Issues in Language Acquisition Planning in Zimbabwe: The Case of Ndebele within the Primary Education System

By

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Declaration

I, Seabird Masuku, Student Number 614M2947, hereby declare that this thesis, “Issues in Language Acquisition Planning in Zimbabwe: The Case of Ndebele within the Primary Education System,” is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Humanities – African Languages Studiesat Rhodes University is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.

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S. Masuku

June 2023

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late grandmother – Hleko Msimanga – who passed on in February 2015, just a month before she turned 100 years old. She was my pillar of strength, and what I am today is because of her love, care and guidance. “I wish you were here today *gogo* to enjoy the fruits of your love”.

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I wish to thank The Almighty Father in Heaven who loved me this much and gave me the time and opportunity to do this research. I went through many difficult situations, travelling hundreds of kilometres but emerged out of that still in one piece, all because of Him. He provided for me and protected me throughout the course of this research.

This research was partially supported through the award of the NRF bursary. In that regard, I wish to thank the Rhodes University for the support extended to me at that time of desperation and need. However, the ideas expressed in this dissertation are not of the university but mine.

A special acknowledgement is due to Professor Dion Nkomo for his guidance throughout the research and the write-up of the thesis. I consider myself very lucky to have had such a supervisor. Many other people contributed directly or indirectly towards the accomplishment of this study. I wish to thank the then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Dr Lazarus Dokora, who facilitated clearance for my research clearance with his office. I also wish to thank the late Minister T. Mathuthu who introduced me to Minister Dokora and facilitated our meeting. I also wish to thank my cousin, Mthunzi Sibanda, who played an important role in the processing of all the necessary documents for this research to be granted. I wish to thank the provincial education directors of Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South. Added to that list I wish to thank the district education officers of Khami, Reigate and Bulawayo Central (all in Bulawayo). I also wish to thank the district education officers of Lupane, Nkayi and Bubi (all in Matabeleland North) and Gwanda, Mangwe and Umzingwane (all in Matabeleland South) and their staff who assisted me with permission letters that I used for my research. My profound gratitude also goes to the then principal at Lowveld High School in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, South Africa, Mrs S. J. Wandrag and my colleagues: Dr N. Schnel, Dr C. Manganyana, and others who assisted me in one way or the other. I would also like to thank Mr Nkululeko Khoza, Mr Prevention Sibanda, Mr Sanderson Masuku, Ms Bekezela Mlotshwa, Ms Nothando Mlotshwa, Ms Pumulo Masuku, Ms Bekezela Ndiweni, Mr Mandlenkosi Khumalo, Mr Themba Ncube, Ms N. Dube and Professor C. Maphosa for their valued input into the completion of this research.

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My family members always supported me during the lengthy period of my research and I would like to give special thanks to my lovely wife Nomusa and our three daughters: Gugulethu, Nobesuthu and Ntombizodwa Masuku. I deprived them of family time as I was always working on my research or away from home but they kept patient until it was done. To you four, you are a special group of people. I love you and will always do.

Abstract

Issues in Language Acquisition Planning in Zimbabwe: The Case of isiNdebele within the Primary Education System

This thesis discusses pertinent language issues within the primary school system in Zimbabwe in view of complaints (over many years) of communities in the two Matabeleland provinces and Bulawayo about high failure rates of learners in the final grade 7 examinations. It also interrogates the government's commitment to the development of indigenous languages in the primary school system, particularly in the three provinces mentioned above as mirrored in the 2013 constitution of the country. The study conducted traces the language trends exhibited currently back to their beginnings during the colonial era in language planning by the government and the policies that informed such planning. What obtains on the ground seems to be violating the principles behind the declaration of the International Mother Language Day (30C/62) proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1999. On 16 May 2007 the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/61/266, called upon Member States (Zimbabwe included) *"to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world".*

The amended education act of 2006 states that in Zimbabwe's primary schools early learning must be done through mother tongue instruction then switch to English in grade 4 upwards. As a first step of a child's academic life, the lower primary education needs to be conducted in the child's mother tongue to bridge the gap between the child's home environment and the new school environment as well as to reduce culture shock associated with the sudden introduction of a new language. Studies, such as those done by Noormohamadi, (2008) and Mackenzie, (2013) have shown that children tend to understand better if they are taught in their mother tongue. In this thesis I seek to establish if the teaching of Ndebele at primary school reveals the socio-cultural ideology (awareness of circumstances surrounding individuals and how their behaviours are affected, specifically by their surroundings, social and cultural factors) and political ideology (thinking structures about the way policies should be run) underpinning language planning in Zimbabwe. It is my observation and argument that the Education Act proclaims what has not been practised on the ground through teacher training and deployment practices.

To establish if the teaching of Ndebele at primary school reveals the socio-cultural and political ideologies underpinning language planning in Zimbabwe, I carried out research in Matabeleland South, Bulawayo and Matabeleland North provinces covering a total of 27 schools, 27 heads of school and 135 teachers. The research's main aims were to find out if Ndebele was taught at school, by who and using what materials. It should be noted that mother tongue, in learning, acts as a basis of interpretation of subsequent concepts. When a child is learning new concepts or words in the second language, he or she first searches the equivalent in his or her mother tongue. If the primary language has not been developed well enough to have such equivalents, such a child is likely to have problems in forming new concepts in the second language. The role of language in meaning, therefore, is a variable that depends on the socio-geographical location of the languages and their speakers.

The research established that, indigenous languages, Ndebele included, are not developed by the government through financial support for teaching material production and qualified teacher deployment. Instead, it was discovered that in Matabeleland there are some learners at primary school who are taught by a Shona-speaking teacher who cannot communicate properly with the learners. It should be remembered that a primary language is used by a child as the foundation to learn the basic concepts in his or her own language and to give him or her freedom to express himself or herself without the inhibitions imposed by an insufficient mastery of the medium of instruction.

As a way of concluding the research I found it necessary that the use of mother tongue by learners at lower grades of primary school be strengthened through the deployment of teachers who can teach Ndebele properly because it provides a strong foundation for further education. Using the mother tongue, students learn to think, communicate and acquire an intuitive understanding of grammar. The mother tongue is; therefore, the greatest asset and vital tool people use to acquire new concepts.

Key Terms:

Behaviourism

Constructivism

Language Acquisition Planning

Language Planning

Language Policy

Zone of Proximal Development

List of abbreviations

‘A’ Level	Advanced Level
‘O’ Level	Ordinary Level
HOT	High Order Thinking
LOT	Lower Order Thinking
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZILPA	Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association
Zimsec	Zimbabwe School Examination Council
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This study broadly falls under the field of language planning. It particularly deals with acquisition planning in Zimbabwe, with specific reference to the teaching of Ndebele in primary school education, focusing on how language planning in Zimbabwe has affected the development of the Ndebele language as a medium of instruction and a subject within the education system. While Ndebele has been taught as a subject in Zimbabwe, as stated in the Education Act of 1987, some indigenous languages have not been offered that chance until around 2005 when Tonga, and Nambya in 2006 were taught in grade one and examined in grade 7 in 2011 and 2012 respectively. The grade 7 end of year results in the past fifteen, or so years, have not shown any development of the Ndebele language to account for its teaching as a subject for all these years. This has been the concern of the communities in Matabeleland hence this study seeks to establish the truth of these claims. Grade 7 candidates in the three provinces of Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South of Zimbabwe have recorded very poor end of year results leading to complaints about the quality of teaching done and the teacher deployment process.

1.2 Background

According to Cooper (1989), acquisition planning refers to planning processes that relate to organised efforts to promote the learning of a language. Acquisition planning is about the teaching and learning of a language and is directly related to the spread and promotion of the language in question. Deciding and choosing which language(s) will be used as media for instruction at school is crucial in acquisition planning as one must not only learn the language but use it to learn. Acquisition planning is a critical part of policy planning, which involves the users of a language and the teaching and learning of that language. Language planning generally refers to activities that attempt to bring about changes in the structure (corpus planning) and functions (status planning) of languages using sociolinguistic concepts and information to make policy decisions and implement them (Cooper, 1989). According to (Staceyet al 2010), “acquisition planning is a sub-category of policy

planning, which involves the users of a language and the teaching and learning of that language".

Language acquisition planning is a type of language planning in which a national, state or local government system aims to influence aspects of language teaching and learning, such as language status, distribution and literacy through education hence the language policy in education. It is important, therefore, that language acquisition planning is done to facilitate the acquisition of mother tongue that plays a major role in the understanding of all other concepts taught to the learners.

Zimbabwe is a multilingual country with sixteen "officially recognised" languages and has a population of 15, 178, 979 people according to the 2022 preliminary census results. All the "officially recognised" languages are indigenous African languages except for English. There are two indigenous languages spoken by the majority of the Zimbabwean population – Ndebele and Shona. Shona is an umbrella term for five main dialects (Karanga, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau and Zezuru) spoken by the majority of the citizens who occupy the central and eastern parts of the country. Ndebele, spoken in the south-western parts of the country, Bulawayo, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and part of the Midlands, is the second largest language. Shona is spoken by about 75% of the population and Ndebele is spoken by about 15% of the population with the remaining 10% spread across the other languages spoken in the country.

As Shona and Ndebele were considered to be the most widely spoken indigenous languages, during the early days of independence in 1980, also with published materials for use in education, students were required to take either Ndebele or Shona at school depending on the geographical location of the school. Ndebele was predominant in Bulawayo, which was part of the Matabeleland North province until 1997 when it became a province, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South and in some parts of Midlands while Shona was taught in the eastern part of the country as well as in some parts of Midlands. However, English still maintained its dominance in all spheres of life as the language of business and medium of instruction at all institutions of learning. This is supported by (Hungwe, 2007), who says that because Zimbabwe's colonial master was Britain, English became the

official language of education, business and government. He further adds that there are two major indigenous languages, Shona and Ndebele that were given a status better than other indigenous languages. That has since changed as other minority languages have been introduced at school, namely Tonga and Nambya. Six of the larger minority languages, Kalanga, Changana, Chewa, Venda, Tonga and Nambya have been officially recognised for use in education and on radio.

It must be noted that multilingual education based on the mother tongue empowers all learners to fully understanding and respect one another and helps preserve the wealth of cultural and traditional heritage embedded in every language around the world. Studies, some cited in this thesis, have proven that people who are bilingual tend to have better cognitive skills than those who only speak one language and teaching the learners, in Zimbabwe, their indigenous language as a basis for them to grasp other concepts places them at an advantage academically. Knowing one's mother tongue also gives one a sense of identity and belonging.

In Zimbabwe, where English is treated so highly, the teaching-learning process in pre-school and early primary classes does not consider the children's home and community contexts. Language skills in teaching deal with listening, speaking, reading and writing, but it must be noted that language serves the purpose of communication, thinking and making sense of the world through the process of inferring and reasoning hence the fundamental value of the mother language should be recognised. Focus should be more on language as a means of communication rather than getting learners embroiled in the technicalities of language rules since little children may find that intimidating.

Source: T. Thondhlana, L. Machiridza Published 24 May 2020

Figure 1.1 Ndebele geo-linguistic areas in Zimbabwe

Areas labelled Tonga, Nambya, Kalanga, Khoisan, Ndebele, Sotho/Tswana and Venda are Ndebele speaking areas and Ndebele used to be the only indigenous language taught in these areas.

The 2013 Constitution is a legislative document that addresses the language issue in the country, although some of its aspects still derive from the inherited Rhodesian language policy based on Clement Doke's 1931 report on the country's language situation. In Doke's report, English was given a high status and it has continued to dominate people's social, political and economic lives (Hungwe, 2007); Kadenge and Nkomo, 2011); Mhute, 2016). It has not only dominated as the language of business, administration, politics and the media but also as the language of

instruction in the entire education system (Chivhanga & Chimhenga, 2013). English is spoken by millions of people around the world and taught in many countries, particularly former colonies of Britain. We cannot argue against the fact that English language learning allows one to communicate with people from all over the world hence making travelling easier as one can always find his or her way through asking in English. While all this can be said about English, its use in the education system as a school subject and as a medium of instruction in schools has disadvantaged many learners. It further affects their performance in other subjects taught in English (Nziramasanga, 1999; Maseko & Dhlamini, 2014). This claim is supported by (Ndille, 2018, p. 5), who states that there is need to Africanise education for the better understanding of an African child. He says,

> Within education, Africanization is a restorative justice project which sees justice in the perspective that each person must have an equal right to the most extensive liberty compatible to a similar liberty with others. It consists of setting up local contents curricula, and proliferating the use of African mother tongues in the development and dissemination of knowledge in African institutions of learning and in the establishment of unique structures of education based on African indigenously established purposes; making African institutions, and not merely institutions in Africa.

While there is no law barring one to be a Member of Parliament if he or she is not educated, formulation of laws in parliament and their application in both modern and traditional courts is based on one's understanding of English. In line with this view (Nyika, 2012), notes that not all key players, such as parliamentarians, traditional chiefs as well as the citizens who are the subjects of these laws, are proficient in English. Because of this wide use of English, African languages have not been sufficiently developed for use as the languages of law and legislature. This thesis highlights how the dominant use of English negatively affects the development of the Ndebele language with reference to its wide use as medium of instruction and taught subject in schools. The important status of English, globally, and imposed use of Shona nationally, undermines the status of the Ndebele language which is only mostly used regionally with other minority languages in the Zimbabwean education system.

While Ndebele has admittedly enjoyed dominance over the other Zimbabwean languages, some scholars, (Thondhlana, 1998; Peresuh & Masuku, 2002; Hungwe,

2007; Ndhlovu, 2010; Chivhanga, 2012; Gotosa, Rodzi & Mhlanga, 2013), highlight that the language-in-education policy has not been sufficiently implemented to develop and allow Ndebele acquisition to be at the same level with English and Shona. During discussions on *Radio Dialogue*, about the deployment of non-Ndebele speaking teachers at primary schools in Matabeleland, a province where Ndebele is spoken and taught at schools, and is supposed to be the medium of instruction up to Grade three, Samukele Hadebe, a renowned scholar argued that Ndebele is dying a slow death because "... the personnel entrusted to administer the language by the education ministry are not proficient in the language". Adding to that, Maretha Dube, the chairperson of the Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZILPA) also argued that, the state of Ndebele as a language in Zimbabwe is abysmal and neglects the fact that language is a culture, it is used to identify a people, it is their heritage and a right (*The Sunday News,* 2014).

In response to these sentiments presented above, the then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Dr Lazarus Dokora, quoted in *The Chronicle* (2016*)* (a daily newspaper in Bulawayo), said that as long as there were no language teachers and textbooks, it was impossible to guarantee that all the officially recognised languages would be accommodated in education. This means that both the language policy espoused by the constitution and the language-in-education policy are cases of declaration without implementation as observed by Bambgose (1991).

While existing scholarship tends to generalise the predicament of indigenous languages due to the dominance of English in Zimbabwean education, cf (Magwa, 2010; Ndamba, 2013), this thesis specifically looks at the position of Ndebele in relation to English, Shona and minority languages that are spoken in the Ndebele geo-linguistic areas. It looks at general concerns regarding the teaching of the Ndebele language in Zimbabwe. This study focuses on the education sector through which political, cultural and socio-economic processes are taught. Accordingly, this thesis looks at the sensitive politics of the Ndebele language within the education sector, more specifically at the primary school level, issues that the existing scholarship has thus far avoided.

1.3 History of the Ndebele Language in Zimbabwe

There are many versions of describing and identifying Ndebele people. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), and Hadebe (2002) there is one version based on what he calls clannish definition which defines Ndebele people as narrowly being members of the Khumalo clan that constituted itself as the ruling elite under Mzilikazi and Lobengula Khumalo. He says this definition fails to take into account the complex processes of nation building evolved by Mzilikazi who continually added new groups into the lower echelons of the original Khumalo clan. The second version is linguistically based. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) says Ndebele people consist of anyone who speaks the Ndebele language as a mother tongue. The third version is the regional-local definition that defines a Ndebele as any person residing in Matabeleland or the Midlands regions of Zimbabwe which Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) further calls the regional-geographic definition of being Ndebele. He sums up these definitions by saying, “Being a Ndebele means a conglomeration of all those people whose ancestors were assimilated into the Ndebele state, be they of Nguni, Sotho, Shona, Kalanga, Tonga, Tswana, Venda or Lozwi extraction, (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009, p. 35).

The Ndebele language originated early in the 19th century as an offshoot of the Nguni language in Natal when Mzilikazi fled the rule of the Zulu leader Shaka and migrated northward to form his own kingdom. With this breakaway of the Khumalos from King Shaka, a distinct Ndebele language and culture was able to develop. Contact with British missionaries paved the way for the development of a written Ndebele language (Hadebe, 2002).The people who fled with Mzilikazi got the name ‘Ndebele’ during their association with the Sotho people in the Transvaal region, (Hughes & van Velsen, 1954). On his way from Zululand to what is present day Matabeleland in Zimbabwe, Mzilikazi assimilated a number of Sotho people and other tribes that were conquered and incorporated into the Khumalo clan hence his original group ceased to be referred to as the ‘Khumalos’. The Sotho referred to all raiding Nguni groups as ‘Matebele’ meaning warriors with long shields, hence the name Matebele for the Ndebele, (Hughes & van Velsen, 1954 p.42), which in Nguni became amaNdebele. On the other hand, Nyathi (1924) claims that the name ‘Matebele’ derives from the Sotho verb ‘hotebela’ “*okutsho ukubhidliza, ukubulala*

kumbe ukuchitha" (p. 24) meaning to destroy, kill or ruin. It is unfortunate that the 'short' documented Ndebele history was written and continues to be written by non-Ndebele historians and anthropologists except for Nyathi, (1994, 1996; Hadebe, (2002) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

1.4 Ndebele and the National Language Policy

Before the 2013 Zimbabwe Constitution, Zimbabwe did not have a comprehensive national language policy document. Since the days of colonialism, there have been some efforts to formulate a language policy by the government and some interested stakeholders such as academics, civil society and community leaders. These include the government-commissioned report by the renowned linguist, Clement Doke, during the colonial times which set the stage for a policy that set English as the official language and medium of instruction in the education system. Ndebele and Shona were taught as the only indigenous languages in their geo-linguistic regions where minority languages also existed, cf. (Doke, 2005; Ndhlovu, 2006).

Since independence in 1980, there have been some curriculum reforms and campaigns that seek to address such dominance mainly through education which include the 1987 *Education Act*, the 1990 *National Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe*, and the 1990 *Report on the Survey of the Teaching/Learning of Minority Languages in Zimbabwe.* In the 1990s, there was the1997 *Position Paper on Zimbabwe's Language Policy*, the 1998 *National Language Policy Advisory Panel Report,* the 1999 *Report of the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training in Zimbabwe*. All these documents were an attempt to provide a language policy framework that would elevate indigenous languages and promote their development, (Ndhlovu, 2009). However, close analysis of all these documents reveals vagueness. English remains dominant in all sectors of life and that has caused concerns from different quarters. There is comfort and hope though, in the fact that the Zimbabwe 2013 Constitution addresses the language issue although some scholars have identified limitations in its provisions (Maseko & Ndlovu, 2013; Kadenge & Mugari, 2015; Nkomo & Maseko, 2017; Moyo, 2018; Mumpande & Barnes, 2019; Hang'ombe & Maseko, 2020).

In education, the complaints have been and still are that the use of English impedes academic progress in some learners as they struggle to understand it as a language and further struggle to understand the concepts expressed in it, (Ndhlovu, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2019; Nyika, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009; Nkomo, 2008; Kadenge & Mugari, 2015; Hungwe, 2007; Nkwe & Murungudzi, 2015). From a socio-economic view, business is conducted in English and that leaves out many citizens who cannot understand or communicate in English. At times, such people, those who cannot communicate in English, keep quiet even if they have very vital issues to discuss. They keep quiet because they are afraid of using English and are also afraid of using their own language for fear of ridicule by those who can use English. There is, therefore, need to develop indigenous languages such as Ndebele to a point where it becomes accepted as a language with which business can be conducted. This has to start at school by teaching the indigenous languages properly and giving them the status they deserve. While scholars have recorded complaints about the dominance of English leading to the neglect of indigenous languages, the Ndebele speakers have also complained about the spread of Shona in the Ndebele speaking region, especially in education. The spread of Shona to Matabeleland and Bulawayo has stifled the development of Ndebele. Such complaints formed the basis of this study. In addition, there has been advocacy since the 1970s for the plight of indigenous languages, (Peresuh & Masuku, 2002; Mumpande & Barnes, 2019; Hang'ombe & Mumpande, 2020).

1.4.1 Ndebele and the Media

In the media, the only indigenous language papers that are in circulation in Zimbabwe are weekly papers *Umthunywa* (Ndebele) and *Kwaedza* (Shona) both published by Zimpapers, a state-controlled and managed mass media company; only representing two of the 15 officially recognised indigenous languages (according to the 2013 constitution). However, it has to be noted that *Umthunywa* occasionally features Kalanga and Tonga articles. On radio, *National FM*, one of the fourteen licensed radio stations in Zimbabwe, broadcasts in Kalanga, Venda, Chewa, Nambya, Sotho, Xhosa, Chikunda, Hwesa, Shangani, Shona and Ndebele. The use of minority languages is between five in the morning and 12 mid-night. Fifteen hours of the broadcasting time is allocated to Shona and Ndebele and then the other languages share the remaining four hours (Maseko & Ndlovu, 2013). On

national television, broadcast is only in English, Ndebele and Shona. Programmes broadcast on national television and radio represent different cultures (16 languages) and those cultures come through languages. With this limited kind of broadcast in many 'officially recognised' languages, many people in Zimbabwe are relegated to the shadows of those languages given more air time. The Media Policy Framework for Zimbabwe (2022), reports that at present, most print media in Zimbabwe are controlled by government. The government that controls the media is the same government that is supposed to promote the development of indigenous languages spoken in Zimbabwe.

1.4.2 Ndebele and the Education Language Policy

The country's language-in-education policy is still rooted in the 1987 Education Act, albeit with some amendments and provisions of the 2013 Constitution. The 1987 Act that forms the basis of the language-in-education policy states that:

1. "Subject to the provisions of this section [of the Act], the main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows: a. Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Shona; or b. Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Ndebele.
2. Prior to Grade 4, either of the languages ... may be used as the medium of instruction, depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.
3. From Grade 4, English shall be the medium of instruction provided that Shona or Ndebele shall be taught as subjects on an equal-time-allocation basis as the English language.
4. In areas where minority languages exist, the Minister may authorize the teaching of such languages in primary schools in addition to those specified in subsections (1), (2) and (3)".

Over the years, there have been some encouraging developments regarding some minority languages such as Tonga and Nambya, that have been taught and examined, respectively, in Grade 7 for the first time in 2011 and 2012 (Ndlovu, 2013). While this positive development seemed to be gaining momentum, some

negative issues surfaced in the teaching and learning of Ndebele. These are issues about the acquisition and development of the Ndebele language in schools and social settings. The public outcry among Ndebele speakers, especially in the private media, highlights such a controversy that bemoans the dominance of first, English over indigenous languages and second, Shona over Ndebele and other indigenous languages. Unfortunately, the existing scholarship gives a misleading impression that English is the only source of linguistic hegemony in Zimbabwe (Nkomo & Maseko, 2017); Ndhlovu, 2009).

