department of education in teaching Numeracy and Literacy in Grade1?

Answer*:*

T1: District conducts workshops on how to teach the Assessment Standards and Outcomes. The workshops do not empower us with skills on how to teach in a multilingual class.

T2: Workshops, meetings and sometimes visit the school but it's been long since we had a visit from them.

12. ***Question:*** What is your opinion of the underlying principles of multi-lingual teaching in Grade 1?

Answer*:*

T1: To teach learners in their mother tongue, but in this school we only teach in English and Afrikaans.

T2: To teach learners in a language they best understand. The policy of our school says we teach in English or Afrikaans and we are doing that.

13. ***Question:*** What kind of support do you get from the school management team in the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy?

Answer*:*

T1: The Head of Department is very supportive. In meetings we discuss our problems.

T2: They support us in many ways. The issue of discipline***.***

14. ***Question:*** What kind of support do you get from parents who insist that their children be taught in English in Grade1?

Answer*:*

T1: Very little. Maybe it is because some parents do not know English that well**.**

T2: Some parents help their children but it differs from parent to parent.

15. ***Question:*** What positive changes if any has multilingualism brought about?

Answer*:*

T1: Learners learn to integrate. They learn to live with each other.

T2: Tolerance. We learn different cultures we would never have known**.**

16. ***Question***: What are the biggest challenges you face?

Answer*:*

T1: The biggest challenge in my view is to put the message across. To make children understand concepts to the best of their ability. Sometimes language limits them when they want to express themselves.

T2: The lots of repetition take most of the time. We cannot proceed before learners have grasped what is expected.

17. ***Question:*** Which particular aspects of multilingualism do you find problematic?

Answer*:*

T1: I do not understand the culture of the learners and find it difficult to relate to how they do things. The same applies to learners they also fail to understand how my culture operates, but nevertheless we try our level best.

T2: It is challenging but we are coping.

(vi)

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent

Thank You for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is to assist in a study to understand reasons by parents for the decisions to choose English as a medium of instruction for their children in a school as opposed to the Department's Language-in-Education Policy that encourages that learners be taught in their home language especially in the Foundation Phase (Grade 1- 3) when learners learn to read and write.

The questionnaire intends to establish the value parents put on English as the medium of instruction especially in the Foundation Phase. Your view in this regard is very important. It will help us understand the current state of affairs in the schools and the effect of the medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase with regards to the achievement of educational goals of quality education. Please respond as openly and honestly as you can to the questions. No reference will be made to any particular individual who respond to this questionnaire. Information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

The Questionnaire is divided into **3 sections listed A, B and C below**. Each section has instructions that you are requested to follow.

SECTION A

Please tick (√) next to the most appropriate answer: (Yes or No)

	Yes	**No**
13. Is the school where your child attends, the learners are children who speak multiple languages (Former Model C School)?		
14. Is English is the only medium of instruction offered in the school?		

15. Do you have knowledge of the Language-in-Education Policy?		
16. **If your respond to 4 is Yes**. Are you in favour of multilingualism as medium of instruction for multiple language learners in your school?		
17. Are you are aware of your rights as a parent to choose the language of teaching and learning for your child?		
18. Were you then involved in the selection of the medium of instruction for your child in the school?		
19. Are you opposed to your child being taught in the Foundation Phase in his/her home language?		
20. When registering your child were you informed of the medium of instruction?		
21. **If Yes to 8**: Would you, regardless of the challenges your child may experience as the second or third language speaker believe the medium of instruction is good for your child?		
22. Does the school satisfy your intention of the best education for your child?		
23. Are there any support programmes for children who are not first language speakers of English in the school?		
24. At the moment are you happy about your child's progress in Mathematics (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy)?		

SECTION B

Please tick (√) in the O (a circle) the most appropriate answer/s

B1. The major reason that influences your choice of a school is;

1. The medium of instruction **O**
2. Accessibility from home **O**
3. The school has a good reputation **O**
4. You can afford the school fees **O**

5. Other: _____**O**

B2.The following issues are crucial to me for my child

1. High quality education **O**
2. Better learning facilities **O**
3. Qualifications that are internationally recognized **O**
4. Well qualified and committed teachers **O**
5. Providing my child opportunities to interact with learners from different cultural backgrounds **O**
6. Other : _____ **O**

B3.The following issues are not important for my child

1. My child to masters his/ her home language **O**
2. My child being taught in his/her home language **O**
3. Teachers teaching my child understand my language and culture **O**
4. My child grasping concepts and knowledge in Mathematics **O**
5. Other: _____ **O**

SECTION C

Do you believe that teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase should be in the language learners know and understand best from home? **Why?**

_____

_____

_____

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RESEARCH STUDY CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET AND FORM FOR THE PRINCIPAL

337 Panda Avenue
Lindhaven
Roodepoort
1724
20 April 2008

Dear Principal

My name is Eunice Ntombizodwa Magwa a Master's student at the University of Witwatersrand. My field of study is Curriculum Development and Evaluation. Part of the requirements of the Masters degree is a research essay on a topic in this field. I have chosen to evaluate the effects of the medium of instruction, English, for the teaching of Literacy (Languages) and Numeracy (Mathematics) to Grade 1 Foundation Phase learners. The purpose of the study is therefore to establish reasons for this choice of medium, and its implications for learning Literacy and Numeracy in Grade 1.