While the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe identifies sixteen languages as the officially recognised languages of Zimbabwe it does not explain what 'officially recognised' language means. It does not give details of the language planning procedures regarding the chosen languages, nor does it indicate the status of these languages regarding their role in different spheres of the country's activities. What further complicates this is that the officially recognised minority languages have not been accorded the properties of official languages, (that is, a special legal status in the country, or other jurisdiction, meaning that it is the language people use for the nation's parliamentary, administrative, business transactions and legal affairs). According to Choudhry & Houlihan (2021 p. 6), "… an 'official' language is defined as the language (or languages) used by the government to conduct official, day-to-day business". That means it is a language with a special legal status in a particular country, state, or other jurisdiction and is used within government in courts, parliament, and administration. This makes it difficult for the minority languages to assume any official functions, pointing to the likelihood that the 'officially recognised languages' status refers to mere acknowledgement of existence rather than functional roles. The seemingly positive pronouncement of 16 languages being 'officially recognised' is eroded by Clause 6.2 of the constitution that states that "An Act of Parliament may prescribe other languages as officially recognised languages and may prescribe languages of record". The Clause states that government or an Act of parliament "…may choose a language of record" and that breeds pessimism regarding the officially recognised languages, especially those subjected to some form of domination by other languages. It may mean that government or the parliament may affirm the dominance of certain languages using their legislative powers.

This breeds pessimism because the policies lack implementation. Both the language policy espoused by the constitution and the language-in-education policy are just cases of declaration without implementation as cited by Dube and Tshuma (2014) in one newspaper *(The Sunday News)* article,

> At least five primary schools in Matabeleland South have reportedly been forced to teach Shona as the indigenous language due to a shortage of Ndebele-speaking teachers as the issue of deployment of teachers continues to raise dust.

In response to the above claim by the press, the then Matabeleland South Provincial Education Director, Mrs Tumisang Thabela professed ignorance over the situation at the schools but officials at her office confirmed to *Sunday News* that the problem had been in existence for many years. They said the problem was beyond the issue of Ndebele and Shona and that most indigenous languages were being suppressed because teachers who were not familiar with the local languages were deployed to teach pupils in these areas.

The issue of non-Ndebele speaking teachers deployed in Matabeleland schools has been brought up in different fora. One such forum was a workshop on indigenous languages and non-fiction writing organised by the Zimbabwe Academic and Non-fiction Authors Association (ZANA) Bulawayo chapter, where the then Deputy Provincial Education Director for Bulawayo province, Mr Richard Swene, blasted the Civil Service Commission for employing primary school teachers whose first language was not Ndebele, *(The Sunday News,* 2014*)*. However, the then Minister of State for Provincial Affairs in the Metropolitan Province of Bulawayo, Nomthandazo Eunice Moyo, had a different take of the concerns of ZANA. She shot down a proposal in the National Assembly that locals should be given preference in employment and education opportunities. She labelled such a call tribalistic and, therefore, she was not going to entertain it (*The Sunday News*, 2014).

In another language issue, it was reported that Binga District (Tonga speaking people) had “banned” the teaching of Ndebele in their district schools (Mutero, 2014). This was an initiative by local people and not by the government. This, therefore, should act as a wakeup call to the government that the language issue

needs to be solved. The Ministry of Education must set free all the affected children, from learning 'foreign' languages at the expense of their own. Primary School pupils should be able to learn English and their mother language if they attend school within their home area as stated in Section 6 (3) (b) of the Constitution.

The Zimbabwe Constitution (2013) stipulates that:

(3) The State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must:
    (a) ensure that all officially recognised languages are treated equitably; and
    (b) take into account the language preferences of people affected by governmental measures or communications
(4) The state must promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe, including sign language, and must create conditions for the development of those languages (Zimbabwe, 2013).

The complaint by the Tonga people about learning Ndebele instead of their Tonga language was not an isolated incident but there were other complaints about a deliberate disrespect of the languages spoken in the greater parts of the three provinces of Matabeleland. There were other complaints about deliberate deployment of non-Ndebele speaking teachers to teach at primary schools in Matabeleland. Responding to a journalist on these claims, the then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Dr Dokora said,

> How can we deploy the teachers, the teachers find their way to the districts and so on after having gone through the PSC [Public Service Commission]. This is because of the contract shared between the employee – teacher and employer who is the PSC. Our ministry is a line of deployment. (The Chronicle, 7 March 2016).

There were complaints about the skewed enrolment of student teachers at teacher-training colleges in Matabeleland. The enrolment seemed to favour Shona speaking persons such that when they completed their training they worked in Matabeleland because there are 'no qualified teachers'. As for having unqualified teachers in schools yet teachers were graduating from teacher training colleges, Dr Dokora said: "Well I don't like it, ask the employer why are they not deploying qualified teachers", (*The Chronicle,* 7 March 2016). The communities linked their claims to a

document code-named “Grand Plan” (whose authorship is unknown but allegedly authored by Zanu PF in 1979 outlining how Matabeleland had to be marginalised) that says, in part, Shona people should be advantaged over all others in terms of employment as teachers at schools. According to Mkwananzi (2014, p.19) part of that document reads:

> The resistance to the teaching of Shona in all schools in Matabeleland will soon fizzle out. Shona college graduates are taking up more and more teaching posts and appointments of Shona school heads have already been won. Students/pupils in all schools in that part of the country will, in the not-too-distant future be mostly Shona.

The quote above suggests that the deployment of teachers in Matabeleland is a calculated political move echoed by Mbonisi Gumbo, a Mthwakazi Republic Party spokesperson, when he was speaking to newzimbabwevision, who said,

> … the Minister was bold to say that, he will deploy teachers anywhere not considering languages issue which is a major cry in our nation of Mthwakazi whereby (Early Child Development) ECD students are taught by teachers who do not understand the local languages. Such policies are resulting in poor performances at schools and undermining local cultures and customs, which is a violation of Ubuntu.

When the Minister said he did not like the deployment of unqualified teachers in Matabeleland schools, he admitted unawares that he knew that was happening but distanced himself from the problem by blaming it on the employer. These were voices of some disgruntled individuals who claimed that the language issue was and remained politically motivated. Language dominance automatically creates many opportunities such as employment, which occurs according to the language spread. The ‘language war’ declared in Binga for instance, is a fight by the Tonga that is meant to liberate Tonga speakers from the Ndebele hegemony to access jobs in their region.

The “Grand Plan” claims that training in tertiary institutions has also played a significant role as it is critical that in manpower development, due attention is paid to giving skills to the Majority indigenous Shona who will be able to take up employment opportunities always. Teachers’ colleges, polytechs, universities, all

reflect Shona dominance in their enrolment statistics regardless of where the institution is located in the country (Mkwanazi, 2014).

It may be coincidence that the “Grand Plan” seems to detail what is happening in Matabeleland but it is difficult not to believe it either. The deployment of non-Ndebele speaking teachers to teach at primary schools in Matabeleland, the skewed enrolment of student teachers at teacher-training colleges and other institutions, the imposition of Shona-speaking heads at schools in Matabeleland, the Shona names on basic food commodities all seem to be clearly detailed in that document and the details are implemented word for word. Ndhlovu (2006) offers a comprehensive account of this phenomenon. The language that children use as they communicate amongst themselves or with their parents is carried to school and as they write, they use the wrong words and spelling hence, they fail the examinations. Children seldom use the Ndebele word *uchago/ubisi* in reference to milk, but instead use *chimombe* which is a Shona name for a milk brand. There are many other examples that I can give but this one quickly comes into mind.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

For many years now, communities in Matabeleland have repeatedly expressed concerns about the poor grade seven national end of year examination results, including those obtained in the Ndebele language. These poor results are assumed to be directly linked to some factors in the education system with the main one being teacher deployment in the concerned provinces. Teacher deployment has been singled out as the main cause of poor results as it is, according to the communities concerned, these teachers who cannot teach learners properly because of language barrier between them and the learners they are supposed to teach. Teaching is a process or engagement between teacher and learners to enable learners to acquire knowledge, understand concepts and processes then apply that knowledge in life situations. With this understanding of teaching and learning, a teacher, therefore, should be a role model to the learners. That means he or she should have mastery of their subject area and can relate concepts and skills in such a way that students learn to understand and appreciate the nature of the subject they are studying. In the Zimbabwe education system, a primary school teacher teaches all subjects in his or her class. If that teacher is not a good model, there are more chances of

learners failing in all the subjects at the end of the year when they are examined. For example, 25 primary schools, 15 in Matabeleland North and 10 in Matabeleland South, recorded 0% pass rate across all subjects in the 2019 examinations. As mentioned somewhere above, the poor performance of the learners is attributed to the incorrect deployment of ill-equipped personnel to implement mother tongue education at the early years of primary education. Learners at the primary school level need to be assisted in other subjects by explaining concepts they do not understand in their mother language before shifting to English. There were such complaints in 2013 about that year's Ndebele examination paper that was described as containing inappropriate language for Grade 7 children. Due to the 0% pass rate in the examinations at some schools, (*The Sunday News*, 2019) on 6 December 2019 reported that:

> The ministry would like to apologise to the nation, the affected communities and recruited teachers for any inconveniences caused as the ministry goes through e-recruitment for the first time in order to improve efficiency and subsequently root out possible corruption in the recruitment process.

In this statement, the ministry acknowledges a 'mistake' in the deployment of teachers that it blames on an automated computer system used to deploy teachers for the first time. The ministry seemed to apologise for the deployment of teachers not the failure recorded. However, the two issues are related and must be treated that way. The relationship between these two issues is a cause-and-effect situation. Teachers are meant to teach learners and that teaching is reflected in the examination results. So, since some schools recorded a 0% pass rate in 2019 that means the teachers did not do their work properly. The apology by the ministry official was not accepted by the stakeholders of the schools that failed and the reasons for their failure to accept the apology will be discussed in chapter 6.

Looking at what the 2013 constitution stipulates, (as stated in 1.4.2 above), there is need to interrogate the relevant language policy issues and practices. Children need at least six to eight years of language 'training' to grasp a language, (Ball, 2014, Nordquist, 2019). New concepts, skills and knowledge should be added to what children already know, and can do. The basis for all of this for young children is their

mother tongue. Role models for a language need to be proficient in that language and well-trained to understand how to teach a language.

Fluency and literacy in the mother tongue lay a cognitive and linguistic foundation for learning additional material in later grades at school and beyond the school, (Nishanthi, 2020). Teachers teaching these mother tongue languages should have a good understanding of the culture of the children and the relationship between that culture and the language and how the different cultures relate with that of the school (Lessow-Hurley, 2009). Teachers need to teach from the children's experiences so as to provide a fertile ground for a strong understanding of academic and social life issues they face.

1.6 Goals of the Research

1.6.1 Key Research Question

What does the teaching of isiNdebele reveal about the socio-cultural and political ideologies underpinning language planning in Zimbabwe?

1.6.2 Sub Research Questions

a) What socio-cultural, political and economic value is attached to the teaching of Ndebele in Zimbabwe?

b) Based on the syllabus, what linguistic and socio-linguistic knowledge and skills are meant to be developed through the teaching of Ndebele at primary school in Zimbabwe?

c) What qualifications are critical for Ndebele primary school teachers in Zimbabwe?

d) What considerations are made in deploying Ndebele teachers at primary school to ensure that the envisaged language skills of the learners are properly developed?

1.6.3 Research Objectives

In alignment with the research questions presented above, the specific objectives of the research are:

a) To establish socio-cultural, political and economic values attached to the teaching of Ndebele in Zimbabwe.

b) To establish the linguistic and socio-linguistic knowledge and skills that are meant to be developed through the teaching of Ndebele at primary school in Zimbabwe.

c) To examine the teachers' academic and professional qualifications to teach Ndebele at primary school.

d) To consider the teacher deployment process in Zimbabwe's primary education system, specifically with regard to Ndebele language and teachers.

1.7 Rationale of the Study

This study examines the importance of Ndebele as a mother tongue language and will attempt to show how it is an irreplaceable cultural knowledge and a cornerstone of indigenous communities, particularly the primary school learners. Languages contain generations of wisdom and are a significant part of the world's knowledge. When a language is lost, much of the knowledge that language represents and carries is also lost. Our words, our ways of saying things differentiate us from other people and their ways of being, thinking, seeing and acting. In addition to speech, each language carries with it an unspoken network of cultural values. These values are a major force in the shaping of each person's self-awareness, identity and interpersonal relationships (Scollon, 2004). These values are absorbed along with one's mother tongue in the first years of life, that is, before the child starts schooling and the whole period of schooling, particularly the primary school period and later help generate and maintain an individual's level of comfort and self-assurance and consequently success in life. For that reason, cultural values and mother tongue are so closely intertwined that they are seen as inseparable.

Zimbabwe has more than twenty languages (both African and non-African) spoken within its borders. It boggles the mind why only two are 'more official' than others. There is need for deliberate action to push for an effective use of all these other languages otherwise Zimbabwe may remain with only these two languages – English and Shona – being practically 'official languages while the rest will be merely declared official languages but with nothing to prove that status. The motivation of this study is, therefore, to investigate why Ndebele has been relegated to home-use only, as it cannot be effectively used in government offices to seek service as most of those employed in those offices will tell you they do not understand what you are saying. The researcher intends to gather as much accurate information as possible on why this is so. If this situation is not resolved, Zimbabwe remains a time bomb that will explode into a fierce tribal war.

One area of concern (among many) is the use of Ndebele in the education system, particularly at primary school level. As discussed in this study's background, teachers who are not conversant in Ndebele are deployed in Matabeleland schools and teach the young learners who are not well-versed with the teachers' language. This creates a language barrier between teacher and learner. Studies by Benson (2004); Lafon (2009); McIlwraith (2013); van der Walt and Nanda Klapwijk (2015), reveal that children learn concepts better when taught by someone who understands and knows the child's language. It is easier for the adult to explain to the child some difficult concepts in the child's mother tongue before the child transfers that to a foreign language of instruction. This is an idea with its roots in social constructivism, a theory by Vygotsky in the late 1970s. Vygotsky's point of view was that acquisition and participation were synergistic strategies in learning situations. Meaningful teaching and learning were based on the participation and involvement of the teacher and the learner in contextualising knowledge. Social constructivism emphasises that learning takes place through interactions with teachers or other students who know better than the learner, (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Benson, (2005, p. 3), "Use of a familiar language to teach beginning literacy facilitates an understanding of sound-symbol or meaning-symbol correspondence. Learning to read is most efficient when students know the language and can employ psycholinguistic guessing strategies …". As a way of approaching the task of recognising the force of the child's language and culture,

fluency in the student's primary language by a teacher is essential for effective learning. This should not be limited to the obvious benefits in communication, but should also extend to the positive image of the students' home languages and cultures which such a teacher can convey (Peresuh & Masuku, 2002).

For a teacher to operate well in a bilingual - bicultural educational system, that teacher should be bilingual, that is, the teacher must know and be fluent in the mother tongue of the children being taught and the language of instruction. It is also worth noting that maintaining fluency in the learners' native languages depends strongly upon a teacher's understanding of the learners' home language and culture. Teachers should teach from the learners' experiences, provide a strong context for the understanding of the issues learners face, emphasise critical thinking, validate the learners' own cultural experiences, and explore both cultural differences and human universals.

One way of making learning more culture-conscious is incorporating local folklore into the school's system. Ndawi and Masuku (1998), as cited in Peresuh & Masuku (2002, p. 34 - 35), argue that "… the main problem in our classrooms today is that the teachers seem to be unaware of the wealth of examples that could be taken from African folklore to enrich the teaching of their subjects. Consequently, their teaching is often divorced from the pupils' cultural experiences". This claim further strengthens the idea that learners must be taught by a teacher who knows their language so that the teacher can select the appropriate folklores for teaching. To add to the claims of language learning as a practice and learning from the significant other, John, (n.d.), citing Piaget (1954) says, "Language, especially, second language is best acquired or learned when it is taught in the environment where it is used as a means of social interaction, thereby enabling learners to construct meaning about the language".

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study looks at language acquisition planning as manifested in the teaching of Ndebele in the primary school education system in Zimbabwe. The study also seeks to explore the ideas informing the language-in-education policy in Zimbabwe which has tended to be more of linguistic imperialism than language learning. Acquisition

planning refers to a process of subconsciously learning a language through natural assimilation that involves intuition. It is achieved through real interactions between people in environments of the target language and culture, where the learner is an active player, (Schütz, 2012). This can be done through the formal education system. Therefore, acquisition planning is meant to equip the language users with the necessary linguistic proficiency for them to effectively use languages in the designated domains. Quite often, acquisition planning is guided by status planning, (Nicolle, 2013). Status planning "addresses the functions of language(s) in society, and typically involves the allocation of languages to official roles in different domains – government and education, for instance", (Ferguson, 2006, p. 20). For the achievement of acquisition planning and status planning goals, corpus planning would be essential. Corpus planning, "addresses language form, the code itself, and seeks to engineer changes in that code, central among which, is the development of writing systems, standardisation and modernisation", (Ferguson, 2006, p. 21).

According to Phillipson (1992), linguistic imperialism is the imposition of one dominant language on speakers of another language or other languages. This imposition is essentially a demonstration of power – politically, numerically or traditionally with the dominant language carrying the culture of the dominant group that is usually transferred to the other people along with the language. Linguistic imperialism occurs when the language of a large or dominant population or the language of power transfers to other people in the same or neighbouring areas. Causes of linguistic imperialism include immigration, conquest, trade and cultural superiority. Such changes in language can be forced or can take place through natural changes. Immigration is a large cause of linguistic imperialism. This is most often seen as the act of an invading or migrating people making local occupants learn their language. The dominance of a language can be spread by arts and culture in the form of music, television shows and music. This has been the case in Zimbabwe. Shona-speaking people have internally migrated from Mashonaland, Masvingo and Manicaland to Matabeleland and Bulawayo in particular. This migration has been viewed as political by the local communities as the ruling party seeks to tribally dominate the whole piece of land in Zimbabwe. Shona is now spoken in virtually every corner of the country. These Shona-speaking people do

not make any effort to learn local languages but insist on speaking and being spoken to in Shona. That constitutes linguistic imperialism.

A language is a vehicle that carries a people's norms, values and culture and with changes happening around the world, people need to incorporate new phenomena into their culture and have such phenomena (new items such as cell phones, tablets, blue tooth and others) called in their language names. Children need to explore technology and other new inventions in their own language and, therefore, need to have some language rich in vocabulary to do so. Linguistic imperialism therefore becomes a hindrance to language development that should be guarded against.

There is a difference between language acquisition and language development. One can acquire a new language that is not the language they were exposed to from birth but learn after they already have acquired their mother tongue. Language development is expanding one's mother tongue by adding new names of phenomena that did not exist before so that they have names of such things in their mother tongue. Language imperialism does not allow one that kind of development but forces them to acquire a new language and in the process fail to develop their own mother tongue and at times end up forgetting it if they are still young to forget it.

1.9 Justification

It is through language that we develop our thoughts, shape our experience, explore our customs, structure our community, construct our laws, articulate our values and give expression to our hopes and ideas. Mother tongue is a common language that is freely and comfortably spoken by adult generations both at home and outside to their children in a community and reflect their culture and ethnic backgrounds. Different groups within the society maintain their identities by means of mother tongue use. Mother tongue is the language that a child learns in his mother's lap. It is the language, which the child learns almost without any conscious effort. It is a language, which the child acquires while living in their own social group. Mother tongue plays a tremendously useful role in the education of a child. It has a great importance in the field of education. Therefore, mother tongue must be given an important and prominent place in the school curriculum. Encouraging young children

to learn their mother tongue would help them to develop confidence, self-esteem and their unique identity within a multicultural society. In an increasingly multi-cultural society, the teaching of mother tongue in schools cannot be isolated from the study of the culture of the people who speak that language. Culture and traditions essentially go hand in hand with language (Senadeera, 2006).

According to Benson (2005, p. 1), “While there are many factors involved in delivering quality basic education, language is clearly the key to communication and understanding in the classroom”. Learners express their ideas and feelings better through the mother language compared to when they use an acquired language. By participating in activities where the mother tongue is used, learners acquire communication skills in the language that will enable them to widen their networks of interpersonal relations, which is a constructivist theory of learning. According to Senandeera (2006), language is a means of transmitting the cultural traditions of ethnic groups to the second and later generations. Therefore, learning the mother tongue should prevent total disappearance of certain language and cultures in the world.

While people are able to communicate in any language, creative self-expression is possible only in one’s own mother tongue then it can spread or extend to other acquired languages. This is supported by (Escobar, 2013) who says that when teachers foster the development of children’s home language in the classroom the learners learn English faster and perform better in school. That also offers the best chance for improved academic performance. Language use is a creative act with which people transform thoughts into language that can be heard. Creative thinking is an important skill in real life. It is part of survival strategies and it is a force behind personal growth and the development of culture and society (Feher, 2007).

The mother tongue is part of a child’s personal, social and cultural identity. They get this identification from speaking their mother tongue that enforces successful social patterns of acting and speaking. The mother tongue is an indispensable instrument for the development of intellectual, physical and moral aspects of education. Habits, conducts, values, virtues, customs and beliefs are all shaped through the mother tongue. Weakness in the mother tongue means a paralysis of all thought and power

of expression. Therefore, mother tongues shape who we are and they are our life, (Nishanthi, 2020).

Original ideas are the product of one's own mother tongue, new and original ideas take birth and get shape only in one's own mother tongue, (Bidyapati, 2003). Thus, mother tongue has tremendous importance in education and in the curriculum and should therefore be taught to every child for academic, intellectual, emotional and social development. It is the focus of this study to establish if Ndebele teaching in the primary school in Zimbabwe provides the platform, through the Language Acquisition Planning, to develop the learners to their fullest potential for the acquisition of the above stated benefits of learning and knowing one's mother tongue, (Nishanthi, 2020).

1.10 Summary

The level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong foundation of their second language development. Children who go to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language, which in most cases is the language of instruction that they have to know and understand fully. When parents and other caregivers (people they stay with at home other than their parents) are able to spend time with their children and tell them stories in a way that develops their mother tongue, vocabulary and concepts, children go to school well prepared to learn the school language and succeed educationally. From the point of view of children's development of concepts and thinking skills, the two languages are interdependent. Transfer across languages can be two-way. When the mother tongue is promoted in school, the concepts, language, and literacy skills that children are learning in the majority language can transfer to the home language. Both languages nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages. On the other hand, when children are made to reject their mother tongue and, consequently, its development stagnates, their personal and conceptual foundation for learning is undermined (Cummins, 2000).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the existing literature related to this study. This includes literature on language planning and language acquisition planning in general, but literature on language issues and language anxiety in Zimbabwe is also reviewed. Language anxiety, according to MacIntyre & Gregersen, (2012), includes feelings of worry and negative, fear-related emotions associated with learning or using a language that is not an individual's mother tongue.

There has been a struggle to shift from an inherited colonial education system, by formerly colonised countries, Zimbabwe included. The colonial education system used the colonial master's language as the medium of instruction at school. After gaining independence, these countries seek to build home-grown transformative and culturally relevant education system that takes into consideration the people's socio-cultural and linguistic background, their educational needs as well as their indigenous languages. Maseko & Dhlamini (2014, p. 61), envisage a home-grown transformative and culturally-relevant education system for African children in saying,

> Such a relevant and effective education strategy would be characterised, first of all, by the use of an appropriate medium of instruction, the use of adequate teaching techniques, the use of culturally adequate curriculum content and sufficient financial and material resources.

Maseko & Dhlamini (2014), advocate for a home-grown curriculum that will cater for the needs of the local people. In this case, it will be a curriculum that is delivered in the mother tongue of both the implementers (teachers) and the learners. In a multilingual country like Zimbabwe, that would mean a regional curriculum to suit and accommodate the various indigenous languages. It must, however, be noted that any education system in any country, even the one envisaged by Maseko & Dhlamini operates within the political policies of that country. Therefore, their proposal would only be appropriate and function well if the political ideologies of the country support that. The type of education they propose may not be in line with the desires of the political leaders of the country, therefore, posing possible political hindrances to its implementation. Politics is about who gets what, when and how

and it represents reality in Africa in reference to the allocation of scarce social, economic and cultural resources to individuals, groups, regions and classes. Ijov & Ayle (2015, p. 15), state that "Among academics, politics is often defined as the authoritative allocation of values. Emphasis is put on how resources are allocated by the system of authorities in society".

Politics influences the policies that guide the operation of the school system and such policies are political views of the political party in government. Let us take a look at the politics of the classroom itself as one entity heavily influenced by the political policies in education. It is important to understand what goes on both in and outside the classroom. Benson (1997), as cited in Pennycook, (2016, p. 33), outlines the ways in which "… we are inclined to think of the politics of language teaching in terms of language planning and educational policy while neglecting the political content of everyday language and language learning practices". Pennycook, (2016, p. 33), says,

> Everything in the classroom – from how we teach (how we conduct ourselves as a teacher, as master, authority, facilitator, organiser), what we teach (whether we focus only on English, on grammar, on communication, on tests), how we respond to students (correcting, ignoring, cajoling, praising), how we understand language and learning (favouring noise over silence, emphasising expression over accuracy), how we think of our classroom (as a place to have fun or a site for serious learning), to the materials we use (off-the-shelf international textbooks, materials from the local community), the ways we organise our class (in rows, pairs, tables, circles) and the way we assess the students (against what norms, in terms of what language possibilities) – needs to be seen as social and cultural practices that have broader implications than just elements of classroom interaction.

All the choices mentioned above are embedded in larger social and ideological formations. Pennycook, (2016, p. 26), goes on to cite Joseph (2006), who argues, "… language is … profoundly political (the political here refers not so much to the tawdry battles fought out in our national parliaments but to the everyday struggles over whose version of the world will prevail)". The language used in the classroom and at school in general is a political if not an economic tool and nothing more than that. For language as an economic tool, Kaplan & Baldauf, (1997, p. 126) argue that since language-in-education is part of national language planning it automatically

becomes a human resource for the country. Because of that "… the education sector needs to understand what languages are desirable in the repertoire of speakers in the community and for what purposes those languages will be used".

In most African states there is neglect of indigenous languages in favour of the inherited language of the former colonial masters, (Pennycook, 2016). The English language that is spread globally through human assistance (human planned activities, such as formal teaching) dominates education systems. English has, therefore, spread to almost all corners of Africa and the other parts of the world as both a political tool of control by the former political masters and economic development tool that links African states to the rest of the world for trade and communication purposes.

All educational systems are driven by political systems that support them making educators political policy drivers in educational systems. Ijov & Ayle, (2015, p. 16), highlight this about politics and education,

> The politics adopted by any educational system are essentially drawn by the government in power (the political system). Educational policies are therefore those guidelines expedient both for political socialization and for national socio-economic and cultural development. Every government or political party is conscious that to ensure its political, social and economic success, the schools must be involved in the promotion of the interests of the governing power.

As Ijov & Ayle (2015) rightly point out every educational system and educators need the support of the ruling political system to carry out their functions and education institutions find themselves used for the promotion of political agenda and social views of successive governments and political leaders (Ijov & Ayle, 2015, (Ekpiken, & Ifere, 2015). Most, if not all African curricular include language learning and teaching with a certain role attached to that inherited language, (Wolff, 2017). African states still attach a lot of importance to their former political masters and seem to have failed to find any role for their indigenous languages, (Walcott, 2001). This has raised a lot of concern amongst language scholars who bemoan the dominance of English and other non-African languages at the expense of indigenous languages.

2.2 Language Acquisition vs Language Learning

According to Krashen (2003) language acquisition is the unconscious process that occurs when language is used in real conversation. Surbakti and Situmorang (2017) add that language acquisition is a natural progression or development in the use of language, typified by infants and young children learning to talk. According to (Schütz, 2012, p. 1), language acquisition refers to "… the process of natural assimilation, involving intuition and subconscious learning. It is the product of real interactions between people in environments of the target language and culture, where the learner is an active player". Language acquisition is "opposed to learning and is a subconscious process similar to that by which children acquire their first language" (Kramina, 2000 as cited in Zascerinska, 2010, p. 3). Yule (2005) concurs by stating that the mother tongue or language acquisition is "…the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations" (p. 163). He contrasts it with the learning of another language which he says is, "… a conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of a language" (p. 163). According to Krashen (1982, p. 10) language acquisition is "a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication". The two definitions given above, by Yule and Krashen, indicate that language acquisition is a result of interactions between people within environments of the target language and culture, where the learner is an active player. According to Schütz, (2012), the primary goal in language acquisition is human interaction in which one operates as a facilitator who provides a lot of input through which the learner chooses his or her own route in a direction that interests him or her. Instead of a syllabus, language acquisition programmes offer intercultural communication through a personal relationship. What is fundamental at this level is the presence of an expert of the language and culture that one intends to teach to the learners. In this case, native or near-native instructors, therefore, have a clear advantage in a communicative approach, inspired by the concept of language acquisition.

Schütz (2012) also points out that efficient and effective language teaching is personalised and takes place in a bicultural environment. He asserts that language teaching is also based on the personal skills of the teacher in building relationships

with the learners and creating situations of real communication with comprehensible input focusing on the learner's interests. The success of this heavily relies on a native or near native language speaker. This idea is further strengthened by the constructivist learning theory that talks about 'a significant other', who is the knowledgeable teacher to guide the learners. This is what the community members in the three provinces, where the research was done, expect and want. On the other hand, language learning is a conscious process that occurs when one first consciously grasps a rule, then practises it over and over until it is automatic. It is the product of either a formal learning situation or a self-study programme (Krashen, 1982). The concept of language learning focuses on the language in its written form and the objective is for the student to understand the structure and rules of the language (Krashen, 1982).

Language learning is an organised process, for the learner by the teacher, with planned activities from a pre-set syllabus. The activities from the syllabus are meant to help transmit knowledge about the language, its functioning and grammatical structures to the learner hoping to produce the practical skills of understanding and speaking the language. According to Schütz, (2012 p. 1), in language learning, "…attention is focused on the language in its written form and the objective is for the student to understand the structure and rules of the language, whose parts are dissected and analysed". However, it has to be noted that while in the past language teaching, as Schutz (2012) states, focused on writing, grammatical structures and rules this has long changed. Language learning (as argued by proponents of communicative language learning) now focuses on all four skills – writing, reading, listening and speaking. Mohammed, (2009) says that in order for language learning to take place emphasis must be put on the importance of the following: Communication: these should be activities that involve real communication to promote learning. Tasks: these should be activities in which language is used to carry out meaningful tasks that support the learning process and meaning: this is language that is meaningful and authentic to the learner so as to boost learning.Language acquisition, which usually is complete around three to four years, (Surbakti & Situmorang, 2017, p. 153), occurs first followed by language learning. Therefore, when the child starts going to school, a new phase, language learning, begins. As children start schooling, they carry an

acquired language to school. The acquired language carries with it the child's culture, norms and values. Scarino & Liddicoat, (2009), say that understanding the relationship between language and culture is important for learning another language. They also add that learners need to contextualise what is said so that they understand it in both their culture and the circumstances under which it is expressed.

The transition period from home to school, and the whole primary school years, is crucial as it provides the grounding for further language development in terms of both language competence and language performance. As children start school, (Croome & Fairhall, 1976), say there should be trust between the child and the teacher, and that trust is created through communication. They also say that most of the learning is inculcated in learners through speech hence the teacher needs to gain the trust of his or her learners by talking to them.

Croome & Fairhall, (1976, p. 21), go on to state that "Each child brings language to school, and his language demonstrates to his teacher his home atmosphere, often even the educational and cultural level of his family". When the school understands the child's knowledge, it can proceed to prepare a suitable programme that will cater for all children in all situations, meaning that, according to Rosen & Rosen, (1973), the role of the school is to make it possible for learners to produce meaningful language by creating a rich environment that will allow the learners to acquire and use language.

According to Croome & Fairhall (1976), when children first attend school, they should be allowed to talk freely. They can freely talk when using their mother language, a language they know, and they need a teacher who will correct, motivate and encourage them. This idea of letting children talk freely is supported by Shiel et al., (2012), who state that, skill in oral language improves reading and leads directly to better literacy performance. They also state that skill in oral reading is a prerequisite to reading comprehension. According to Skinner (1964), one of the pioneers of behaviourism who explained language development by means of environmental influence, correct utterances are positively reinforced when a child realises the 'communicative value of words and phrases'. It is

important, therefore, that language teachers be those who can be good role models for the learners. Lawrence & Snow, (2011, p. 330), state that “Teachers who model how they handle the reading challenges they encounter by “thinking aloud” help students understand what skilled readers do as they are reading, and thus provide explicit guidance to students on how to do the same”. Their need to communicate drives them to acquire their mother language and they do so through interaction with their parents and other people around them.

A home is the first institution that teaches a child its mother tongue with members of the family being the first teachers. The school is the next institution that a child encounters, that develops the children’s grasp of their mother tongue. It is the focus of this thesis, therefore, to establish if the schools in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, carry out that mandate as expected when it comes to teaching Ndebele as a language at primary school level. This becomes the integral part of this thesis because many citizens in Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South Provinces have voiced concerns over the teaching of Ndebele at primary schools. They claim that language learning, (Ndebele), does not extend on language acquisition as expected. Why that happens can be answered by looking at language planning in the primary education system of the country.

Shiel et al., (2012, p. 223), further state that skill in oral language is important for classroom interaction that leads to effective learning of various aspects of the language such as vocabulary and comprehension skills. They also state that this aspect of oral language is especially important in the years before the learner can read independently.

The quote above strengthens the claims from the three provinces that there is no continuation in their children’s language development that they expect to see from home to school. The school is expected to provide means with which learners’ language skills from home are developed to higher levels of communication and that should be reflected through the curriculum and skills possessed by language teachers deployed to these areas.

2.3 Language Planning

The term language planning, according to Mesthrie et al., (2009), was introduced by the American linguist Einar Haugen in the late 1950s and refers to all conscious efforts that aim at changing the linguistic behaviour of a speech community. Cooper (1989, p. 183), defines language planning as, "… deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes". He further adds that language planning contributes to change by promoting "new functional allocations of language varieties, structural changes in those varieties, and acquisition of those varieties by new populations" (p. 185).

According to Zaidi, (2013) some scholars argue that language policy and language planning are two different concepts. While "language policy is about decision-making and goal-setting; language planning is about implementing policies to obtain results" (p. 2). He goes on to say that, Kaplan & Baldauf (2003) argue that language policy and language planning are sometimes used as synonyms and aspects of the same activity while they are actually two different activities. Kaplan and Baldauf, (2003), see language planning as the activity that leads to the dissemination of a language policy while language policy is the body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules, procedures and practices intended to achieve the objectives of the policy. Nkomo (2018, p. 153), The terms *language policy* and *language planning* are sometimes used interchangeably, although the latter seems to mainly refer to practice and field of study. This makes language policy a product or object of language planning", (Cluver, 1993; Haugen, 1959 as cited in Nkomo, 2018). Nkomo (2018) further notes that many definitions of both language policy and language planning place emphasis on governments, government-authorised agencies or other such authoritative bodies as language planners or policy-makers. Emphasis is also placed on language policy as an authoritative document to language usage and language planning as problem-solving.

According to Williams, (2016, p. 79),

> Our language, and our way of using it is central in expressing who we are in current terms, but also in showing how we came to be

> what we are through past dictionaries which bear witness to the evolution of our languages.

Therefore, a language policy, in a multilingual country should cover and allow as many languages as possible to be taught at school as Wurm, in Skutnabb-Kangas, (2002, p. 2) sums it up by stating that:

> Each language reflects a unique world-view and culture complex, mirroring the manner in which a speech community has resolved its problems in dealing with the world, and has formulated its thinking, its system of philosophy and understanding of the world around it.

In this, each language must be taken as a means of expression of a certain group of and it remains a reflection of this group's culture for some time even after the culture which underlies it decays and crumbles, under the impact of an intrusive, powerful, different culture.

It is therefore, important for each community to use its language in dealing with its social, political and educational matters. Denial of linguistic diversity in many countries is meant to linguistically oppress other groups, particularly those considered to be speaking 'minor' languages. So, authoritarian states frequently use the national language as a point of unity and social cohesion and find linguistic diversity threatening, therefore, an element to be contained or eliminated. These happen to be the fears or assumptions of people in Matabeleland that high political authority in the country feels threatened by the presence and use of many languages, particularly Ndebele, and therefore, must eliminate it via staff deployment in key operational areas such as education. There is a third major type of language planning that is particularly relevant and important for education which is known as language acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989).

2.4 Language Acquisition Planning

Language acquisition planning, according to Cooper (1989), deals with the teaching and learning of languages. This planning involves deliberate efforts to influence the number of users through creating opportunities or incentives to learn these languages. Mesthrie et al. (2009, p. 374), define language acquisition as, "Efforts to spread and promote the learning of a language". Choosing which language or languages to use as medium or media of instruction is of great significance in

acquisition planning as one must not only learn the language but also use it to learn. Such efforts are part of government policies on language in education.

Language acquisition planning is one of the three areas that have traditionally constituted language planning (Kloss, 1997; Cooper, 1989). The other areas are status planning and corpus planning (Kloss, 1967; Cooper, 1989) and the recently introduced language opportunity planning by Antia (2017). All these three areas of language planning are closely related and influence each other.

Language planning and policy is concerned with the policies that influence what language(s) are spoken when, how, and by whom, as well as the values and rights associated with speaking those languages. It is an attempt to influence how a language is used (Cooper, 1989). This is usually done to create a wide use of the language covering more subjects. Deliberate strategies, goals and objectives are put in place to change the way a language is used. Corpus planning creates new words, expressions or changes old ones to have a new meaning. Status planning raises the languages to new levels of use and functions while acquisition planning creates conducive environments for the learning and spread of the language for use by as many people as possible, (Kaplan, 2013; Ramlan, 2018; Hill, 2010). Therefore, language planning is important to a country to ensure that a language corpus can function in contemporary society in terms of terminology, or vocabulary, to meet present needs and that everything needed for its teaching and learning is availed to the learners for easy acquisition.

In that rational and systematic planning, the main goals of acquisition planning set out by Kaplan & Baldauf (2003) as cited in Hiroyuki Nemoto (2011, p. 34 – 35) are:

- to decide what language should be taught within the curriculum,
- to determine the amount and quality of teacher training,
- to involve local communities,
- to determine what material will be used and how they will be incorporated into the syllabi,
- to establish a local and state assessment system to monitor progress and
- to determine financial costs.

The goals of language acquisition planning stated above string together very important aspects of a progression from language acquisition at home to language acquisition and learning at school. If a learner has to acquire, learn and develop their language – in this case their mother tongue – the learning environment at school must be conducive for that. As stated above, Croome & Fairhall, (1976), highlight that each child brings their own language to school, and the school has to prepare a suitable programme that will cater for the difference of all children in those situations.

According to Shohamy (2006), language policy is the mechanism for organising language behaviours and their use in society. It is through language policy that preferred languages are legitimised, used as languages of instruction and taught in schools. This is particularly true when one looks at the Zimbabwean education system. English, Ndebele and Shona have been regarded as Zimbabwe's national languages since Doke's (1931) recommendations regarding the language issue in Zimbabwe. Doke's recommendations led to the crafting of an Education Act 'Languages to be taught in schools', whose Section 62, Part (XII) states that:

1. Subject to this section, all three main languages of Zimbabwe namely Shona, Ndebele and English shall be taught on an equal time basis in all schools up to form two levels.
2. In areas where indigenous languages other than those mentioned in subsection (1) above are spoken, the minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in schools in addition to those specified in subsection (1).

In that way, Ndebele and Shona became major languages of Zimbabwe, and the only two indigenous languages to be taught at school in addition to English. Although either is compulsory in completing one's academic certificate, or acquiring a job, Ndebele and Shona were offered for study at university as subjects. The assumed raised status of these two languages can be realised in many translations on notice boards and many other important documents used in the country. However, Nkomo, (2012, p. 9), notes that,

> Identity documents reflect an English bias as English texts take precedence in those documents which are supposedly multilingual like the passport.

According to Shohamy (2006), language policies refer to documents, laws and regulations that attempt to bring harmony in society in terms of language use. However, in some cases these language policies have resulted in battles between various groups demanding recognition, self-expression and mobility on the one hand and those in authority who prefer to uphold national, regional and global languages. One example of such is given by Hill (2010, p. 43) in reference to the Afrikaans language in Namibia and South Africa, which was bound to lose its significance when indigenous languages were introduced into the education system; who argues that the 1993 and 1996 constitutional provisions on language constituted two influential statements. The first was the future status of Afrikaans in both Namibia and South. The second was the development of the indigenous languages to a level of having them as viable media of instruction at both primary and secondary school.

In Zimbabwe, the Education Act of 1987 states that the three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele, and English shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows:

a. Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority or the residences is Shona, or
b. Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority or the residence is Ndebele.

The Act further mentions that prior to the fourth grade, either Shona or Ndebele may be used as the medium of instruction depending on which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by pupils, (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987). This pronouncement by the government provoked resistance from minority languages who felt left out and neglected. One such outcry came from the Tonga people in Binga who according to Mutero (2014), passed a resolution to ban the teaching of Ndebele in all schools in the Binga district.

While existing scholarship tends to generalise the predicament of indigenous languages due to the dominance of English in Zimbabwean education, (cf. Magwa, 2010); (Ndamba, 2013), this study looks at the position of Ndebele in relation to English, Shona and minority languages that are spoken in the Ndebele geo-linguistic areas. It looks at general concerns regarding the teaching of the Ndebele language in Zimbabwe (Ndhlovu, 2006). This study focuses on the education sector through which political, cultural and socio-economic processes are cultivated and sometimes implemented. Accordingly, this study investigates the sensitive politics of the Ndebele language within the education sector, more specifically in the primary school level, building on issues that the existing scholarship has thus far avoided.

In Zimbabwe, battles between various language groups demanding recognition, self-expression and mobility on the one hand and those in authority who prefer to uphold national, regional and global languages, resulted in the emergence of organisations such as Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZILPA) and VETOKA (Venda, Tonga and Kalanga), (Nyika, 2012). These are organisations whose advocacy activities, after independence, saw some minority languages gaining more ground in the education sector and in the new (2013) constitution (Nkomo & Maseko, 2017).

It is important to note that when children go to school for the first time, they take a language with them. That language the child takes to school has a role to play in acquiring knowledge and academic success at school and beyond the classroom. According to Leech (1974), language has five functions - informational, expressive, directive, aesthetic and phatic. Each function is crucial for the purpose it should serve. A language is a tool used for communication – a function that every human being performs – but one's mother tongue is way more than just a tool.

One has to give information and directions to others and as a mother tongue speaker they have to be expressive in their communication (Leech, 1974). Not knowing a mother tongue well could have an impact far greater than we can imagine. Acquisition planning, therefore, equips language users with the necessary linguistic proficiency to effectively use language(s) in the designated domains. To achieve acquisition planning and status planning goals, corpus planning would be essential. As discussed in section 1.7 above corpus planning results directly in standardisation

and modernisation of a language so that it is appropriately learnt and efficiently used. Antia (2017) introduced the concept of opportunity planning to emphasise that languages, status, corpus and acquisition planning may not be sufficient as long as there are no socio-economic incentives for the elevation, development and learning of such languages. That applies more to African languages that exist in multilingual situations, quite often on the shadows of global languages such as English, French, Arabic, Spanish and Russian. The link between language planning concepts – status planning, acquisition planning, corpus planning and opportunity planning (as introduced by Antia (2017)), clearly defines who a language teacher should be, as per the key factors to consider when planning for language use in education. According to Pflepsen et al (2015, p. 5) the factors are:

- Identifying goals of language acquisition and selecting languages to be used in classrooms, and for what purpose;
- Identifying effective pedagogical methodologies for teaching languages and curricular materials, and selecting languages to include in instruction;
- Developing teaching, learning, and assessment materials in the appropriate languages;
- Aligning teacher recruitment, training, and placement with the pedagogical approach to using language; and
- Cultivating support from, and involving stakeholders – from policy makers to parents – in language plan development and implementation.

There is a lot to know and understand in teaching a language than just being that language speaker or a qualified teacher. As Pflepsen et al (2015) outline, a language teacher should understand the purpose of teaching that language, be able to identify and use effective pedagogical methodologies and select appropriate material for teaching that language to achieve the goals of teaching that language. Added to that teacher training, recruitment and placement must be considered in line with other aspects mentioned above.

2.5 Language Acquisition Planning in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a multicultural nation with multiple ethnic groups. Since 1980, after attainment of independence from colonial Britain, the government has struggled to

formulate a language policy to suit all linguistic and cultural groups. This has resulted in disillusionment of linguistic minorities leading to the language issue being a sensitive subject associated with undertones of tribalism, regionalism, linguistic imperialism and political division. It has to be noted that language is one of the most important parts of any culture. It is the way by which people communicate with one another, build relationships, and create a sense of community. It is hard to separate language and politics. Linguistic identity is “largely a political matter and languages are flags of allegiance” (Rajagopalan, 2001 as cited in Mpofu & Salawi, 2018, p. 2). Therefore, a solution in terms of language policy needs to be obtained to allay the undertones mentioned above. It is important therefore, that the language planning document or language policy to be adopted eventually encompasses all languages of Zimbabwe in all spheres of language function. Mpofu & Salawu, (2018) state that the presence of common language is necessary for the formation of networks meaning that languages are not limited to being means of communication only but are also political objects. Languages are also a component of ethnic identity and all groups of people belong to such groups.

Language planning in Zimbabwe started in the 1920s as a translation activity by missionaries who wanted to translate the Bible into African languages in order to “reach the souls of Africans in the most effective way possible,” (Roy-Campbell & Gwete, 1997, p. 2 as cited in Chivhanga & Chimhenga, 2013). The initial writing in Shona, in its various forms, was done by different missionary societies in areas where Shona dialects were spoken. These missionaries had little or no expertise in linguistic description and that created problems of orthographic differences within the same language (Dube, 2002; Chivhanga, 2008, in Chivhanga & Chimhenga, 2013). A typical example is Clement Doke, a foreign (South African) linguist, who was commissioned to undertake a dialect survey in 1929 and make suggestions about a common writing system in Rhodesia. Chimhundu (1992) states that the purpose of Doke’s mandate was to make a thorough survey of the language position throughout the country with a view to advising the language planners of Government on a uniform orthography and a possible unification of dialects, for the standardisation of an official language for that part of the country occupied by the Shona speaking people. Doke recommended that Shona and Ndebele be the two African languages that were to be recognised officially in the areas in which they

were predominant and that all the other languages be basically ignored. Doke did not have an understanding of the diverse language groups of Zimbabwe and the declaration he made about Ndebele and Shona marked the beginning of the language problems in Zimbabwe. Now, decades later after Doke's 1931 language commission, Zimbabwe is battling with tribal issues when in fact as a people we are simply diverse, but one.

This government-commissioned report by Doke set the stage for a policy that set English as the official language and medium of instruction in the education system. Ndebele and Shona were set to be taught as the only indigenous languages in their geo-linguistic regions where minority languages also exist (Doke, 1931; Ndhlovu, 2006). After independence in 1980, the government realised the need to include indigenous 'minority' languages in the school system leading to the drafting of the 1987 Education Act that was meant to address the language issue.

Some scholars dealing with language issues have raised concerns on the provisions of the 1987 Education Act, arguing that the Act does not adequately address the full issues concerning the country's language situation as it seems to maintain what the previous Act presented. Nkomo (2008), states that there is no significant difference in language in education practices in independent Zimbabwe and those of colonial times. He adds that such a situation is bad for indigenous language speakers, (p. 356)

> As far as minority languages are concerned, 'the Minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in primary schools in addition to those specified in subsections (1), (2) and (3)'. In the light of subsection 2, this implies that, in cases where the Minister does not approve the teaching of minority languages, as seems to have often been the case in terms of the actual practice, there can be no question of mother tongue literacy.