I would like your permission to conduct the research in your school. The research will include classroom observations in Grade1 classrooms, interviewing the prominent stakeholders,[the school Principal, 2 SGB members, Foundation Phase Heads of Department, Grade 1 educators]. The interviews will take place during educator's free time, after school or when the respondents are available. The evaluation will also include analysis of the school Language Policy documents, teacher's three levels of planning, learner performance Assessment Records, Newsletter, and learners workbooks. Questionnaires to parents will also be part of the data collection.

I wish to assure you that that there will be no interference with the school programme of and teaching and learning. The results of my research will not divulge the information collected from the school. The name of the school and names of all participants will not be mentioned. Views and responses will be completely anonymous and nobody besides myself or my supervisor will be aware of who the participants were. Stakeholder's participation will be voluntarily and they will retain the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

Participants will be able to voice their opinions concerning the choice of the medium of instruction and consequences thereof. The findings in the research will provide a basis for reflection on the Language-in-Education Policy, its practicability, particularly the theories underpinning it in the light of selecting appropriate medium of instruction for learners in the Foundation Phase. If the school wishes, feedback can be provided and a summary or copy of the research can be made available.

Thank you for your help.

Eunice Ntombizodwa Magwa
Cell No: 0733345109

REPLY SLIP

I _____ Principal of the school have read the above information and hereby give permission for teachers in my school to participate in this study.

Signed: _____ at_____on this day____of_____ 200___

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RESEARCH STUDY CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET AND FORM FOR THE EDUCATOR

337 Panda Avenue
Lindhaven
Roodepoort
1724
20 April 2008

Dear Teacher

My name is Eunice Ntombizodwa Magwa a Master's student at the University of Witwatersrand. My field of study is Curriculum Development and Evaluation. Part of the requirements of the Masters degree is a research essay on a topic in this field. I have chosen to evaluate the effects of the medium of instruction, English, for teaching Literacy and Numeracy to Grade 1 Foundation Phase learners. The purpose of the study is therefore to establish reasons for this choice of medium, and its implications for learning Literacy and Numeracy in Grade 1.

I would like to interview yourself and a number of other teachers in Grade 1 to find out what your experiences are in using English as medium of instruction in the teaching of Numeracy and Literacy in Grade1. The evaluation will entail interviewing you, observations of teaching and learning in Numeracy and Literacy in your classroom, looking at learner's workbooks and learning and support material used in the classroom, and discussing your three levels of planning and assessment. There will be no interference with your teaching or classroom management, and I will take as little of your time as possible.

You will be able to give your opinion concerning teaching in English as medium of instruction in a multilingual class and describe your experiences. This could lead to more support being given to teachers in this situation as well as further research done in this phenomenon. If you wish, feedback can be provided and a summary or copy of the research will be left with the school.

Thank you for your help.

Eunice Ntombizodwa Magwa
Cell No: 0733345109

REPLY SLIP

I _____ the Grade1 Teacher in the school have read the above information and hereby give researcher permission to conduct research in my classroom.

Signed: _____ at_____on this day____of_____ 200___

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RESEARCH STUDY CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET AND FORM FOR THE SGB MEMBERS

337 Panda Avenue
Lindhaven
Roodepoort
1724
20 April 2008

The Chairperson
The School Governing Body

Dear Sir/ Madam

My name is Eunice Ntombizodwa Magwa a Master's student at the University of Witwatersrand. My field of study is Curriculum Development and Evaluation. Part of the requirements of the Masters degree is a research essay on a topic in this field. I have chosen to evaluate the effects of the medium of instruction, English, for the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy to Grade 1 Foundation Phase learners in your school. The purpose of the study is therefore to establish reasons for this choice of medium, and its implications for learning Literacy and Numeracy in Grade 1.

I would like your permission to conduct the research in the school. The research will include interviewing yourself and one SGB member, Questionnaires to parents, classroom observations, as well as analysis of the school documents [Language Policy, school's Mission and Vision, the 10th Day School Survey, teachers' planning, learner performance Assessment Records, News letters, learners workbooks]. I wish to assure you that there will be no interference with the school programme of teaching and learning.

The results of my research will not divulge the information. The name of the school and names of all participants will not be mentioned. Views and responses will be completely anonymous and nobody besides myself or my supervisor will be aware of who the participants were. Stakeholder's participation will be voluntarily and you retain the right to withdraw your participation from the study.