Muchenje et al. (2013) have criticised the confusion created by the 1987 Education Act. They state that the Act creates unnecessary confusion in learners who will have been taught using their mother tongue and received instruction in their mother tongue up to Grade 3 in the areas where their languages are commonly spoken then

have to abruptly switch to English as a medium of instruction and Ndebele or Shona as indigenous languages from Grade 4 onwards.

Nkomo (2008) and Muchenje *et al* (2013) make a good point as they foresaw academic problems at schools in terms of the language situation. The use of indigenous languages as media of instruction in the first three grades then a shift to Ndebele or Shona and English in Grade 4upwards potentially causes confusion and lack of continuity in the development of learners. The fears expressed by the scholars mentioned above are supported by Mulkey, (2012) who says that continuing with the mother tongue actually increases the efficiency and development of academic skills, that obviously learners in Zimbabwe will need for assessment in grade 7. The shift from Ndebele to English between grade 3 and grade 4 breaks the continuity the child will have gained and draws him or her back to start with a new language. Concerns are grounded on the fact that minority languages are drowned by Ndebele and Shona in the education system. This makes it look like the two languages are assuming the status of English forming a hierarchy of importance. Ndhlovu (2007) posits that if the dominance of English is disregarded, language use patterns and cultural representations in the public domain reflect the dominance of Shona and Ndebele at the expense of the minority languages. That scenario forms a hierarchical organisation of language use in public spaces with Shona at the top and Ndebele coming second.

The hierarchy mentioned by Ndhlovu (2007), means that English remains right at the top followed by Shona then Ndebele. This scenario is clearly illustrated in a study carried out by Muchenje et al. (2013) where they describe the perceptions of learners with a Nyanja/Chewa-speaking background about the status of their mother tongue in the education system. Their findings reveal that the Zimbabwean language used in the classrooms (Zvimba, Mashonaland West) is Shona rather than the language spoken by the community, (Nyanja and Chewa). This situation has been labelled “unfortunate” by the participants.

This study will not deal with the whole education system, but with the primary school system as it is the focus of this research. The study will focus on the teaching of Ndebele under the language acquisition planning policy in Zimbabwe.

2.6 The Origins of Zimbabwe's Language Problems

Muchenje et al., (2013) state that the Doke report of 1931 was the first language policy in education that set English as the medium of instruction in the education system of the country. All the indigenous languages were neglected except for Ndebele and Shona that became the only indigenous languages taught in the education system. That was the beginning of a language problem that is still haunting the country up to this day. In an introductory chapter of Doke's photographic reprint of the original report, Chimhundu in (Doke, 2005, p. 8), states,

> First, we must note that Doke was invited to intervene and settle the contentious issue of a common Shona orthography, which the early missionaries had been addressing seriously during the previous 25 years but had failed to resolve. Secondly, the intensive work that he did with missionary representatives from 1929 culminated in his report, which was accepted by the government, and his recommendations were implemented almost in their entirety in the African education system which at that time was run by the missionaries. Thirdly, he did manage to come up with a common writing system for all the Shona dialects of Zimbabwe that are spoken outside the administrative provinces of Matabeleland.

According to Doke (2005), his task in Southern Rhodesia was to investigate almost entirely into the Shona dialects and not Ndebele or Zulu in the Western Area. He says, therefore, that he was not in a position to give a definite recommendation regarding the choice between Ndebele and Zulu as the official language of the Western Area. However, some recommendations Doke made based on his investigation into the Shona dialects greatly influenced the language practices in the Western Area. Out of his eleven recommendations for the unification of the Shona dialects, there were two that directly influenced the language system in the Western Area, known as Matabeleland today. The first recommendation was that "there be two official native languages recognised in the whole of Rhodesia, one for the main Shona-speaking area, and one for the Ndebele speaking area", (p. 76).

This recommendation guided the teaching of languages in Zimbabwe from 1931 and still formed the basis of the Education Act of 1987 (seven years after independence) that adopted Ndebele and Shona as the only two indigenous languages taught at school, neglecting more than ten others that were not mentioned in Doke's recommendations. Probably at that time it was the best solution to adopt and stick

to that recommendation for the language situation in the country not realising that it was a creation of one big problem to haunt the country later.

In terms of recommendation 8, Doke (1931) recommended:

> That for the Western Area, Ndebele or Zulu be recognised as the official language, and that for educational purposes this official language be used in the following districts: Insiza, Mzingwane, Matobo, Bulawayo, Bubi, most of Nyamandlovu, and portions of Bulilima-Mangwe, Gwanda, Belingwe, and Gwelo.

To clarify and explain the above recommendation, Doke expressed lack of confidence on the status of Ndebele; stating,

> … I am not in a position to give a definite recommendation regarding the choice between Ndebele and Zulu as the official language of the Western Area. It may be observed, however, that Ndebele is recognised as a dialect of Zulu, that Zulu is well understood by Ndebele speakers, that the necessary movement in Africa is towards an economy in the number of dialects used for official and educational purposes, and that Zulu already has a growing literature which Ndebele sadly lacks. My personal opinion would be towards the substitution of literary Zulu for official and educational purposes in this area (Doke, 2005, p. 99).

In view of the above, Chimhundu, (1992) states that all the major issues in African languages experienced since independence can be discussed with some reference to Doke's recommendations. Probably the most worrying thing to Chimhundu was the fact that, “the unified literary language that was to be developed in the Shona-speaking area should exclude Kalanga and draw its vocabulary from Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika and Ndau”, (Chimhundu, 1992 p. 105). In terms of this argument, the language problem then becomes tribal or dialectical rather than indigenous. His argument is based on, “… why Doke specifically recommended that ‘Korekore words be admitted sparingly’ (Chimhundu 1992, pp. 105-106), while words from Budya and all the other smaller dialects should be discouraged”. With the argument going down to dialects, Ndhlovu, (2006, p. 305) states, “Doke’s 1929 – 1930 research on Zimbabwean languages has played a key role in shaping the tribalised and politicised linguistic terrain that characterises modern Zimbabwe”.

Ndhlovu, (2006, p. 305), further states that Doke's legacy left an 'indelible mark on the language treatment and language policy formulation' in postcolonial Zimbabwe. It is one of Doke's recommendations (Recommendation 8) that stifled the writing and publication of Ndebele materials because 'there was no need for that as Zulu literature was already there to cater for the teaching of Ndebele' (Doke, 2005).

After that declaration by Doke, Ndebele was then registered and taught as Ndebele/Zulu with Zulu books such as *Uhlelo lwesiZulu* by Sibusiso Nyembezi, novels such as *Izwi Nesithunzi* by R. R. R. Dhlomo, *Ngisinga Empumalanga* by O. E. H. M. Nxumalo, *Umthathe uzala umlotha* by I. S. Kubheka and many others as part of the prescribed texts for the 'O' Level and 'A' Level syllabi. The Ndebele Secondary and High School syllabi still use Zulu books to date. The availability of such Zulu literature made the government of Zimbabwe not to commit sufficient financial resources to the development of the Ndebele language as a whole as the teaching leaned towards Zulu as recommended by Doke.

After gaining independence, and realising the importance of teaching and having indigenous languages in the education system, Zimbabwe committed to a transformative and culturally relevant education system through the introduction of the 1987 Education Act, which was the first attempt to address the language policy and English, Shona and Ndebele were favoured for use in education.

After the 1987 Education Act, more language planning activities took place in Zimbabwe and some of them are listed below: The 1990 amendment of section 62 read:

Languages to be taught in schools

(1) Every school shall endeavour to –

(a) Teach every officially recognised language;

(b) Ensure that the language of instruction shall be the language of examination;

(c) Ensure that the mother tongue is to be used as a medium of instruction at early childhood education.

(2) School curricula shall as far as possible reflect the culture of the people of every language used or taught in terms of this section, (Veritas, 2020, p. 625).

The 1990 revision of the Education Act was followed by the 1997 Kariba Draft Constitution which was another attempt at trying to address the language issues in Zimbabwe, and it read:

Languages:

(1) All indigenous languages spoken in Zimbabwe, that is to say Shona, Sindebele, Venda, Nambya, Shangaan, Kalanga, Suthu and Tonga, are recognised.

(2) The official languages are English, Shona and Sindebele,

Cultural objectives:

(1) The State must –

(a) Promote and preserve cultural values and practices which enhance the dignity and well-being of Zimbabweans; and

(b) Encourage the preservation, development and enrichment of all indigenous languages spoken in Zimbabwe.

(2) The State and all citizens must endeavour to preserve and protect Zimbabwe's heritage.

The1997 Kariba Draft Constitution which was an attempt to address the language situation in the country was followed by the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Teaching. The commission unearthed a lot of problems that were buried in the implementation of the existing Education Act. The following are some of the things the inquiry highlighted:

- The interpretation and implementation of the provisions of the Education Act of 1987 in the school system is confused and half-hearted in respect of both the national and official minority languages. The result is that English becomes the medium of instruction in all schools; ChiShona and IsiNdebele are taught only as subjects.
- The problem in the teaching of indigenous languages is caused by a paucity of instructional materials, the scarcity of trained teachers of minority

languages and lack of second language teaching methodology for indigenous languages.

- English has remained entrenched as the medium of instruction as well as the key to qualification for education and training at all levels and therefore as the key to employment, upward social mobility, and international dialogue.
- Failure to include minority languages in the school curriculum, meant suppression of linguistic and cultural heritage of some sections of the country's population and that consequently meant they would not effectively participate in the country's development.
- The present Education Act of 1987 is characteristically colonial because it promotes English at the expense of developing indigenous languages,

The Commission then made the following recommendations:

- Comprehensive measures need to be taken to boost the status of indigenous languages as they were still treated as "vernacular" like they were treated by the colonialists.
- that the use of indigenous languages in education should be part of the continuing process of the reform of African education systems towards sustainable development.

The 1999 Inquiry noted how the language policies implemented before it was carried out suppressed the so-called minority languages. In that inquiry it was noted how English was given a higher status and protected by the policies. The Education Act of 1987, the amendment of 1990 and the Draft Constitution of 1997 all mentioned the use of indigenous languages to certain levels but "English remained entrenched as the medium of instruction as well as the key to qualification for education and training at all levels and therefore as the key to employment, upward social mobility, and international dialogue", (Nziramasanga, 1999). According to Nhongo (2013), English has dominated the African education systems to a point where the African leaders see no need to develop the indigenous languages or spend resources in trying to do so. English is regarded as a gateway to success. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Nziramasanga Commission recommended that comprehensive measures had to be taken to boost the status of indigenous languages as it felt that

the indigenous languages were still treated as vernacular as they were treated by colonial policy makers.

This inquiry led to the amendment of the Education Act of 1987 in 2006. According to Kododo & Zanga, (2015, p. 118), the amendment was due to, "… heightened debate and accusatory complaints to the effect that poor performance in schools was partly a result of the use of an L2 as medium of instruction in education", and that pushed the Zimbabwean government to embark on language innovation culminating in the 2006 Education Amendment Act, which in part read:
Languages to be taught in schools:

(1) Subject to this section, all the three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught on an equal-time basis in all schools up to Form Two level.
(2) In areas where indigenous languages other than those mentioned in subsection (1) are spoken, the Minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in schools in addition to those specified in subsection (1).
(3) The Minister may authorise the teaching of foreign languages in schools.
(4) Prior to Form 1, any one of the languages referred to in subsection (1) and (2) may be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

It is important to note that pronouncement of policy in education is one thing and implementing that policy is another. Formulation of a language policy is usually done with good intentions but there are always various factors that may affect the implementation of said policy. One of such factors is language attitude. According to Webster et al. (2012), attitudes have the capacity to affect policy implementation. Language attitudes determine the success of any language policy implementation as well as what language users prefer when confronted by situations ranging from social to economic. The implementation of the language policy as directed by the 2006 Education Amendment Act in Zimbabwe was, therefore, subject to users'

attitudes, meaning that its success was subject to its acceptability by stakeholders, both implementers (all involved in the teaching of indigenous languages) and beneficiaries (learners and their parents).

The 2006 amendment of the Education Act of 1987 was a reaction initiated by the Secretary's Circular No. 1 of 2002: (Policy Regarding Language Teaching and Learning), that stated:

- Minority local languages: These are languages that are spoken by relatively small indigenous groups in various parts of Zimbabwe. They include, but are not restricted to Kalanga, Tonga, Venda, Nambya and Sotho. These languages are currently being taught up to Grade 3. From January 2002 the languages will be assisted to advance to a grade per year until they can be taught at Grade 7.

The teaching of the languages mentioned above was meant to progress beyond Grade 3 as stated in the original Act of 1987. In 2005, all the languages mentioned above were supposed to be examined at Grade 7 level, but the plan was delayed until 2011 and 2012 when Tonga and Nambya were examined at Grade 7 level, respectively.

The annual progression of the classes would enable the necessary inputs to be made in advance, including teachers, classrooms and materials. By the time these languages were offered at Grade 7 in 2005, new arrangements would have been made for their further development. In other words, we would cross that particular bridge when we got to it, (Nyika 2008).

According to Ndamba & van Wyk, (2018), literature has shown that African governments do not show any willingness and commitment to address problems that affect the status of indigenous languages, but come up with plans and make declarations that remain on paper without implementation. According to the Secretary's Policy (Zimbabwe) Circular 1 of 2002, the minority languages, namely TshiKalanga, TshiVenda, ChiTonga, ChiTshangana and ChiNambya were to be progressively taught up to Grade 7 by 2005, but that also remained on paper.

The Secretary's Circular of 2002 was followed by the Director's Circular Number 26 of 2007: (Policy Guidelines on the Teaching of Local Languages in Primary and Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe). The circular reads as follows:

The Director's Circular No. 26 of 2007, under the section on '*Implementing the Teaching of Local Languages*', spells out the Ministry's position on the significant role played by the mother tongue:

- The underlying principle for using Local Languages as media of instruction lies in their proven ability to ensure effective communication between the learner and the teacher. Effective and efficient communication is important for full comprehension of fundamental concepts by the learner, (Ndamba & van Wyk, 2018: 52).

The Director's circular is supported by 'The New Zimbabwe Curriculum Framework', (Ministry for Primary and Secondary Education: Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015–2022) which emphasises the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction at Infant School level (Early Childhood Development up to Grade 2). Despite efforts by the government to utilise the crucial value of the home language in the learning of primary school learners, teachers' attitudes appear to disregard the suggestions (Ndamba, Sithole & van Wyk, 2017; Kadodo, et al, 2012). Teachers are viewed as key role players in the successful implementation of any language policy and if they do not become active stakeholders in the whole process, the policy is bound to remain on paper and may be hard to implement.

The other document to address the language issue in Zimbabwe is the New Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) that acknowledges the 16 languages as officially recognised in the country. It states that:

- the State and all institutions and agencies of Government must ensure that all the languages are treated equitably and take into account the language preferences of people affected by governmental measures or communications. In addition, the new education curriculum has been

> developed to cover all the indigenous languages stated in the Constitution. The Zimbabwean Indigenous Languages Curriculum (2015 – 2022) developed by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education allocated equal teaching hours to all the languages that are officially recognised in the country. As such, 100% of instructional hours dedicated to teaching languages are for teaching official or national languages.

According to Maja (2017), the new Zimbabwean Constitution (2013), provides for three important concepts that help protect language rights, and these are: a) official language status; b) use of official languages; and c) promotion of use and development of all languages in Zimbabwe. Maja, (2017, p. 60-63), further justifies this and highlights the need to protect language rights by stating:

> First, the intrinsic value of language affirms the need to protect language rights. Language is a mirror of one's cultural identity, a vehicle of culture, a medium of expression, a means of transfer of knowledge and a source of power, social mobility and opportunities.
>
> Second, the legal protection of language rights helps address the problem of discrimination of linguistic minorities based on language that has been prevalent in the history of most African states including Zimbabwe.
>
> Third, most linguistic minorities are numerically inferior, politically non- dominant, poor and socially vulnerable. They require the assistance of the law to protect their rights in a functioning ethnolinguistic democracy.
>
> Fourth, the legal protection of language rights contributes towards the preservation of the identity of language speakers. In Africa, identity is linked to language. Webb and Kembo-Sure argue that in Africa, "people are often identified culturally primarily (and even solely) on the basis of the language they speak." Examples include the Tonga, Ndebele and Shona in Zimbabwe.

Maseko & Dhlamini, (2014), have also added their own views and expectations on the language situation in Zimbabwe. They argue that in a multilingual approach both the local and foreign languages must have their appropriate place and methods of teaching. They further argue that instruction in the mother tongue contributes more than the foreign language in cultural, cognitive and socio-psychological development of the child.

It is the lack of the transformation in language in education observed and discussed by Maseko & Dhlamini (2014), and the vague and inconsistent nature of the new language policies in Africa, as stated by Kangira (2016), that create challenges negatively affecting the implementation process. The language situation in Zimbabwe can be summarised as similar to that of Nigeria as expressed by (Segun, 2008), who states that the linguistic situation in Nigeria is that of 'dominant and dominated languages'. He goes further and states that English in Nigeria has assumed a hegemonic status and dominates the three main indigenous languages of the country (Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo) which in turn dominate the other minority languages of the country.

Even after several attempts to rectify the language situation in Zimbabwe, Ndebele and Shona still dominate other minority languages and English still dominates all of them and that domination stems from Doke's recommendation during the colonial period which in turn informed the 1987 Education Act whose dictates have not been totally neutralised. According to Ndhlovu (2006) the two languages, Ndebele and Shona, are however, not given equal functional space because of the quest for Shona political hegemony. He goes on to state that Ndebele has always been systematically marginalised in education, judicial system, business and many other spheres.

On Doke's recommendation to use Ndebele and Zulu, probably we can conclude that his idea of using the two languages was tribally and politically high-jacked by people with ulterior motives. Ndhlovu, (2006, p. 306) posits

> The dominant postcolonial perspectives on the language situation in Zimbabwe are all preoccupied with the unequal power relations between the English language (the only official language) and Zimbabwe's officially recognised national languages, as if Shona and Ndebele are always given equal functional space.

The colonial status English still enjoys has given it dominance over other languages, which means it is the language of business, law and administration, as well as regional and international trade and communication (Ndhlovu, 2006). Because of the status accorded the English language, the issue of its hegemony in former British colonies is no longer an item for debate. A new phenomenon of African

languages themselves dominating each other has risen. A typical example is Ndebele in Zimbabwe that Ndhlovu (2006, p. 306), describes as having been "pushed to the peripheries of mainstream sociolinguistic functions, leaving Shona as the only dominant African language in Zimbabwe". Therefore, both colonial and postcolonial developments in Zimbabwe have contributed to the politics of language marginalisation in the country (Ndhlovu, 2006).

In addition to recognising the 16 languages, the constitution also states that the State must promote the use of all Zimbabwean languages, and create conditions for the development of these languages. All the efforts mentioned above, aimed at crafting a language policy that should work for all stakeholders are a result of Zimbabwe being a multilingual country with about sixteen indigenous languages officially recognised but there could actually be more than 16 languages spoken in Zimbabwe. According to Gotosa et al. (2013), in 1980 when Zimbabwe got independent from Britain, the country adopted the colonial language policy that regarded English as the official language to be used in all spheres of life while Ndebele and Shona were the only national languages considered for use in formal settings.

In 2006, the policy was amended to extend mother tongue instruction to Grade 7 leading to the first ever Tonga Grade 7 examination in 2011. The new Zimbabwe Constitution of 2013 gives all the 16 officially recognised languages 'official' status with recommendations that they should all be given equal recognition including in education, though there are no suggestions given as to how this should be done. That means there is still a need to come up with a practical policy that will be clear in its articulation of how the indigenous languages will be treated versus English which has dominated all spheres of life since the days of colonialism. Lack of clarity in the use of the indigenous languages is the reason why this study endeavours to establish what the teaching of Ndebele, as one of the indigenous languages, reveals about the socio-cultural and political ideologies underpinning language planning in Zimbabwe.

2.7 The Indigenous Languages and the Education System

The plight of indigenous languages is not peculiar to Zimbabwe or Southern Africa only. It is a continental, and even a global problem. For many years, conferences to

discuss issues surrounding the status of African languages, covering the whole of Africa have been held. Some years after the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe that is the latest intervention to the country's language problem, English still dominates as an official language in Zimbabwe. South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia are faced with the same problem. According to Ndamba (2017, p. 23), "Despite the advantages of learning through the mother tongue, the Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) is not being effectively implemented in Zimbabwean primary schools". Thondhlana, (1998) also highlights that in the case of minority languages it has been noted that implementation of the above-mentioned Policy will be difficult because the teachers who are proficient in those languages are not deployed in those relevant areas. Thondhlana goes on to state that the problem is with the deployment of teachers which does not take into consideration the question of lower grades' medium of instruction.

The teaching of indigenous languages cannot be done if teacher deployment is not done the right way. Teacher deployment seems to be the easily noted problem but the language teaching issue is deeper than that. To solve the language issue, there is need for proper planning that covers material production, teacher training and deployment and monitoring of the programme. Benson (2005: 4), in a report for UNESCO on girls' education says, "More girls enrol in school when they can learn in a language that is familiar to them". Mackenzie and Walker (n.d.) concur with Benson by stating that low quality education and low achievement in many African schools are partially related to language. UNESCO adds that Africa is the only continent where the majority of children start schooling using a foreign language such as English, French or Portuguese.

In describing the Nigerian language issues Segun, (2008), states that language planning policies in Nigeria and Africa as a whole are still largely characterised by problems such as 'avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation and declaration without implementation'. Results of such language policies lead to failure of public policy, impact negatively on minority languages and strengthen the hegemony of English.

This seems to be a common scenario when looking at the inherited languages. They tend to enjoy the attached status of unifying multilingual societies, and that seems to be typical of the majority of African countries who then neglect their indigenous languages. It is, therefore, not surprising that the language situation prevailing in Zimbabwe's institutions of learning today has its deep roots in colonialism. Although several attempts have been made to rectify that and come up with a new Zimbabwean language policy, all the attempts are yet to yield a plausible policy that appeals to all stakeholders. Marungudzi (2016) concurs by stating that the recommendations, all the way from Ngara (1982) to the Nziramasanga commission to use Shona and Ndebele as media of instruction have not been implemented.

Kangira (2016) suggests that in order to promote indigenous languages to the level of English some of these recommendations should be considered:

- Change the attitudes of the ruling elites so that they stop perpetuating linguistic imperialism through the language policies they impose in their countries.
- Develop dictionaries, grammar books and promote fiction writing in indigenous languages and translate government documents written in foreign languages into indigenous languages to enhance service delivery.
- Extend the use of mother tongue to secondary level so that learners can see the link between life at home and at school through their home languages.
- Focus on corpus planning and provide terminologies to serve socio-economic development and develop corpus resources to facilitate the use of previously disadvantaged languages in socio-economic communicative domains.
- Adopt inclusive language policy that allows language planners to give the former colonial language and indigenous languages equal functional status. If indigenous languages are used in teaching and in school subject exams, they will gain prestige, which will increase the need to study them seriously.

In trying to put indigenous languages at par with English, the syllabus for the new curriculum in Zimbabwe (2015 – 2022) has allocated the following times for indigenous languages: Grades 1 and 2 should be allocated at least 8 periods of 30

minutes each per week, (Unit, 2015, p. 4) and Grades 3 - 7 should be allocated at least 9 periods of 30 minutes each per week, Services, (2015, p. 2). This is a change from a time when English was allocated between 6 and 8 periods (30 minutes) a week while indigenous languages were allocated between 4 and 5 periods (30 minutes) a week. According to Kangira (2016), lack of seriousness and strict monitoring of the implementation of the policy, as stated in the Constitution, opens the whole policy for abuse.

It is hoped that the stipulations of the new curriculum framework will be implemented as that will benefit the teaching of indigenous languages. The problem, however, is lack of supervision by government officials to see that the teaching of indigenous languages is done accordingly as schools tend to neglect them in favour of English which has dominated the education system.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the theoretical framework of this study. It identifies some major learning theories and discusses their views of knowledge acquisition and application in the classroom, particularly focusing on language teaching and learning. The theoretical framework is informed by theories of learning as propounded by Skinner (Behaviourism), Piaget (Cognitive Constructivism) and Vygotsky (Social Constructivism). This study draws much from Constructivism as a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning; and because of that, I will discuss the key tenets of this theory as well as Behaviourism. The constructivists theory as discussed by Dagar & Yadav, (2016, p. 1) states that:

> Education involves the process of the development and learning of the child on multiple dimensions, facilitated by the teacher, who is guided by a curriculum. Effective education is a process where the teacher, children and the schools involved participate actively.

Croome & Fairhall, (1976) concur with Dagar & Yadav (2016) by highlighting that the relationship between the teacher and the learner, for learning to take place, should "be based on mutual trust which comes through the establishment, and maintenance, of communication through speech" (p. 20).

Below is the discussion of the learning theories, Behaviourism and Constructivism – split into Cognitive Constructivism and Social Constructivism.

3.2 Behaviourism

Behaviourism is a learning theory that suggests that environment shapes human behaviour, and according to Essays (2018), it is a branch of psychology which began in the late 19th Century with the work of Ivan Pavlov, a Russian psychologist, further developed by Thorndike, Watson and Skinner in the United States of America.

As a learning theory, Behaviourism stresses the role of the environment, and the associations that are made between an individual and the events in that environment. Teaching of Ndebele as a language using Behaviourism tenets requires the environment of teaching and learning to be made conducive for that.

Such an environment needs planning that involves issues of curriculum development, pedagogy, teacher competence and assessment. According to Ertmer & Newby (2013, p. 48), under behaviourism, “Learning is accomplished when a proper response is demonstrated following the presentation of a specific environmental stimulus”. They further assert that, “The most critical factor, however, is the arrangement of stimuli and consequences within the environment”. This impacts heavily on the quality of teaching, the qualification of the teacher, the content to be taught which has to be arranged in a way that learners will connect with from their previous lessons and knowledge they possess from home. Weegar & Pacis (2012, p. 2) concluded that, “… given the right environmental influences, all learners acquire identical understanding and that all students can learn”. This environment is created by the teacher who is the leader and guide in the classroom, a point also expressed by the Constructivists in their view of learning. Both Behaviourism and Constructivism claim that the teacher has to be competent enough to take the lead and guide the learners in the learning process.

The behaviourist theory of learning, like other theories, has implications in the language teaching classroom since it informs the teacher how learning takes place, the purpose of teaching and serves as a guide to the way teaching is conducted, (Britwum, 2014). According to the behaviourist theory of learning, learning can only be said to have taken place when there is a change in the outward behaviour of the learner (Cherry, 2014 as cited in Britwum, 2014). Accordingly, in a language classroom, the teacher gives a lot of practice work in line with Thorndike’s laws of learning that insist on “practice makes perfect” and “learning is by doing”. Language is primarily learnt orally; a lot of speaking gives learners enough practice. The teacher corrects all mistakes made and reinforces correct speech as suggested by behaviourists in their reward and punishment theory.

The other behaviourist aspect of learning is that the learner must be prepared mentally and emotionally for learning to take place effectively. It is, therefore, the teacher’s duty to make sure that the learning environment is conducive to learning and that includes the assessment of the readiness of the learners, provision of relevant learning material that will stimulate the desire to learn in the learners. Added to the environment that the teacher has to create, lesson objectives should be communicated to the learners so that they get to know the objectives of the lesson.

Since the behaviourist teacher aims to see change in behaviour of learners as evidence that learning has taken place, he or she will set objectives of the lesson such as: *"By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to use learnt proverbs in correct sentences",* that is, if they are teaching proverbs. The teacher, therefore, has to be knowledgeable and competent in the language they are teaching so that they provide all answers for the learners to just receive (Britwum, 2014).

Behaviourists consider human nature to be the product of one's environment. To them, this consideration applies in language teaching and learning, but its application has to be guided by language competence and proficiency. For learners to master a language, they need to have a teacher who will model the target language. This claim is supported by Gropper (1987) as cited in Ertmer & Newby (2013, p. 50), who purports

> Behavioural theories imply that the job of the teacher/designer is to (1) determine which cues can elicit the desired responses; (2) arrange practice situations in which prompts are paired with the target stimuli that initially have no eliciting power but which will be expected to elicit the responses in the "natural" (performance) setting; and (3) arrange environmental conditions so that students can make the correct responses in the presence of those target stimuli and receive reinforcement for those responses.

A poorly equipped language environment will not facilitate any learning and, therefore, according to Behaviourists, the teacher should be a competent guide who will facilitate language learning through enriching the environment for the benefit of the learners. This links well with what Vygotsky, a social constructivist himself, advocates in his zone of proximal development that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Teaching is about assisting and motivating learners so that they achieve maximum learning. Teachers use the behaviourist theory to show students how they should react and respond to certain stimuli. Teachers become models guiding learners through the learning process and they have to be good role models for quality learning to take place. This modelling needs to be done in a repetitive way so that learners are regularly reminded of what behaviour the teacher is looking for. This goes together with positive reinforcement for good performance and negative reinforcement for bad behaviour. The conducive learning environment created by

the teacher is in line with what Weegar & Pacis (2012) and Vygotsky (1978) stipulate as key learning needs.

According to Duchesne & McMaugh (2016) the strategy of rewarding learners for good behaviour and punishing them for bad behaviour is a good behavioural approach to manage learners' behaviour and encourage learning. Behaviourism is basically a cause-and-effect system with which external factors lead to response which becomes a learnt behaviour after some time.

It is necessary, therefore, to note that learning depends on prior arrangements made for it to take place. Conducive learning environments created by a teacher enable learners to understand what is taught. That is the behaviourist belief. Vygotsky believes that the teacher must be knowledgeable and be able to breakdown the content he or she teaches into small concepts learners can easily understand. This is the issue communities in Matabeleland provinces and Bulawayo are demanding and wishing for, teachers who are knowledgeable in Ndebele concepts and culture who can breakdown issues for children to understand easily when taught to them.

3.2.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Behaviourism

Behaviourism, as one of the many schools of psychology, has one main overall focus; it studies how a human being behaves. Watson (1913, p. 158), states that, "… psychology, as a behaviourist views it, is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is … prediction and control". A behaviourist views everything as having a set of behaviours and that thing should perform a certain role. Such views have strengths and weaknesses that are discussed below.

3.2.1.1 Strengths

According to Duchesne & McMaugh (2016) the main strength of behaviourist approaches to learning is that they provide teachers with effective ways to use to teach new skills and behaviours to young children and learners with intellectual disabilities and behaviour problems. Duchesne & McMaugh (2016) further add that most young learners, if not all, are yet to think independently and are passive participants who receive everything they learn from the teacher. It is, therefore, important to have teachers who are competent and proficient in the languages they

are teaching because these learners will not challenge the teacher even when the teacher makes a mistake as they are ‘only there to be fed’ by the teacher.

Stepich & Newby (1988) as cited in Ertmer & Newby, (2013) argue that the role of the teacher includes firstly, understanding that individual learners bring various learning experiences to school that can affect learning outcomes; secondly, determining the best way in which to organise and structure new information and thirdly, to provide feedback to the learners so that the newly learnt information is effectively absorbed by the learners. When learners go to school, one of the subjects they will do is their mother tongue which they have already acquired at home. Teachers have to build on this language foundation and that needs language competent and efficient teachers, particularly for the mother tongue.

The other strength of Behaviourism, according to Drew (2014), is that it can be a very effective teaching strategy as it gives clear rules to teachers on how to conduct the lesson and set expectations. Learners are shown the grammar in language teaching and so, they know what is expected of them. Expectations of the community and society at large are that learners should be taught manners at school and that they are taught the appropriate registers for different situations. While these aspects are taught at home, the school strengthens their importance in life. It is, therefore, important that a teacher should know the language well so that they become role models to the learners.

3.2.1.2 Weaknesses

Duchesne & McMaugh, (2016), state that as a weakness the behaviourists’ approach to teaching seems to neglect the contribution of cognitive skills that learners possess and bring into the learning process. Ertmer & Newby (2013) concur with this by stating that “Cognitive theories stress the acquisition of knowledge and internal mental structures . . . [they] focus on the conceptualization of students’ learning processes and address the issues of how information is received, organized, stored, and retrieved by the mind” (p. 51). If learners remain passive participants as the behaviourists claim, learning may not be achieved since learners have to conceptualise what they learn, organise, store and retrieve what they learnt. Cognitive skills are needed for these activities to take place but behaviourists do not consider them important.

3.3 Constructivism

Constructivism theory is a teaching and learning paradigm comprising two branches; cognitive constructivism (pioneered by Piaget) and social constructivism (founded by Vygotsky) and supported by other psychologists and sociologists. Maxim (2006) in Rowell & Palmer, (2007), says cognitive constructivists and social constructivists have similarities and differences in the type of involvement of both the teacher and the learners in the learning process. While social constructivists stress grouping together of learners with the knowledgeable adults or peers providing assistance to the less skilled, the cognitive constructivists describe a learner-centred environment where learners carry out activities that support their interests and needs. Cognitive constructivists actually promote an individualistic venture in learning.

Teaching in the classroom should, therefore, not be a telling activity but the teacher should appropriately guide learners in finding out information and meaning for themselves through encouraging them to first think about what they know about a new topic before embarking on new teaching. Learners go to school with their language and many life experiences in their language so; teachers should not treat them as passive participants but should engage them in an interactive manner of class activity. This is what Vygotsky (1978) describes as scaffolding and Liu and Zhang (2014, p. 137), explained as, "*Scaffolding Instruction" used* in constructivism "to illustrate vividly a kind of teaching mode" where "a teacher or more competent peer helps the student in his or her, Zone of Proximal Development", (the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he/she can do with help). "In this process, teachers guide the learners to master, construct and internalize the knowledge and skills, so that learners can pursue their cognitive activities at higher levels", (Liu & Zhang, 2014, p. 137).

According to Pritchard, (2009), constructivists view learning as a result of mental construction where learning takes place when new information is built onto an individual's already existing knowledge structure. The Constructivists' key argument in this theory is that, "… there is no such thing as knowledge "out there", independent of the knower but only knowledge we construct for ourselves as we learn is the true

knowledge", (Dagar & Yadav, 2016, p. 1). They further argue that if people believe that knowledge is gained through learning about the real world "out there", then the power of organising and presenting that knowledge is passed from the teacher to the learner. Constructivists claim that 'collaborative learning is facilitated and guided by the teacher', and should be seen as a process of peer interaction that is mediated and structured by the teacher and requires learners to develop teamwork skills and to see individual learning as related to the success of group learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Constructivist learning theory is built around a set of important features and the following are some of them. Pritchard (2009) cites Jonassen et al, (1999) as stating the following features to be considered:

- The construction of knowledge and not the reproduction of knowledge is paramount.

This means that, for the constructivists, the processes that the learner puts into place and uses matter, and that is what constructs knowledge rather than the fact of knowing something as an end product. In this way, the learner is actively involved in the learning process and is in control.

- Reflection on prior experience is encouraged.

Learners are required to relate the new knowledge they acquire to what they already know (existing knowledge and experience). This allows the acquired knowledge to integrate with what is already known thereby expanding the learner's framework of understanding. If learning is set in meaningful contexts, it becomes far more likely to engage learners than when it is set in remote contexts. The teacher is supposed to make learning meaningful by placing it in a setting with which children can identify. Relevant life experiences need to be used by the teacher to strengthen the learners' understanding. This needs a teacher who knows the norms, culture and general practices of the people whose language he or she teaching. Culture based concepts are usually difficult to teach if the teacher is not conversant with the culture of that people.

- Collaborative work for learning is encouraged.

Working with others allows additional and alternative perspectives to be considered when making personal conclusions. Different knowledge, points of view, and understanding can be given and considered before moving on. This is what can be called social interaction. Social interaction allows for discussion between pairs, groups and between teacher and learners which is essential for the effective development of understanding. Collaborative learning as a strategy is used by the teacher within groups of learners and aims to improve their learning experience and understanding of a learning subject – Ndebele. Each member of this group brings with him or her new knowledge to share with others. What is key in this learning strategy is that the teacher moderates and guides all contributions from all participants so that the desired outcomes are achieved. The Ndebele teacher listens to contributions by the class and aligns them with what is acceptable register for the age group of his or her class considering that there are some words not allowed to be used by children.

3.3.1 Cognitive Constructivism

The key proponent of this theory of learning is Piaget. Pritchard (2009, p. 19), says, “For Piaget, learning is a process of adjustment to environmental influences”. Piaget goes on to describe two basic processes which he says form the process of adjustment and these are *assimilation* and *accommodation*. According to Pritchard, (2009: 20) and Lindon, (2010: 29 - 30) Piaget’s theory of learning by children was based on the following:

> Assimilation is the process whereby new knowledge is incorporated into existing mental structures. The knowledge bank is increased to include new information.
>
> Accommodation is the process whereby mental structures have to be altered in order to cope with the new experience which has contradicted the existing model.
>
> Equilibration is the process of arriving at a stable state where there is no longer a conflict between new and existing knowledge.

Piaget’s idea of how children learn is explained and exemplified by Pritchard (2009), who says that when a concept is introduced to a child he or she links the description to an object he or she sees. After that the child thinks everything that fits the

description given before has the same name. Learning then is achieved if new information in the form of a simple explanation from a teacher or any adult will add the new information to the existing model and learning will have taken place. This can only be done by a person who knows the concepts and can explain clearly to the child. A knowledgeable peer or adult understands that the children will obviously generalise their knowledge and will use that kind of knowledge to develop their learning. For example, teaching homonyms becomes a big challenge for teachers who do not know the language properly. Connected to that is intonation which can actually change the meaning of a word or the whole sentence if the word is not properly pronounced. For example: the word *'amabele'* can mean crops or breasts depending on the tone of the reader or speaker. Another example of a challenging question is: *Ubuze kimi?* This question can mean 'Did you ask from me?' or 'Did you come to me?' It can be a statement: *Ubuze kimi,* meaning he or she asked from me. These examples strengthen the idea of having a mother tongue teaching young children so that they grasp a proper foundation of their language.

In constructivist learning learners draw on their experience of the world around them and learning is active mental work, not passive reception of teaching as expressed by behaviourists who say a learner is a passive participant who waits for the teacher to model laid down rules. The teacher facilitates learning by providing an environment that promotes discovery and assimilation or accommodation. When the learner makes a mistake, 'the more knowledgeable adult' (Pritchard, 2009, p. 20), corrects the mistake and the child learns from that. The correction made by the adult promotes assimilation or accommodation as the child discovers that it is not everything that looks the same that is called by the same name. It should be noted though that the child needs a knowledgeable person and environment conducive for discovery and learning, which can only be created or provided by someone who is competent in what is being taught.

Piaget's cognitive constructivism theory and Bloom's taxonomy (a step-by-step arrangement of cognitive skills that can be used by teachers and learners in the classroom to plan lessons, set tests and plan evaluation) can be used to complement each other in teaching. Bloom's taxonomy was originally published in

1956, and later developed and modified in 2002 by Krathwohl. Hutton-Prager, (2018, p. 9), says,

> "This most common form of Bloom's taxonomy is the cognitive domain, represented by lower order thinking (LOT) and higher order thinking (HOT) activities … This taxonomy is progressive in a similar manner as Piagetian thinking skills, and demonstrates that one must be comfortable with LOT before accessing HOT".

This means that the teacher may use this taxonomy for a particular topic in class. Activities are organised such that the first ones require learners to remember and understand new terminology and concepts that will later be applied to progressively more difficult activities. Hutton-Prager, (2018, p. 10), adds that the depth of low order thinking (LOT) and high order thinking (HOT) varies according to the intellectual capabilities of individual learners. Creating new knowledge for any concept taught depends on the capabilities of the learners. In such instances the Bloom's taxonomy can be used as a tool to demonstrate life-long learning; frame the teaching of a given topic; and frame the learning of a given topic for more independent learners. Its use depends on the teacher and the content to be taught. A competent and proficient teacher is needed to use this theory. It is even more important in language teaching because cognitive domains will only allow certain vocabulary for one group of learners yet the other group can be allowed to move on.

3.3.1.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Cognitive Constructivism

Cognitive constructivists believe that if a student is provided with the entire information in learning, his or her cognitive input for drawing conclusions and assimilating ideas is minimal. However, if the student is given a chance or challenged to connect ideas that will lead him to the correct conclusion, his cognitive input is considerably more important. Such type of learning enables the student to develop advanced learning abilities, such as critical thinking and the ability to connect a large number of different ideas about a common topic. Such beliefs have strengths and weaknesses as discussed below.

3.3.1.1.1 Strengths

As a learning theory, some of the strengths of cognitive constructivism are that:

- The constructivist notions lead to the development of comprehension abilities.
- It helps students develop comprehension abilities such as:
  - Developing vocabulary, which is an important aspect of language in both spoken and written forms,
  - Questioning skills, which is an important aspect of language learners must possess so as to use when soliciting for answers in discussions or when they have to interrogate someone and need to get answers. They also have to question themselves for the expansion of their own understanding and knowledge.
  - Summarising skills that are also important because a greater percentage of what they hear will need to be summarised before they communicate it to the next person.

According to Müller, (2004, p. 31 - 32), the other benefits of using constructivism in teaching are:

- Children learn and enjoy learning when they are actively involved in the given activities.

Given such freedom to be actively involved allows them to be independent and creative in their speech and presentation. They become confident as they can support their thoughts with their own experiences.

- Constructivism concentrates and stresses learning how to think and understand as opposed to memorisation.

When given a chance to discover and discuss things learners come to understand processes of doing things and, therefore, they do not rely on being told and memorising what they are told but they discover and understand the processes involved in learning. Usually, human beings forget what they heard but remember what they did.

- In a constructivist classroom, learners create principles that they can take or transfer to other learning settings.

Learners come to understand that vocabulary learnt in comprehension and language lessons can be applied or used in essay writing or speech presentation and so on. So, they learn to transfer their knowledge between aspects of life. Müller, (2004), states that constructivism promotes social and communication skills because of its creation of an environment that allows for the exchange of ideas. This system actually teaches learners collaboration and how to express themselves. These are skills that learners need in life after school as they will be exposed to real life situations that will need such skills.

3.3.1.1.2 Weaknesses

As a learning theory, some of the weaknesses of the cognitive constructivist theory are:

- It discards standardised curriculum in favour of a more personalised course of study based on what the student already knows.

This could lead some students to fall behind of others because they are allowed to move at their own pace and understanding.

- It also removes grading in the traditional way and instead places more value on students evaluating their own progress, which may lead to students falling behind.

This learning theory removes standardised evaluation or grading since learners are encouraged to evaluate their own progress in what knowledge they have acquired. Without standardised grading and evaluations teachers may not know that the student is struggling. Students may not be creating knowledge as the theory asserts, but just be copying what other students are doing.

- It can actually confuse and frustrate students because they may not have the ability to form relationships and abstracts between the knowledge they already have and the knowledge they are learning for themselves.

Learners cannot be left alone to learn because it is not guaranteed that they all have the ability to connect knew knowledge to the existing one. Once learners realise that they have not moved forward with their learning they get frustrated.

3.3.2 Social Constructivism

Vygotsky (1978) posited that knowledge construction was a result of the social intersection of people, interactions that involve sharing, comparing and debating among learners and mentors. Vygotsky further asserted that in that way, knowledge was mutually built and could not be isolated from social and cultural context. He goes on to state that, in the social constructivist model of learning, knowledge is constructed through interaction between teacher and learner. The role of the teacher in this model is to motivate the learner, be the resource person and guide the learner into discovering knowledge rather than being the giver of that knowledge with the learner just being a passive recipient. The learning process is learner centred, learner directed and it is collaborative.

In his social constructivism theory, Vygotsky incorporates history and culture as key aspects to the development of an individual hence his socio-cultural approach to learning. Vygotsky (1978) says that the individual's development is a result of his or her culture and development applies mainly to mental development, such as thought, language and reasoning process. He argues that culture gives the child the cognitive tools needed for development. Adults in the learner's environment are conduits for the tools of the culture, which include language, cultural history, social context, and more recently, electronic forms of information access. According to Fani & Ghaemi, (2011, p. 1550), "… these abilities were understood to develop through social interactions with others (especially parents) and therefore represented the shared knowledge of the culture".

According to Pritchard, (2009) social constructivism prioritises language in the process of intellectual development where dialogue is used to consider, share and develop ideas. This dialogue is usually with the more knowledgeable person and at times with peers. Prior knowledge plays a very big role in such dialogues. It is an individual's prior and current knowledge that forms the foundation of any contribution to a dialogue. It is with reference to existing knowledge and understanding that new ideas and understanding can be constructed during the dialogue. When we consider the more knowledgeable other, it is easy to assume that this person will be a teacher or a parent, but this need not be the case. More knowledgeable need not imply older nor in a position of responsibility for learning.

Social constructivism claims that most learning does not take place in school but any social interaction with anybody may lead to learning. The theory also postulates that the teacher usually takes the role of the more knowledgeable other in formal learning situations. In such formal situations the teacher stimulates dialogue and maintains its momentum and engages individuals and groups in dialogue and supports the development of understanding. As a result of his beliefs in the learning process, Vygotsky introduced what he called *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)* to explain how learning occurs when learners work together. Vygotsky (1978) says that in social constructivist classrooms collaborative learning is a process of peer interaction that is mediated and structured by the teacher.

3.3.2.1 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

According to Dolya, (2007), Vygotsky believed that a teacher has an important role in the child's education. Vygotsky as cited in Dolya, (2007, p. 9) states that, "In developing children's abilities, teachers can guide them towards performing actions or tasks which are just beyond their current capacity. With such guidance, children can perform beyond their own ability – within certain limits". Dolya, (2007), goes on to say that Vygotsky defined these limits as the Zone of Proximal Development, meaning the "difference between the level of solved tasks that can be performed with adult guidance and help, and the level of independently solved tasks". The most effective teaching, therefore, is aimed at the higher level of the child's ZPD, the edge of challenge.

In his description of zone of proximal development, Pritchard, (2009, p. 25), says,

> The zone of proximal development is a theoretical space of understanding … In the zone of proximal development, a learner is able to work effectively, but only with support. … The process of learning involves moving into and across the zone and looking forward to the next level of understanding, which will involve a similar journey through a newly created zone.

Pritchard (2009) goes on to say that passing through the zone of proximal development is a process achieved through the assistance of another. Usually, the role is fulfilled by a teacher but other people or materials can play that role as well. When planning work for learners, a teacher needs to take into account those learners' current state of understanding so as to plan accordingly and appropriately.

Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) defined ZPD as, “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers”. Language and culture therefore become the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality and the two play essential roles both in human intellectual development, and in how humans perceive the world. Vygotsky (1978), as cited in Dolya, (2007, p. 8), further states that, “Language gives children a powerful tool that helps them solve difficult tasks, inhibit impulsive actions, plan solutions to problems before executing them, and ultimately, control their own behavior”.

Language is an important part of our lives. It is much more than just a means of communication; it is an inseparable part of a people’s culture and the debate whether language influences people’s thought process or it is people’s culture that influences the language is not up for debate now. The fact remains that language and culture are closely connected. Quoting Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan-born American novelist and physician, Holmes, (2015, p. 1), says, “If culture was a house, then language was the key to the front door, to all the rooms inside.” This further shows the relationship that exists between language and culture; it is not possible to talk about one and not the other, the two are inseparable. Holmes (2015), goes on to say that culture is a historically transmitted system of symbols, meanings, and norms, meaning that knowing a language automatically enables someone to identify with others who speak the same language hence share with that group the beliefs, practices and taboos of the group.