Participants will be able to voice their opinions concerning the choice of the medium of instruction and consequences thereof. The findings in the research will provide a basis for reflection on the Language-in-Education Policy, its practicability, particularly the theories underpinning it in the light of selecting appropriate medium of instruction for learners in the Foundation Phase. If the school wishes, feedback can be provided and a summary or copy of the research can be made available.

Thank you for your help.

Eunice Ntombizodwa Magwa
Cell No: 0733345109

REPLY SLIP

I _____ the SGB Chairperson have read the above information and hereby give permission for the school's stakeholders to participate in this study.

Signed: _____ at_____on this day____of_____ 200

:

(x)

Observation Record Sheet

Class: _____

Educator: _____

Lesson: _____

Date: _____

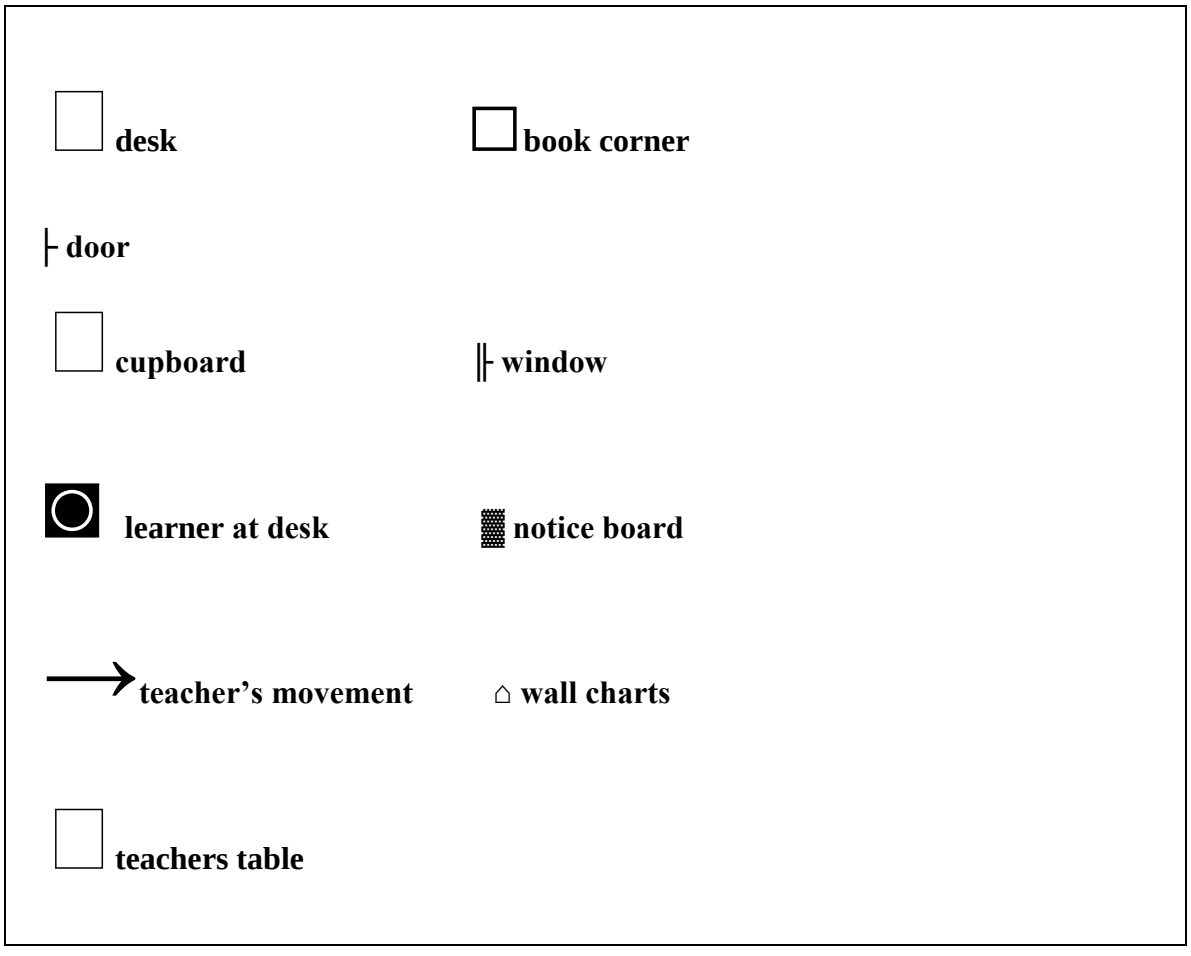
Time: _____

Medium of Instruction: _____

Observations:

Classroom environment:

Sitting arrangement:



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Analytical Schedule that will capture what teacher does:

Time	**Instructional practices used in the classroom**	**Teacher's movement**	**Teacher learner interaction**	**Patterns that start to emerge**

Linguistic analysis:

1st and 2nd language speakers:

_____

_____

Descriptive analysis:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reflections:

_____

_____

_____

_____