Ndebele speaking learners arrive at school with immense potential, strengths to build on, and dreams for their future. It is their teacher’s job, as education professionals, to help them realise that potential and to provide them with the right learning opportunities so that they can address some academic content easily. The ZPD (as introduced above) is a future-oriented approach to learning that begins from an understanding of students. It is a teacher’s expertise, knowledge, and pedagogical action that is responsible for making every Ndebele learner realise his or her potential. All that is important for the teacher in such learning is the deliberate,

thoughtful planning and scaffolding of tasks that the teacher provides in the classroom interactions so that the learners are guided through their linguistic and academic zone of proximal development, learning grade-level content and developing language in the process. Below is an illustration of how this ZPD works.

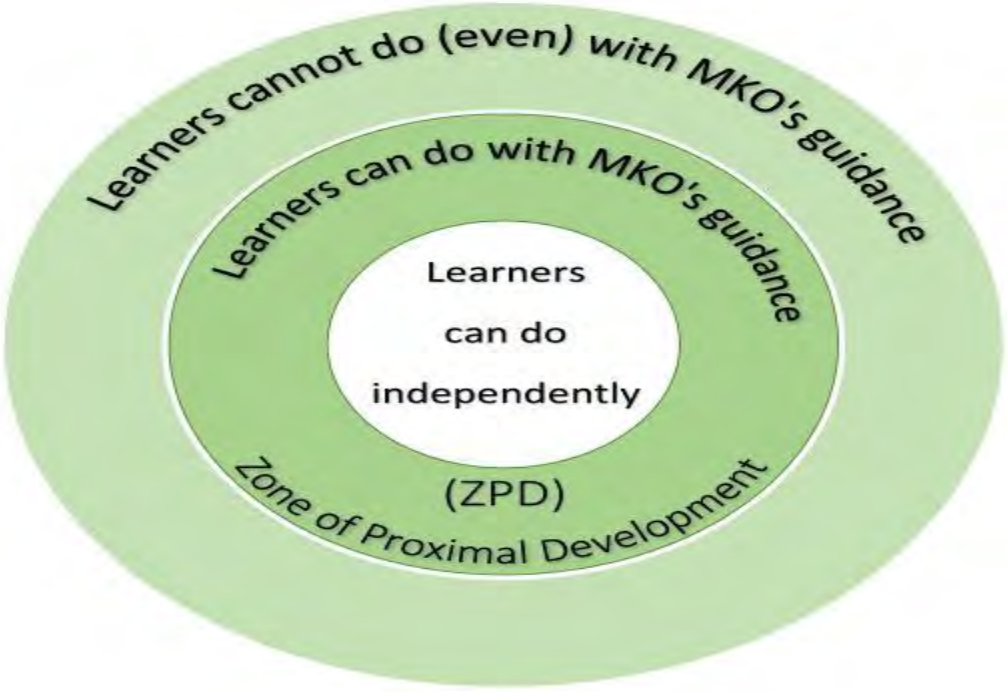


Figure 3.1 Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

According to Sideeg, (2016),

1. The inner white circle represents what learners can do on their own.
2. The middle circle is the zone of proximal development and represents what learners can learn with the guidance of the more knowledgeable others.
3. The outer circle represents what learners cannot do alone even with the guidance of the more knowledgeable others.

For Vygotsky (1978), much important learning by children occurs through social interaction with a skilful tutor. The tutor may model behaviours and/or provide verbal instructions for the child. This interaction and behaviour modelling become cooperative or collaborative dialogue. The child seeks to understand the actions or instructions provided by the tutor (often the parent or teacher) then internalises the information, using it to guide or regulate their own performance. Looking at this explanation of how children learn, Fani & Ghaemi, (2011, p. 1550) state that "As this

definition was created with child development in mind, it includes “adult guidance”. Vygotsky also allowed that more capable peers may provide the nudge of assistance in the ZPD that showed a child’s potential. This connects well with Skinner’sbehaviourismtheory’s view of knowledge that says knowledge is a repertoire of behavioural responses to environmental stimuli. The home is the first institution that teaches a child its mother tongue. Members of the family are the first teachers of that mother tongue and the behaviourists’ theory of learning predominates this stage where the child has to imitate what is taught. The school is the next institution that a child encounters after home that develops the child’s grasp of the mother tongue as the teacher takes over from parents and other members of the family.

While both branches of constructivists believe that children develop knowledge through active participation in their learning, Piaget believed that cognitive development was a product of the mind “achieved through observation and experimentation whereas Vygotsky viewed it as a social process, achieved through interaction with more knowledgeable members of the culture” (Remmel, 2008, p. 80).

According to Weegar & Pacis, (2012, p. 6 - 7), Piaget’s theory of cognitive development suggests that,

> … humans are unable to automatically understand and use information that they have been given, because they need to “construct” their own knowledge through prior personal experiences to enable them to create mental images. Therefore, the primary role of the teacher should be to motivate the children to create their own knowledge through their personal experiences.

This relates to what Vygotsky says in his zone of proximal development that, more capable peers may provide the nudge of assistance in the ZPD. It also connects with behaviourism in that Skinner (1974) says, “… given the right environmental influences, all learners acquire identical understanding and that all students can learn”. This all comes down to who the teacher is, or the significant other, as Vygotsky puts it.

Both Piaget and Vygotsky (pioneers of constructivist theory) believed that individuals actively construct their own knowledge and understanding with Vygotsky stressing the importance of the social interaction in which an individual participates; while Piaget stressed the inner motivation to balance new information with existing knowledge and understanding (Pritchard, 2009).

3.3.2.2 Social Constructivism in the Classroom

As noted earlier, social constructivism as a learning theory purports that all knowledge is constructed socially and it forms a part of the society-centred field of constructivism. Mutekwe et al. (2013, p. 60), say,

> Vygotsky's conception of mediation in the social construction of knowledge holds that, language is a dominant psychological tool for seeing; talking, acting, thinking as the mediator (teacher, parent, book, calculator or a more competent peer) scaffolds others toward higher mental functions. It is used to accomplish ways of representing ideas, interpreting and evaluating events and experiences and constructing explanations.

Mutekwe, et al (2013) emphasise the importance of language in learning as one expresses themselves through language. In teaching, it is important for the teacher to understand this Vygotskian principle so as to be productive in the teaching and learning process.

According to Watson (2001), teachers use some of the following ways to promote learning and acquisition of knowledge.

- Teachers make use of constructivist principles to promote and accept student self-sufficiency and inventiveness while also encouraging students to become more resourceful through the use of constructivist principles.
- Teachers using constructivist methods enquire about the understanding of the concepts by the students before imparting them more information about the concepts.
- In a constructivist classroom, teachers encourage students to work in groups and get involved in discussions and dialogues with both the teacher and amongst each other.

- Constructivist teachers encourage students to verbally communicate through asking thoughtful and open-ended questions. Students are encouraged to raise their difficulties and problems instead of listening to the teacher and taking down notes.
- Constructivist teachers always give students extra time to analyse the questions, seeking answers and explanations and then giving the response. When the students are analysing the questions, the teacher waits and keeps up their patience.
- Constructivist teachers allow time for students to build relationships within the classroom settings for it is important to build up associations and correlations with the teacher as well as with other students.

3.3.2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Social Constructivism

The theory of social constructivism states that people are only able to learn by making use of the previous social experiences in their lives and use new information in association with their experience to create new mental representations of this information. This theory has been applied in education because it focuses on engaging the students to participate actively in the lessons so that they are able to construct solid ideas about the main focus points. Such beliefs have strengths and weaknesses as discussed below.

3.3.2.3.1 Strengths

The role of social interaction in the process of co-constructing knowledge is quite important as it helps learners to transform their lower mental functions to higher ones particularly if the mediation is carried out in the learners' zone of proximal developments. According to Mutekwe et al, (2013); Taber, (2006), the social constructivist epistemology, culture and the social context in which learners operate, model the way learners learn. From a constructivist view point knowledge is indeed a social construct and not a given entity. This concept is clear from Piagetian and Vygotskian perspectives of constructivism that three elements are crucial for the effective social construction of knowledge in educational environments and these are: active educators, active learners and active socio-cultural environment. If one

is to consider the above perspectives of constructivist knowledge acquisition the following are the strengths of social constructivism in education.

- Knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received from the teacher or any outsider.
- Learning is done by the learner and not imposed on him or her.
- Learners come to the learning situation with existing ideas on previously acquired knowledge and some of these ideas are unstable while others are deeply rooted and well developed.
- Learners have their own individual ideas about the world. Some of these ideas are socially and culturally accepted and shared, and they are often part of the language, supported by metaphors. These ideas they possess often function as tools with which to understand many phenomena.
- Knowledge is represented in the brain as conceptual structures, and it is possible to model and describe these in some detail.
- Teaching has to take the learner's existing ideas seriously if they want to change or challenge these.
- Although knowledge in one sense is personal and individual, the learners construct their knowledge through their interaction with the physical world, collaboratively in social settings and in a cultural and linguistic environment.

3.3.2.3.2 Weaknesses

One main weakness of the Social Constructivist theory, according to Mutekwe et al. (2013), is that it over-empowers learners and sort of places them at the same level with their educators in the process of co-constructing knowledge. This tends to undermine the role and authority of the educator and also erodes the educator's loco-parentis role as the learners view the educator as an equal partner in the co-construction of knowledge. When learners view an educator as an equal partner, levels of respect and discipline drop resulting in disciplinary problems. However, I tend to differ with these scholars about their assessment of this relationship. I believe that lines of operation continue to be clear for learners even if a teacher treats then as 'equals' because the two parties know the truth. If such a relationship is based on honest respect, that respect cannot be destroyed by how a lesson is

conducted. Other weaknesses of social constructivism as stated by Taber (2006) and Mutekwe et al., (2013, p. 61), are:

- Constructivism assumes the truth of its root proposition.
- Constituents of constructivism use logic and persuasion but disprove the truth of logic; the theorist falls prey to his theory (c.f. White 2007: 82).
- Constituents of constructivism attempt to include worldviews in their analysis (Berger & Luckman specifically), but fail to see their own perspective as a worldview, and removes constructivism from the criticism it levies on others (Naugle 2002: 233).
- Berger's constructivism conflates a difference in representation with a difference in the thing represented (that is, he mistakes "different worlds" for "differences in belief about the world").
- Constructivism is "hugely empowering. If we can be said to know up front that any item of knowledge only has that status because it gets a nod from our contingent social values, then any claim to knowledge can be dispatched if we happen not to share the values on which it allegedly depends" (Boghossian 2007). For the postmodern thinker "grammar is power: whoever controls the rules and ordinary usages of a language controls what can be thought" (White 2006: 99).

3.4 Comparing and Contrasting Piaget and Vygotsky – Summary

According to Pritchard, (2009), both Piaget (a Cognitive Constructivist) and Vygotsky (a Social Constructivist) believed that children learn through being active. The only difference between these two great scholars was that Piaget said children learn through operating on their own as 'lone scientists' while Vygotsky said that they learn through interaction with the significant others who happen to be parents, teachers or peers who are more knowledgeable than them.

While both scholars are correct in their claims, Vygotsky's claim that interaction plays a great role in children when learning a language is more plausible. There are language aspects that children may not learn on their own if they operate as 'lone scientists' as Piaget wants us to believe. Children interact with parents, siblings and other people at home before they attend school. At this level they acquire language

as a means of communication and expression but do not learn the structure and grammar of their language which they, then, go on to learn at school. Ndebele is no exception. This is why mother languages are taught at school as subjects. Richards & Rodgers (2014) in their 'Direct Method' of teaching say, "In practice it 'Direct Method' stood for the following principles and procedures:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
2. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
3. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
4. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasised (p. 12).

These principles are seen in the following guidelines for teaching oral language:

- Never translate: demonstrate
- Never explain: act
- Never imitate mistakes: correct
- Never go too fast: keep the pace of the student.

The above method of language teaching is a typical example of the interaction that Vygotsky talks about. In this way the teacher, who is the 'knowledgeable other', demonstrates for the learners to follow, acts to show the learners how (what they need to do) is done and corrects their mistakes. These are all done in line with the four principles outlined above. Correct pronunciation and grammar, as stated above, are key aspects of language teaching. Ndebele uses a lot of homographs and, therefore, the issue of pronunciation becomes paramount when teaching concepts that involve such words. Teaching both speech and listening comprehension will need accuracy of this aspect meaning that a knowledgeable other will be the most appropriate role model.

Piaget believed that understanding could be inhibited if a learner is shown how to do something rather than being encouraged to discover on their own. Vygotsky believed that learning is a socially mediated activity with emphasis placed on the

role of the teacher or ‘more knowledgeable other’ as a ‘scaffolder’. According to him, the teacher is a facilitator who provides the challenges that the child needs for achieving more (Pritchard, 2009).This study will follow Vygotsky’s thinking.

Vygotsky says development is fostered by collaboration (in the ZPD) and not strictly age related, as claimed by Piaget in Pritchard (2009). He goes on to say that development is also an internalisation of social experience hence children can be taught concepts that are just beyond their level of development with appropriate support. While it may be accepted that there are certain concepts that cannot be understood by children at a certain age, there are also arguments contrary to that. Vygotsky (1978) says that what can be learnt by a child depends on the child’s circle of interaction. this circle of the child’s interaction should be the knowledgeable others from whom the child can learn. A teacher who knows the learner’s language is the better person to teach the child. The idea of deploying non-Ndebele speakers in the Matabeleland and Bulawayo schools defeats the concept argued by Vygotsky. It is, therefore, not necessarily age that determines what a child can learn or not learn but who teaches the child or with whom the child interacts.

While Piaget’s claims that the teacher should always provide learning materials for the child Vygotsky’s says that what a child can do with an adult today, they can do alone the next day. The interaction with the knowledgeable others makes it possible for the child to learn ‘today’ and remember that ‘tomorrow’. This then means that the foundation of the child’s learning is very important. A knowledgeable teacher is better placed to teach a child today to lay a strong foundation for the child to remember what was learnt. The teacher has to choose appropriate teaching and learning materials for the learners and that can only be done by a knowledgeable person. The teaching of learners in Matabeleland and Bulawayo at primary school needs this knowledgeable teacher who can choose appropriate tools for the acquisition process to be achieved.

In conclusion, Piaget argued that a child learned to think first, and then from that thought, spoke; meaning that thought preceded language but Vygotsky believed that thought and speech were separate processes that merged when the child was around three years old. To him (Vygotsky) cognitive development occurred as

language was internalised. The language referred to here is not just what the child can speak, but what the community of adults around the child speaks. This leads to the conclusion that the socio-cultural environment shapes children's cognitive development and the way they understand the world. Children spend more time at school than at home hence their circle of interaction at school becomes very important. The teacher, as one person considered to be the oasis of knowledge, should be a good role model to guide the learners through their academic desires. Piaget asserted that cognitive development occurred before learning and learning had to be initiated by the child hence forming the basis for Discovery Learning but contrary to that, Vygotsky believed that children developed cognitively when they were assisted by a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO: parent, teacher, older sibling or peers) to learn and practise new skills in a supported environment. This understanding led to Vygotsky's greatest theory - the Zone of Proximal Development.

Table 3.1 below shows the three main learning theories and each theory's views on four different categories of learning, that is, view of knowledge, view of learning, view of motivation, and implications for teaching. All three learning theories converge on the role of the teacher when it comes to their implications for teaching. Behaviourists say, "Correct behavioural responses are transmitted by the teacher and absorbed by the students" (GSI Teaching and Resource Center 2021). The Cognitive Constructivists say, "The teacher facilitates learning by providing an environment that promotes discovery and assimilation or accommodation". Finally, the Social Constructivists say, "Collaborative learning is facilitated and guided by the teacher. Group work is encouraged" (GSI Teaching and Resource Center 2021). It is clear from the three theories that the teacher is *"the significant other"* (GSI Teaching and Resource Center 2021) who has the knowledge to be transmitted to the learners. It, therefore, follows that if the teacher is not competent enough to plan and deliver good lessons the learners will not learn much. However, the teacher is not the only key piece of the puzzle here, but there are other issues involved. The competence of the teacher should be assessed on what they have to teach, that is, the curriculum, their training at college or university, their educational background as well as the environment of the school.

Richards & Rodgers, (2014, p. 353), state that,

> Teacher training, teaching experience, as well as the teacher's personal philosophy and understanding serve as a source of principles and practical knowledge that can be applied across different situations as well as in specific situations, such as when teaching large classes, teaching young learners or adults, teaching mixed-ability classes, or teaching specific content such as grammar or reading skills.

Although the learning theories discussed above do not prescribe who the teacher should be, or the qualities of the teacher using anyone of these theories in class, the discussions indicate that the teacher should be both competent and proficient in the language they teach. The transition between home and school, when the learner attends school for the first time, is a crucial period in the learner's academic life from the first grade onwards. Skinner (1974), talks about correct behavioural responses being transmitted by the teacher and absorbed by the students in the teaching and learning process. This is a continuation of the imitation learning done at home before the child attends school. The cognitive constructivists' theory says that the teacher facilitates learning by providing an environment that promotes discovery and the social constructivists say that collaborative learning is facilitated and guided by the teacher. The teacher who knows the learners' language may be the most suitable for the job as work given to learners connects with their culture and language. A mother tongue speaker of the learners' language is the better person to teach at primary school. With this not happening in the Matabeleland and Bulawayo schools one is safe to conclude that the teaching of Ndebele at those primary schools does not help the development of the Ndebele language, but instead teachers working there are destroying the Ndebele language because learners lack the language development they deserve.

Table 3.1 Summary of Learning Theories

	Behaviourism	Cognitive Constructivism	Social Constructivism
View of knowledge	Knowledge is a repertoire of behavioural responses to environmental stimuli.	Knowledge systems of cognitive structures are actively constructed by learners based on pre-existing cognitive structures.	Knowledge is constructed within social contexts through interactions with a knowledge community.
View of learning	Passive absorption of a predefined body of knowledge by the learner. Promoted by repetition and positive reinforcement.	Active assimilation and accommodation of new information to existing cognitive structures. Discovery by learners is emphasised.	Integration of students into a knowledge community. Collaborative assimilation and accommodation of new information.
View of motivation	Extrinsic, involving positive and negative reinforcement.	Intrinsic; learners set their own goals and motivate themselves to learn.	Intrinsic and extrinsic. Learning goals and motives are determined both by learners and extrinsic rewards provided by the knowledge community.
Implications for Teaching	Correct behavioural responses are transmitted by the teacher and absorbed by the students.	The teacher facilitates learning by providing an environment that promotes discovery and assimilation/accommodation.	Collaborative learning is facilitated and guided by the teacher. Group work is encouraged.

Courtesy of Graduate Student Instructor (GSI Teaching and Resource Center 2021) Berkeley University of California

The above table shows different language learning theories with different views of knowledge, learning, motivation in learning and also the implications for learning. Constructivism, as a learning theory, is associated with language teaching and learning situations. The theory assumes that learning is a process of structuring meaning learners are actively involved in what they learn, and that a language teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a person who knows all there is to know

about the language or learning. Teaching is a process of showing or helping someone to learn how to do something through giving instructions, guiding and providing the learner with knowledge causing that learner to know or understand better.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the study's research paradigm, approach, design, population and sampling strategies, data analysis procedure and issues of trustworthiness and research ethics. According to McMillan & Schumacher, (2010), research methodology is, "… a systematic, purposeful and planned way to collect data on a particular research problem". Accordingly, this chapter introduces and explains the rationale for the research methods chosen to provide answers to the following research question and sub-research questions:

- Research Question:
  What does the teaching of Ndebele as a subject and language reveal about the socio-cultural and political ideologies underpinning language planning in Zimbabwe?

- Sub Research Questions:

a) What socio-cultural, political and economic value is attached to the teaching of Ndebele in Zimbabwe?
b) Based on the syllabus, what linguistic and socio-linguistic knowledge and skills are meant to be developed through the teaching of Ndebele at primary school in Zimbabwe?
c) What qualifications are critical for Ndebele primary school teachers in Zimbabwe?
d) What considerations are made in deploying Ndebele teachers at primary school to ensure that the envisaged language skills of the learners are properly developed?

The following section discusses the setting of the study and after it follows the research paradigm, research approaches, research design and sampling together with the data collection tools.

4.2 Research Sites

I conducted this study in three provinces of Zimbabwe namely, Matabeleland North, Bulawayo and Matabeleland South. Of the country's ten provinces, I chose these three because it is where Ndebele is the predominant language, which, according to the Education Act of 1987 and other follow-up papers on language policy, is supposed to be the medium of instruction at school at least up to grade3. All the schools chosen in the districts of these provinces teach Ndebele as one of the (subjects) indigenous languages, as detailed in the constitution of the country. Figure 4.1 below shows the provinces mentioned and in each one of them I sampled the following: 3 districts in Bulawayo, 3 districts in Matabeleland North and 4 districts in Matabeleland South.

BULAWAYO
Bulawayo Central District
Khami District
Reigate District

MATABELELAND NORTH
Bubi District
Lupane District
Nkayi District

MATABELELAND SOUTH
Gwanda District
Bulilima District
Mangwe District
Umzingwane District

The 3 provinces and 10 districts where the research was done.

Figure 4.1 Map of Zimbabwe showing all 10 provinces including the three provinces where data was collected
Source: Webster Mavhu - 2014

4.3 Research Paradigm

My research is located in the constructivist paradigm whose approach to research intends to understand "the world of human experience" suggesting that "reality is socially constructed", Mertens, (2005), in Mackenzie & Knipe, (2006). My research

topic deals with language acquisition planning in Zimbabwe and looks at the teaching of Ndebele, one of the indigenous languages that the constitution lists as one of the sixteen “officially recognised” languages. Every subject taught at school is taught for a purpose hence my sub-research questions try to establish the status of Ndebele, as one of the indigenous languages, and their teaching at school.

4.4 Research Approaches

The choice of a research approach is based on the researcher’s personal experiences, the nature of the research problem and the audiences for the study. There are three main research approaches that researchers use when carrying out research and these are the pragmatic approach to research, quantitative research and qualitative research. In this study I used both the quantitative and qualitative approaches for the advantages they each provide in research.

Since my study is rooted in the constructivism philosophical paradigm, my research adopted more of the qualitative approach. The reason for doing so was because the qualitative approach research provides an in-depth understanding of the ways people come to understand, act and manage their day-to-day situations in particular settings. This approach uses words and images to help us understand more about “why” and “how” something is happening and, sometimes “what” is happening. According to, Creswell and Poth, (2018), use of this approach intends gaining a deeper understanding of people’s experiences. That suits the intention of the study in trying to understand the processes of language acquisition planning in Zimbabwe in the case of teaching Ndebele. Qualitative research often involves a smaller number of participants (hence the small sample I chose) and for the purposes of statistical analysis or making generalisations from the results, a large number of people is not needed, (Choy, 2014).

The quantitative research is a research approach in the positivist/post-positivist paradigm involving collecting and converting data into numerical form for statistical calculations leading to conclusions, (Creswell and Poth, 2018). I used it to quantify the human resources deployed in the selected areas of the study. From the established numbers of teachers deployed in the areas of study it could, therefore, be possible to test the certain claims around human resource provision as a critical aspect of language acquisition planning.

The qualitative research approach was chosen as the main research method for the following strengths:

a) The researchers are free to go beyond the initial response that the participant gives and allows subsequent questions to be tailored to the responses just given, (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

b) This approach gives participants a certain degree of freedom and permits spontaneity rather than forcing them to select from a set of pre-determined responses, (Creswell, 2014).

c) Yauch & Steudel, (2003), in Choy, (2014), say that the primary strength of the qualitative approach is its ability to probe for underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions that cannot be unearthed by other research approaches.

d) Choy, (2014: 102), says, “The other great benefit with a qualitative approach is that the inquiry is broad and open-ended, allowing the participants to raise issues that matter most to them”.

e) According to Creswell and Poth, (2018; 81), “… in qualitative research, researchers often collect data when participants are in their natural setting”.

This study seeks to get answers to questions in 4.1 above about the teaching of Ndebele in the three mentioned provinces. I chose the qualitative research method as a suitable research method for this study because it is a paradigm that seeks to understand a phenomenon under study from the experiences of the participants, (Adom et al., 2016). From what was said by the participants I concluded that they, as individuals, wished to teach the indigenous languages as they believed those indigenous languages were part of their lives. They believed the indigenous languages carry the culture of a people that has to be taught to the learners at school as part of the curriculum. Unfortunately, the teachers do not have a say in the designing of the syllabus and they are not crucial stakeholders in the education system beyond their duty of teaching. By the end of the research, I was able, based on my findings, to attach meaning to the findings.

The qualitative approach is generally used in research to understand views and perceptions of the population. It offers visions to different problems and helps in

developing concepts or theories for further potential research. The following are the reasons why I chose the qualitative approach as a suitable research method for this study.

- Studying participants under their real-world conditions (at their schools) gave me an advantage of seeing them performing in their everyday roles.
- Participants in this study freely gave their views and feelings about the teaching of Ndebele as one of the indigenous languages, as well as teaching other indigenous languages, enhancing the main purpose of the study which is to capture the participants' perspectives since those perspectives are the major purpose of a qualitative study.

Creswell and Poth (2018) go on to say the researcher in the qualitative approach collects data himself or herself through examining documents, observing behaviour, and interviewing the participants, which is what I did for this study, collecting data from teachers at their schools. The participants were sampled teachers whom I asked to complete the questionnaire as they are the ones who teach and are the ones 'affected' by the results after examinations. I collected the data myself and so, I got first hand reactions about the teaching of Ndebele as opposed to being told by another researcher.

According to Karl, (1992), a questionnaire is a data collecting instrument consisting of a series of questions administered to receive a response from individuals. Kumar, (2011), says a questionnaire is a written list of questions, whose answers are recorded by participants after reading and interpreting those questions. It is similar to an interview with the only difference being that with the interview, the interviewer who asks the questions (sometimes explains those questions, if necessary) and records the given answers. A questionnaire is designed to collect data from a group, in the absence of the researcher, and since there is no one to explain the meaning of the questions to the participants, as is the case with the interview, it is important that the questions are clear and easy to understand, (Kumar, 2011). A questionnaire has three kinds of questions used. These are; fixed-alternative (multiple choice questions), scale (rating items on a scale, or to rank items in order of importance or preference), and open-ended (questions that allow respondents to answer openly based on their complete knowledge, feeling, and understanding. Response to this

question(s) is not limited to a set of options). While a questionnaire is more of a quantitative data collecting instrument it can be used in qualitative research. When used in qualitative research it becomes a series of written questions designed to give respondents a chance to explain their perspectives or experiences. These types of questions should be specific enough that your participants have a clear understanding of what information you want them to provide, but also allow room for them to generate their own responses that provide in-depth information about them, their lives, and their experiences. Using a questionnaire as a data collecting instrument does not mean it is a perfect tool. All instruments have their strengths and weaknesses.

The weaknesses of qualitative approach are that, “Firstly, the process is time-consuming, and secondly, a particular, important issue could be overlooked”, (Yauch & Steudel, 2003), in Choy, (2014: 102). They also state that, “…because qualitative inquiry is generally open-ended, the participants have more control over the content of the data collected”, (Choy, 2014). Daniel, (2016), says that non-use of numbers by qualitative researchers makes it difficult and impossible to simplify findings and observations. Knowing the above stated weaknesses of the qualitative approach helped me prepare ways of dealing with them when they arose. Dealing with many participants is indeed time-consuming and so, I had a small but representative sample to deal with weakness one stated above. To deal with weakness two, the freedom given to the participants to express themselves on matters of teaching Ndebele as one of the indigenous languages eliminated the chance of overlooking any issue about indigenous language teaching and the personnel employed to do so. The open-endedness of the approach did not cause a problem but was a ‘weakness’ turned strength because it helped me collect as much information as was possible from the participants as they expressed themselves freely. For the last weakness about non-use of numbers I used the quantitative approach to simplify the numbers.

4.5 Research Design

According to Creswell, (2012), a research design is a specific procedure involved in the research process: data collection, data analysis, and report writing. In this research, I used the ethnographic research design (a qualitative research method

for collecting data through observation and interviews. Collected data are used to draw conclusions about the issue under study) as it gave me direct access to the culture and practices of my participants, which can be interpreted as the language educational practices, how teachers interpret Ndebele language curriculum, and develop relevant teaching plans, as well as assessment. It gave me first-hand experience about the behaviour and interactions of my participants within a particular context.

Having chosen the research methods design I had to decide on the selection of participants, which is a key step in research. The selection of participants depends on who can give enough and valuable information on the topic under study. The choice of such participants is what is referred to as population and sample as discussed below.

4.6 Population and Sampling

These are terms used in research referring to a complete set of elements, which could be people or objects that possess the same characteristics and a process of choosing a group of people, events, behaviours, or other elements with which to conduct a study respectively. These terms are defined fully below.

4.6.1 Population

When carrying out a research, researchers talk about “a population and a sample”. A population is a group of people or certain objects with a specialised set of characteristics. Creswell, (2012: 142) says, “A population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristic”. Since my research is about teaching Ndebele in primary schools in the three mentioned provinces, my population, therefore, are the teachers at the primary school teachers plus the heads of school from 27 schools and 243 teachers in the three provinces and the selected districts and schools.

4.6.2 Sample

A sample is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalising about the target population, Creswell, (2012). My sample, in this research, is 135 teachers and 27 heads of school in the selected schools and districts of the three mentioned provinces. The 135 teachers sampled comprise 1 teacher per school for the following grades, 1 – 3 and 6 – 7. Grade 1 – 3 teachers

were sampled because they teach the early grades in which learners are supposed to be taught in their mother tongue. Grade 6 – 7 teachers were sampled because they teach the last two grades at school with grade 7 writing national examinations, (see tables in section 5.4.3). A sample, therefore, is a smaller version of a larger group or a subset with the characteristics of a larger population that the researcher selects for the study. According to Creswell, (2012: 142),

> A sample is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population. … For instance, you might select a sample of high school teachers (the sample) from the population of all teachers in high schools in one city (the population).

Samples are used in statistical testing when population sizes are too large for the test to include all possible members. However, a sample should represent the population as a whole and not reflect any bias toward a specific attribute, (Kenton, 2019). Figure 4.2 below shows the three concepts of population, sample and individuals (case or element).

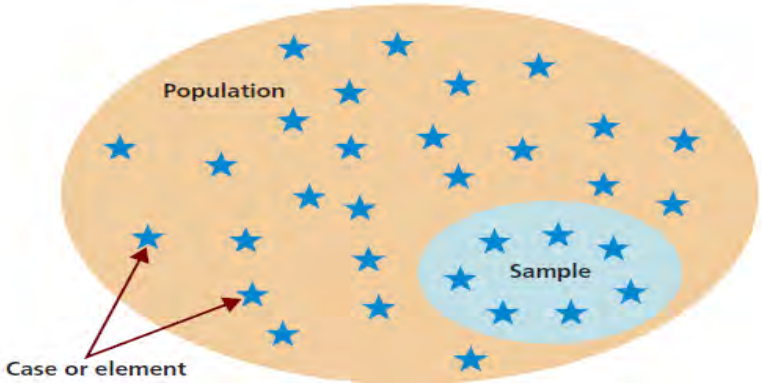


Figure 4.2 Illustration of Population, Sample and Individual Cases

4.6.3 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting units (cases or elements as presented in Figure 4.2) of the same characteristics such as teachers, doctors or footballers from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may generalise our results back to the population from which they each belong. According to Majid (2018: 3), “Sampling is the process of selecting a statistically

representative sample of individuals from the population of interest". Bhat, (2020), says that sampling saves time and is a cost-effective method used by researchers to collect information from few individuals instead of the entire population. Researchers do their sampling in different ways for different reasons and here, below, I will present how and why I did my sampling.

4.7 Sampling Methods

There are several sampling techniques that are divided into two groups as shown in Figure 4.3 below: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling methods are more expensive and time-consuming compared to non-probability sampling. With non-probability (non-random) sampling, some individuals have no chance of being selected because the researcher does not start with a complete sampling frame. Besides the weaknesses of non-probability sampling methods, they are useful for exploratory research and hypothesis generation and are cheaper and more convenient to use, (Barratt & Shantikumar, 2020).

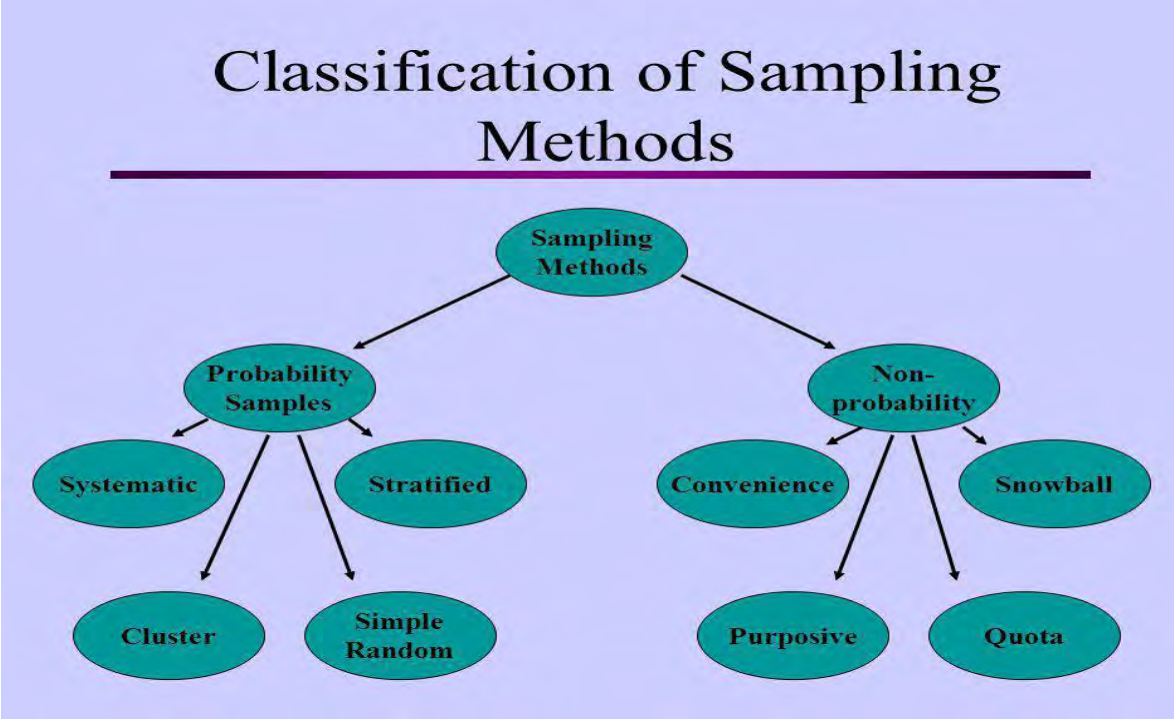


Figure 4.3 Diagram Showing Sampling Methods ***(Adapted from slideplayer.com)***

For this study, I chose the non-probability sampling method that is explained in detail below.

4.7.1 Non-probability Sampling

This sampling method involves a collection of data based on a researcher's sample selection capabilities not on a fixed selection process. The non-probability method of research has four types of sampling (see Figure 4.3) and of those four I chose to use Convenience Sampling for my research. For effective collection of data another type of sampling was used together with Convenience Sampling, the Cluster Sampling, discussed in 4.7.3 below.

4.7.2 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling (also known as Haphazard Sampling or Accidental Sampling) is defined by Etikan et al., (2016: 2), as,

> … a type of non-probability or non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study.

As its name probably says, it was convenient for me to use because it is affordable, easy to use and the participants were readily available. Barratt & Shantikumar, (2020: 3), say, "Convenience sampling is perhaps the easiest method of sampling, because participants are selected based on availability and willingness to take part". Bhat (2020: 5), says, "This method is depended on the ease of access to subjects such as surveying customers at a mall or passers-by on a busy street". I used this method because of the proximity of the research sites and that it saved me a lot of time on travelling. Its main disadvantage is that, the results are prone to significant bias because those who volunteer to take part in the research may be different from those who choose not to and the sample may not be representative of other characteristics, such as age or gender, (Barratt & Shantikumar, 2020), or mother tongue in case of this study. It should be noted that it was not possible to eliminate such a weakness since participants could not be forced to partake in the research.

4.7.3 Cluster Sampling

This is one of the four forms of probability sampling that the researcher chooses and uses in two or more stages because the population is extremely large. A cluster sample is defined by Jackson (2011) and Sharma (2017), as a research technique in which clusters of participants that represent the population are identified and put together as a sample. Fleetwood, (2020: 2), defines it as, "a sampling method where multiple clusters of people are created from a population where they are indicative of homogeneous characteristics and have an equal chance of being a part of the sample". Since this research comprises 27 government primary schools conveniently sampled for easy accessibility from Bulawayo where the researcher was based, a combination of convenience sampling and cluster sampling (also known as multistage cluster sampling) was used leading to two smaller samples – 13 rural government schools and 14 urban government schools.

Table 4.1 Number of Participating Districts and Schools

PROVINCE	Total No. of Districts	Total No. of Schools	No. of Participating Districts	Total No. of Schools per District	No. of Participating Schools	Total No. of Participants
BULAWAYO	5	152	3	96	9	45
MATABELELAND NORTH	7	618	3	250	9	45
MATABELELAND SOUTH	7	521	3	211	9	45

The cluster sampling was used because of the advantages it has in research. I used this cluster sampling because: Firstly, it was a convenient way of collecting data because it reduces travelling costs since the subjects chosen will be close to each other (cluster). Secondly, it was an economical method to use as it takes less time and costs less since the areas of research are geographically within a short distance from each other.

4.8 Data Collection tools or Instruments

Data collection tools refer to the instruments used to collect data, such as a paper questionnaire or interview. Data collection is a methodical process of gathering and analysing specific information to provide answers to certain questions. To collect this data, a researcher needs data collection tools and there are many such tools with which to collect data for research but in this thesis, I will report on the use of only two, namely the: questionnaire and document analysis because these are the tools I used for this study. It is important to decide the tools for data collection because research is carried out in different ways and for different purposes. The objective behind data collection is to capture quality evidence that allows analysis to lead to credible answers to the questions that have been asked, (Creswell, 2012).

4.8.1 Questionnaire

For data collection in this research, I used a paper questionnaire, (see Appendix A). This questionnaire was distributed to 135 teachers and 27 heads of school. Using a questionnaire to collect data gave me some advantages such as: 1) I collected large amounts of information from many people in a short period and in a relatively cost-effective way. 2) The identity of the participants was protected in that they did not write their names on the questionnaires and 3) Questions asked covered all areas of the topic, (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981).

In this research I opted for the open-ended questions because of the following reasons.

- Open-ended questions do not restrict the participants in their answers, they are free to include details about feelings, attitudes, and views that they usually would not get to do in close-ended questions.
- Some questions need an answer that is more than just Yes or No. Restricting questions seem to limit the participants from giving detail or the scrutiny they would give when answering open-ended questions.
- Open-ended questions draw out best responses from participants in situations where they are expected to explain their feedback or describe the troubles they are facing with the situation under study.

- Open-ended questions offer participants the freedom to voice their opinions that may be insightful to the researcher and offer some unforeseen improvement.

Like any other data collecting instrument, a questionnaire (often used for quantitative research), but used here (see 4.4 page 91), has its own weaknesses. I will discuss some of them here and show what I did to minimise the effect of those weaknesses. One of the weaknesses of a questionnaire is that participants may give dishonest answers, for whatever reason. While this is difficult to prevent, I tried to minimise it by assuring participants that their privacy was guaranteed, valued and that the process prevented personal identification, (Karl, 1992); (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981).

The other weakness of a questionnaire is that participants may not understand some of the questions that may seem clear to the researcher since there would be no one to explain the questions to them when they answer them. This misunderstanding can lead to skewed results, and to minimise such problems I had a pre-research run of the questions testing their clarity and level of difficult, (Karl, 1992); (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981). I asked 2 heads to go through the questionnaire designed for heads of school and answer it. I also asked 4 teachers to do the same with a questionnaire designed for teachers. All questions were understood the way they were designed to be understood.

Another weakness is that of unconscientiously given responses because participants do not take their time to read the questions. To minimise that, all participants were asked to take their time to read and answer the questions in the best way they could. There was no way I could test if participants told the truth or lied to me about the clarity and their understanding of the questions. There is also what is called questionnaire fatigue which happens during the answering of questions. Participants just feel tired to answer the questions. This usually happens when questions are long and boring to read. This is not easy to prevent, but asking short and attention drawing questions (as I did) can minimise that, (Karl, 1992; Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981). Given the advantages, a questionnaire offers in research, coupled with my own financial and time limitations, a questionnaire was the best instrument to use in this research.

4.8.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic material. Document analysis is based on existing sources, like government reports, personal documents, and articles in newspapers, books or medical records. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge, (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The documents I analysed in this study are the primary school curriculum, (see Appendix B); the grade 1 – 7 Ndebele syllabi, (see Appendix C); Ndebele set books in current use, (see Appendix D) and Primary School Teachers' Training College Ndebele syllabi, (see Appendix E). In analysing these documents, I wanted to establish if the requirements of teaching Ndebele as stipulated in the curriculum could be matched with teacher qualifications, competences and practices in their teaching. The data alignment grid below shows my sub-questions, data collection instrument, the unit of analysis and how data analysis will be done.

Table 4.2 Data Alignment Grid

Research Sub-questions	Data collection Instrument(s)	Unit of Analysis	Data Analysis
a) What socio-cultural, political and economic value is attached to the teaching of Ndebele in Zimbabwe?	Questionnaire	School heads Teachers	Thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics analysis.
b) What linguistic and socio-linguistic knowledge and skills, based on the syllabus, are meant to be developed through the teaching of Ndebele at Primary School in Zimbabwe?	Questionnaire	School heads Teachers	Thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics analysis
c) What qualifications are critical for Ndebele teachers for the Primary School in Zimbabwe?	Questionnaire	School heads Teachers	Thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics analysis
d) What considerations are made in deploying Ndebele teachers at Primary School to ensure that the envisaged language skills of the learners are properly developed?	Questionnaire	School heads Teachers	Thematic analysis Descriptive statistics analysis
e) What material and content is used at different levels of the curriculum to attain the envisaged goals of language teaching?	Questionnaire	School heads Teachers	Thematic analysis Descriptive statistics analysis

4.8.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is the process of gathering information using a systematic way that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. The data collection steps include, “Setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi structured observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information”, (Creswell, 2014: 239). For my data collection in this study, my plan and systematic outline were as follows:

- Letter from university to research sites seeking permission for me to conduct research.
- Permission from The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to conduct research in the provinces of Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and Bulawayo.
- Permission from the Provincial Regional Directors of the three provinces to conduct research in their districts.
- Permission from District Education Officers to conduct research in their districts.
- Permission from the School Heads to conduct research in their schools.

The school heads did not give me a letter granting me permission to conduct research in their schools. All they did was to inform their teachers about my presence and business. They announced to the teachers that only those willing to participate had to do so, no one was forced to.

- Permission from the participants (teachers) to conduct research with them. Those who volunteered to take part in the research signed consent letters.
- I issued the participants with the questionnaire and asked them to complete it in the most honest way they could apply.

For those schools very close to each other, as the participants at School A were refilling in their questionnaires, I went to School B then came back to collect the questionnaires from School A. For those schools far apart, I waited in the staffroom or head's office for the participants to complete the answering of those questions. By doing so, I managed a 100% return of questionnaires.

4.8.4 Data Analysis

According to Flick, (2014), the analysis of qualitative data can have several aims,

(i) To describe a phenomenon in some or greater detail,

(ii) To identify the conditions on which there are differences and on what those differences are based

(iii) To develop a theory of the phenomenon under study from the analysis of empirical material.

My study focuses on a group of sampled teachers (135) and the teaching of Ndebele as an indigenous language. My study covers all the three aims mentioned by Flick above. The intention was to understand the phenomenon and describe it in detail as well as identify the conditions that created the differences between what was expected and what was achieved in teaching of Ndebele. As I went through the answers, I grouped similar responses to generate themes that were addressing the sub-questions. After my interpretation of the participants' responses and writing them down in summary form, I took their transcribed data back to them to check for content accuracy, (Flick, 2014), a procedure that is called member checking. I also did document analysis, looking at documents such as the curriculum, syllabi and textbooks used at school for different grades. Other documents analysed were the Teachers' Training College syllabi to get the content trainee teachers go through in preparation for employment and deployment as qualified teachers when they complete their course. These documents provided plenty of relevant information, such as content to be taught and the methodology to use in teaching the content, about the phenomenon under study. After doing all that I used all the data collected to address the research questions of the study.

4.9 Rigour or Trustworthiness Criteria

Trustworthiness is a term employed in assessing the quality of a qualitative inquiry, (Yin, 2011). According to Huberman & Miles, (1994), trustworthiness seeks to prove that a study was conducted in a transparent manner and is, therefore, credibility. There are different views regarding trustworthiness or rigour in qualitative research. Lincoln & Guba (1985) came up with four widely accepted standards of trustworthiness or rigour: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability, (Shenton, 2004); (Merriam, 2009). Trustworthiness, therefore, is about establishing these four things, but only two, credibility and transferability will be discussed in this study as they are the only two relevant here.

4.9.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the degree to which findings of the study are an accurate and authentic representation of the meanings of the research participants (Denscombe, 2014). In the Zimbabwean case the language issue is more than just an academic, policy and/or language teaching issue but it is actually ethnic and political. Being

Ndebele myself and with this Ndebele language teaching issue turned into an ethnic and political battle I was bound to handle the issue subjectively in the collection and presentation of data. However, that aspect was checked and contained through the credibility checks. For the credibility of my study, after collecting data and going through it, I went back to the participants and read through their answers to the questions to check for accuracy. That is what Shenton, (2004), calls member checking, and describes it as a vital strategy for enhancing trustworthiness in qualitative research. This helped me to ensure that the findings reflected the participants' contributions to the research and not mine or how I personally felt about it.

4.9.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the potential of the research results being used in other settings or groups. According to Polit and Beck, (2017), transferability is the extent to which findings from the data can be transferred to other settings or groups. Lincoln & Guba, (1985), say that transferability is one of the factors that ensure trustworthiness of research findings as it refers to the degree the findings of a study can be applied to other settings, events or groups in the population. Data collected in this study can be transferred to other groups (indigenous language teaching) as it deals with teaching Ndebele as an indigenous language.

4.10 Ethical Issues

For this research the university issued me a letter introducing me to different institutions whose permission to carry out research at their institutions had to be obtained. This was in line with what (Creswell, 2014), says, "… ethical issues involve seeking a letter of approval specifying the extent of time, the potential impact, and the outcomes of the research the researcher will be working on". Part of the ethical issues is not to force individuals to be part of your sample when they do not want, and I followed that, (Christensen et al., 2015). For this research, all participants volunteered their participation and those who declined to take part were excused. My action was in line with what Creswell, (2014: 136), says,

> When collecting consent for a study, the researcher should not force participants to sign the informed consent form. Participation in a study should be seen as voluntary, and the researcher should

explain in the instructions for the consent form that participants can decide not to participate in the study.

As part of the ethics, I promised to protect my participants from any form of being known or having their responses to my questions known. In line with what Creswell, (2014) and Christensen et al, (2015) say about the protection of one's participants, I gave my participants pseudonyms in my data presentation in the next chapter (Chapter 5).

4.11 Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology for this research in form of research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling strategies and data collection instruments and analysis procedure adopted in the study. Also discussed in this chapter is data collection and the collection instruments, procedure and analysis and issues addressing trustworthiness and research ethics. I did this intending to obtain an in-depth understanding of the teachers' (participants) perspectives of the Ndebele language teaching in Zimbabwe and the value attached to teaching it. The next chapter presents data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents collected data on the teaching of the Ndebele language, as one of the indigenous languages, at 27 schools that participated in this research. The data reveals the socio-cultural and political ideologies underpinning language planning in Zimbabwe. First, the chapter presents the languages national syllabus based on the 1987 Education Act, and later, on the curriculum framework for 2015 to 2022. Demographic information of all participants is also represented together with responses to the questions on the questionnaire. Towards the end of the chapter, community reactions, from newspapers articles, to examination question papers between 2013 and 2016 are presented.

5.2 The Ndebele Primary School Syllabus

A syllabus is a requisite document for teaching that outlines or summarises topics to be covered in an education or training course, (Sabbah, 2018). The Zimbabwe primary school syllabus is discussed in detail in section 5.2.1 below. Teachers do not set the syllabus, but implement it; there should be a way in which teachers are introduced to the syllabus for effective implementation. Training colleges are meant to offer that hence the college syllabus has to be aligned with the school syllabus.

In 1999, a Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training was established. Its main focus was to identify the shortcomings of the Zimbabwean curriculum, (Nziramasanga, 1999). As a response to its findings, a new framework for education was finalised in 2015 with its implementation starting in the same year. Part of that framework states that:

- The language learning area comprises Indigenous, English and Foreign languages and emphasises use of indigenous languages in line with provisions of the Zimbabwe Constitution, (Education, 2015). It goes on to say that at the junior school level, Indigenous languages are important avenues for fostering early literacy.

- The learning of English and its use as language plays a vital role in the development of literacy and creates opportunities for the learner to interact with an otherwise closed world, (Education, 2015).

One outstanding observation is that the framework still glorifies English and makes it seem a better language by stating that both English and any foreign language will help learners to develop communication skills and critical understanding that are necessary for meaningful and active participation in society and the world at large.

The 2015 – 2022 framework's main aim is to transform the structure and curriculum of the country's education system to adequately meet the evolving national development of the country, but it does not offer much change to the teaching of indigenous languages. One hoped it would raise the status of the indigenous languages to match that of English but it still says, "English and its use as language plays a vital role in the development of literacy in that it enhances learning in other areas of the curriculum". This is admitting that indigenous languages cannot match the full functions of English and that statement further stifles the development of indigenous languages. This same document, prior to this statement about English says, "Learners achieve mastery of language through the mother tongue as the medium of instruction," (Education, 2015, p. 32). There seems to be a contradiction in these pronouncements. This framework is meant to replace the old curriculum that was based on the Education Act of 1987.

The following section focuses on the aims of teaching and examining Ndebele at primary school as set by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe. The Ndebele primary school syllabus is divided into two, Grades 1 – 3 and Grades 4 – 7, but both the teaching and examination aims are the same.

5.2.1 Teaching and Examination Aims

Educational aims are statements that clearly describe what learners are expected to know at the completion of the programme being studied, because of having attended an educational institution. It must be noted that teaching Ndebele, as the mother tongue to most of the learners in these provinces, is important because at the time they develop their mother tongue, they simultaneously develop other

essential skills such as critical thinking and literacy skills that hinge on the knowledge of their mother tongue. These aims are outlined in Section 3 of the Ndebele Primary School Syllabus as follows:

- Develop in learners the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Guide learners to present their views clearly.
- Develop in learners the love of reading different books for entertainment.
- Develop in learners the desire to develop and preserve their language demonstrating their humanity.
- Develop in the learners the skill of analysing current news and future anticipations.

The two documents, Grade 1 – 3 and Grade 4 – 7, have 5 aims each and the wording of the aims is the same. As an introduction to teaching languages, the curriculum framework says, “The depth of coverage for each learning area is influenced by the appropriateness of the age, content and experience of learners,” (Education, 2015, p. 32). Therefore, the aims of teaching Ndebele are the same throughout primary education, but the age of the learners and their experiences will determine the depth of the content taught.

If the learners’ mother tongue is taught at school, their comprehension and learning become easier since they will be using a language they are familiar with. Naturally, children enjoy more when taught in their own language, (Benson, 2005). They enjoy school more when surrounded by learners and teachers speaking a familiar language. They develop confidence in themselves and find it easy to pick up new concepts. This leads to higher self-esteem in the students, and it is a source of pride to know one’s mother tongue thoroughly. According to Benson, (2005, p. 3),

> Use of a familiar language to teach beginning literacy facilitates an understanding … Learning to read is most efficient when students know the language and can employ psycholinguistic guessing strategies; likewise, students can communicate through writing as soon as they understand the rules of the orthographic (or other written) system of their language.

A closer analysis of the aims of the syllabus indicates that in learning Ndebele, learners are supposed to be equipped with both spoken and written communication skills. Language is one of the proven ways of keeping a people's culture alive. Proficiency in their mother language develops a sense of belonging and identity with the culture and heritage among children.

Assessment in education is an important activity because it establishes whether the learning aims in a course were met or not. It is a key component of learning because it helps teachers to teach and it helps students to learn. Assessment evaluates the students' ability of learning and it is an effective way of establishing the knowledge of students. The following are the examination aims of the Ndebele primary school syllabus:

By the end of primary education from Grade 1 to 7, learners should be able to:

- Write a narrative or descriptive composition or a letter demonstrating their intelligence and maturity.
- Use interesting language relevant to the topic.
- Present related ideas that are logically arranged and grammatically correct.
- Write sentences in correct language using correct spelling.
- Demonstrate their understanding of poetry through answering questions correctly.
- Construct words correctly showing the difference between capital and small letters.

Examinations or tests are educational assessments that are an end product meant to measure the candidate's knowledge, skills and aptitude based on what was taught during the course. They are concerned with the achievements of the learner rather than the intentions of the teacher. They display to both the teacher and the learner what has been achieved during the course. These aims are derived from the teaching aims and are intended to prove how best the teaching and learning process was done. These aims should be understood by teachers and be linked with teacher training programmes so that teachers will be fully prepared to work towards achieving those aims in their teaching.

5.3 Teacher Training College Ndebele Syllabus

Academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and teaching skills and the commitment of the teacher are aspects that have an effective impact on the teaching and learning process. The importance of teacher training is thus essential as it gives the teacher a theoretical and practical experience on how to teach learners to achieve their highest mark. Without some form of training, teachers will not be able to provide meaningful guidance and that would negatively affect the foundation of the education system. According to Rahman et al., (2011, p. 151), "Training of teachers provides them with knowledge, skill, and ability relevant to the professional life of a teacher". Teachers are constantly faced with new challenges in their profession and proper training equips them with the appropriate skills to deal effectively with those challenges. Rahman et al. (2011) further add that "Training is an important part of teacher preparation programs, especially for those aspects of teaching that are more skill-like in their conception" (p. 151).

This section presents the Ndebele teacher training syllabus to give insights into how teachers are prepared to teach the language at primary school level. The following are some of the objectives of Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic, one of the Teacher Training Colleges situated in Matabeleland South Province, which offers a Diploma in Education (Primary).

By the end of the course, student teachers should be able to do the following:

- Teach the four language skills, speaking, listening, reading and writing
- Teach Ndebele culture and customs using different sources such as, comprehension texts, folktales, drama/plays and booklets
- Design teaching aids for the Ndebele lessons for all grades at primary school

As preparation to deliver the stated objectives, trainee teachers are given examples and suggestions of tools to use to develop their skills. They are not limited to suggested activities. Depending on a teacher's creativity, environment, resourcefulness, availability of resources and the teacher's knowledge, the teacher can add to the suggested lists. Below are the language skills that student teachers are trained to develop in learners and guiding methods they may use to develop

those skills also extracted from the Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic Teacher Training College.

Developing the speaking skill

- Using drama/plays, imitation, folktales, songs, riddles, debate and quiz.

Using drama and plays to teach the speaking skills encourages learners and affords them the chance to develop their confidence, fluency and communicative competence as they reflect real life situations. Learners also learn to put language into context, providing them with life skills that they will need outside the classroom. Being involved in role-play, singing and listening to songs during drama all contribute immensely in developing the learners' vocabulary.

Developing the listening skill

- Using voice recorders and audio devices.

By listening to pre-recorded reading or speaking activities, learners have a chance to get good pronunciation and intonation of words. Such recordings should be of people who know the language well so that they role model the learners and do not distort the pronunciation of words of a language.

Developing the reading skill

- Production of correct vowel and consonant sounds
- Production of correct word pronunciation
- Teaching correct sentence reading
- Teaching correct paragraph reading

Having listened to voice recordings and acted in drama, learners should be comfortable enough to produce correct vowel and consonant sounds leading to correct pronunciation of words, particularly homographs.

Developing the writing skill

- Writing phonics
- Writing correct words/spelling
- Writing sentences
- Writing paragraphs

As a teacher myself, I have observed that many people often write words the way they speak them, both English and Ndebele. This means that if one has a poor pronunciation of words, it becomes difficult for such a person to write that word correctly. Teachers, therefore, need to be good role models to the learners if the learners have to learn from them.

The above stated language skills are developed through the teaching of topics that are part of the school syllabus for all grades as detailed in the set books used at school.

Table 5.1 is a table of contents of one set book (*Inyathelo 1*), that is used at schools as a Ndebele set book series from Grade 1 to Grade 7. The table of contents lists topics to be covered in class in form of lessons per week. Week one deals with speaking activities that the teacher has to develop in the Grade 1 learners who are only starting school. These activitiesinclude having learners speak about what they see, naming what they see, telling the difference between things they see and explaining a given story.

Table 5.1 Inyathelo 1 Table of Contents

Okumunyethweyo (Contents)

All the topics to be covered in the first week address the speaking ability of the learners. The topics build on the learners' existing knowledge built from home which makes them comfortable as they will be attending school for the first time. This builds learners' confidence and their attitudes towards learning. It should be noted as well that speaking a language helps to improve one's knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation leading to one's improvement of fluency and memory too.

The topicsaim to develop the four language skills listed in both the school and college syllabi. Cruickshank & Metcalf (1990), in Rahman et al., (2011, p. 151), state, "Trained teachers should build upon learners' present skill level during early learning stages". This is why the first topics in week 1 of the set book are about what the learners know.

Table 5.1 above, also shows topics that introduce the child to a new life at school. At this level there is need for the grade teachers to start by light activities like talking so as to develop confidence in the learners so that when they engage in more demanding topics, they will be used to the school system and are confident to engage with the teacher and their colleagues. These first topics deal with general activities that the learner can see in the classroom and within their immediate environment. Learners are asked to talk about what they see and they have to call it by their correct name. Such a discussion develops confidence in the learners as they are asked to speak before the whole class. Learners get a chance to develop their vocabulary as different objects could be called by different names from their homes. One example that comes into mind could be a chair that can be called *isitulo* (a borrowed version of stool from English) or *isihlalo* with some learners knowing one of the two words or both. A teacher who knows the mother language is crucial in such cases to correct the learners and explain how both are correct (or incorrect as the situation presents itself).

The following, (Table 5.2), is a table of contents page from a Grade 3 set book *(Inyathelo 3)* listing topics to be taught. The table of contents shows a progression from the Grade 1 and Grade 2 topics. The topics are advanced in the Grade 3 book.

The Grade 3 week 1 topic is:

- Uyangazi na? (Ulwazi ngomuntu) (Do you know me? Knowing a person)

While the Grade 1, week 1 topics need the speaker to just speak about what they see and what the listeners also see, the Grade 3, week 1 topic requires the speaker to first know who they are in order to relay that knowledge to the next person (learner or teacher). Whatever is said here is a self-assessment by the learner that reflects on their character as told by themselves as compared to speaking about what they see. It also requires more developed language skills and confidence.

While *Inyathelo* is the approved series of books to be used, teachers have the freedom to use information from many other sources they deem relevant to the set topics. Use of additional materials depends on the knowledge the teacher possesses in the topic to be taught.

Table 5.2 Inyathelo 3 Table of Contents

Okumunyethweyo (Contents)

Izahluko (Chapters)

The connection between the school and college syllabi shows the relationship between the two institutions of learning. Trained teachers (from college) are deployed to schools to teach the set curriculum through the set syllabi. Language acquisition planning needs all stakeholders to work together, meaning there should

be a strong link between the curriculum planners, material producers and curriculum implementers so that the learner gets a full package.

The following section presents the collected demographic data about the participants in this study.

5.4 Information of all Participants

The following section presents the demographic information of all the participants in this study. Table 5.3 gives information about the heads of school and Table 5.4 gives information about the teachers.

5.4.1 Information of the Heads of School

Table 5.3 shows the demographic information of the 27 heads of schools who were part of this research. Information presented on this table shows the following: whether Ndebele was part of their subjects at school and their professional qualifications. Analysis of these numbers will be presented in chapter 6.

Table 5.3 Information about Heads of School

		Total	%
Did you do Ndebele as one of the subjects at school, at 'O', 'A' Level or college?	Yes	19	70
	No	8	30
		27	**100**
Professional Qualifications	Certificate in Education	2	7
	Diploma in Education	7	26
	Academic Degree e.g. BA or MA or Professional Degree e.g. B.Ed or M. Ed	18	67
		27	**100**

There are 8 heads out of 27 who did not do Ndebele at school. While this may seem an irrelevant point as heads ordinarily do not teach, they have to carry out teacher supervision. This supervision is primarily done to give the teacher feedback about classroom management, classroom interactions, both teacher-learner and learner-learner, and methodology. The head should have some knowledge of all subjects

so as to give relevant and meaningful feedback to the teacher. There may be need to use an indigenous language (Ndebele) in a mathematics or English lesson, the head should contextualise such an incident in line with Vygotsky's scaffolding idea in teaching. Those heads who teach (especially in small schools), have to know Ndebele in order to teach it because a primary school teacher teaches all the subjects in their class.

5.4.2 Information of the Teachers

The following table (Table 5.4) shows information of the 135 teacher participants in this research. The information on this table indicates the number of non-Ndebele speakers, Ndebele mother tongue speakers and the participants' professional qualifications.

Table 5.4 Professional Qualifications of the Teachers

	Teachers' Professional Qualifications			
GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS	Certificate in Education	Diploma in Education	Academic or Professional Degree	**Totals**
Non-Ndebele Speakers (Other Languages)	7	40	8	**55**
Ndebele Speakers (Ndebele Home Language)	3	65	12	**80**
Totals	**10**	**105**	**20**	**135**

The information on the table above shows that all the participants are qualified teachers, with 20 of them being holders of either an academic or professional degree, which is a further qualification that makes them better equipped to deal with the primary school subject content. This is supported by Rahman et al., (2011, p. 151), who states, "Training and development can be thought of as processes designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students". Having gone through teacher training and attained a qualification through a college syllabus, which is

aligned to that of the school, it becomes easy for the newly qualified teachers to deal with the content they have to teach at primary school.

The following section gives details on teacher deployment per school and district in the three provinces where the research was done.

5.4.3 Teacher Deployment in Provinces, Districts and Schools

All participating schools have been labelled A, B and C for anonymity. It should be noted that the number of teachers indicated as non-Ndebele speakers in schools are from the researcher's sampling not the whole province or district. The deployment of teachers, shown on the following tables, is not because they chose to be deployed there but because the district offices deployed them there. While teachers are made to choose where they want to teach, when they leave college, it is usually by mere chance that they get deployed in the regions and districts they choose. According to the Provincial Officer of each province, deployment depends on the availability of posts at the province, district and eventually at school. Such concerns are addressed by the responses the participants gave when answering the questionnaire given to them. After collecting information about Ndebele and non-Ndebele speaking teachers at the participating schools, I created the following tables to present the data collected: 5.5. 5.6 and 5.7. The tables indicate the deployment of teachers in the two provinces of Matabeleland and Bulawayo district by district and school by school. The numbers indicate non-Ndebele speakers versus Ndebele speakers as the idea is to confirm or refute the claims made by members of the communities that non-Ndebele speaking teachers were deployed at primary schools yet they could not teach Ndebele or communicate with locals effectively about the progress of their children at school.

5.4.3.1 Teacher Deployment in Selected Schools in Matabeleland North Province

As reported in section 4.6.2, five teachers out of all who volunteered, were sampled for this study. When I issued out the questionnaires, I asked for volunteers from grades 1 – 3 and 6 – 7. After collecting all completed questionnaires, I picked one per each grade mentioned above hence the number 5 per school on the tables below.

Table 5.5 Mat North Deployment – Non- Ndebele speakers over total number of sample

Province	District	School A	School B	School C	Total
Mat. North	Bubi	$^{0}/_{5}$	$^{4}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{6}/_{15}$
	Nkayi	$^{4}/_{5}$	$^{3}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{9}/_{15}$
	Lupane	$^{0}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{1}/_{5}$	$^{3}/_{15}$
					$\mathbf{^{18}/_{45}}$

There were $\frac{18}{45}$ teachers in Matabeleland North who are not Ndebele Home Language speakers which translates to 40% of the total sample.

5.4.3.2 Teacher Deployment in Selected Schools in Matabeleland South Province

Table 5.6 Mat South Deployment – Non-Ndebele speakers over total number of sample

Province	District	School A	School B	School C	Total
Mat. South	Umzingwane	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{1}/_{5}$	$^{5}/_{15}$
	Mangwe	$^{3}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{0}/_{5}$	$^{5}/_{10}$
	Bulilima	$^{0}/_{5}$	$^{0}/_{5}$	$^{0}/_{5}$	$^{0}/_{5}$
	Gwanda	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{6}/_{15}$
					$\mathbf{^{16}/_{45}}$

There are $\frac{16}{45}$ teachers in Matabeleland South who are not Ndebele Home Language speakers, translating to 35% of the total sample.

5.4.3.3 Teacher Deployment in Selected Schools in Bulawayo Province

Table 5.7 Bulawayo Deployment – Non-Ndebele speakers over total number of sample

Province	District	School A	School B	School C	Total
Bulawayo	Bulawayo Central	$^{3}/_{5}$	$^{3}/_{5}$	$^{3}/_{5}$	$^{9}/_{15}$
	Reigate	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{6}/_{15}$
	Khami	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{2}/_{5}$	$^{6}/_{15}$
					$\mathbf{^{21}/_{45}}$

There are $\frac{21}{45}$ teachers in Bulawayo Province who are not Ndebele Home Language speakers, translating to 47% of the total sample.

Table 5.8 below shows the number of participants (out of 135) who have Ndebele as their mother language, those who studied Ndebele as one of their subjects at school and the deployment of these teachers (participants). Answers to these questions are what ties together the themes presented in this presentation.

Table 5.8 Teachers' Responses to Questions 5, 6 and 9 of the Questionnaire

QUESTIONS	TOTAL	YES	%	NO	%
5. Do you speak Ndebele as your Home Language?	**135**	80	*59*	55	*41*
6. Did you study Ndebele at (primary & secondary) school?	**135**	100	*74*	35	*26*
9. Did you choose to be deployed where you are teaching now?	**135**	102	*76*	33	*24*

5.5 Thematic Presentation of Data

This section presents data collected through the two questionnaires, one for school heads and the other for teachers. Each theme was drawn out of several questions for both heads and teachers. Answers to those questions are presented as given by the participants.

5.5.1 Theme 1: Teaching and Training

As mentioned above, this theme was drawn out of the following questions:

Heads

- What is your highest qualification?
  Academic ..... ('O' Level, 'A' Level, BA Degree or MA)
  Professional ..... (Certificate, Diploma, B Ed, M Ed, Grad CE.)

  Key:
  'O' Level – Ordinary Level which is Form 4.
  'A' Level – Advanced Level which is Form 6.
  BA – Bachelor of Arts
  MA – Master of Arts
  B Ed – Bachelor of Education
  M Ed – Master of Education
  Grad. CE. – Graduate Certificate in Education

- Are all your teachers trained to teach at primary school? If no, how many are trained to teach at primary school?

a) For your trained teachers, what languages were they trained to teach?

b) Are they teaching those languages here at your school?

- To what level were they trained to teach the languages?
- What kind of resources do you have for the teaching of Ndebele (as one of the indigenous languages) across all the grades?

Teachers

- What is your highest qualification?
  Academic ..... ('O' Level, 'A' Level, BA Degree or MA)

Professional ..... (Certificate, Diploma, B Ed, M Ed, Grad CE.)

Table 5.4 indicates the professional qualifications of the participants in this research. All the participants had basic academic and professional qualifications. They all possessed at least 5 'O' Level passes including English, a prerequisite for enrolment for teacher training. Their professional qualifications range from having a Certificate in Education, a Diploma in Education or an academic or professional degree. All the 135 participants were trained to teach an indigenous language (Ndebele or Shona) depending on what one studied at school that is at primary school and at 'O' Level or 'A' Level.

As shown on Table 5.8, 100 participants studied Ndebele as a subject at school and were trained to teach the language at primary school. Since these 100 participants were trained at college to teach Ndebele at school, they have the methodology and all other requirements needed for teaching a language. They know the language and can freely supplement available material for teaching for a successful teaching and learning process.

The following section gives answers by heads of school about the resources they use for teaching, these are set books and any other additional books. To conceal the participants' identity, I have given them codes for reference, HP 1 for Head Participant 1. Their answers are given in summary form of what each one of them said. After their answers there is a comment by myself on the answers.

HP 1 There are prescribed textbooks for each grade for a certain period. Added to the prescribed books, teachers use other recommended support materials that are useful in teaching languages. We also invite community members who are experts in certain topics if the teachers cannot teach the topic(s) effectively.

HP 2 We use prescribed books and for now the prescribed Ndebele textbook is Inyathelo and it is a series from Book 1 to Book 7. If the school has money, we buy additional (resource) books recommended by the teacher.

HP 1 and HP 2 stated that there are set books for each grade and they were using *Inyathelo* series (1 – 7) as a prescribe set book for all the grades. HP 1 added that

for some topics that were not adequately addressed by the set book the school invited some experts in such topics among the community member to address the topic. This was similar to what other heads, not recorded here, said about the teaching materials they use at their schools. HP 2 added that some of the additional materials the school bought were recommended by the subject teachers. There are other resource books that teachers can use to supplement what *Inyathelo* series provides. Some heads indicated that they invite subject experts to teach some areas that they are not qualified to teach. It should not be assumed that qualified teachers know all topics to be taught. Teachers themselves should accept that they can still learn as they teach. So, it is a plausible idea to invite experts.

5.5.2 Theme 2: Language Teaching Policy and Teacher Deployment

The following questions guided the formation of this theme.

Heads

- What is the language of instruction at this school and at what level?

Teachers

- Did you choose to be deployed in this region, district or school?
- What is your comment about the random deployment of teachers done by the Ministry of Education?
- If given a chance to deploy teachers yourself, how would you do it and why?

The question, “What is the language of instruction at this school and at what level?” was based on the requirements of the constitution which states the following about languages:

The State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must –

a) ensure that all officially recognised languages are treated equitably and
b) take into account the language preferences of people affected by governmental measures or communications.

The State must promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe including sign language, and must create conditions for the development of those languages.

All the heads stated that the language of instruction was English. When asked why the language of instruction was English when they were supposed to be using mother tongue with grade 1 to 3, HP 3 stated that it was because the whole education system was result oriented and the academic success of a school was measured through its results. He added that it was difficult to achieve good results with the first three grade using mother tongue as they took too long to adjust to English and that caused poor results in grade 7. The same sentiments were expressed by HP 6 and HP 5 concurred.

The following are some of the reactions of the participants on teaching indigenous languages.

HP 3 We are employed to talk but our talking has a purpose that is why whomever we talk to must listen. Children come to school to learn and they do so when we talk to them. Language is, therefore, very important in our job. It is very important to talk to the learners in the language they understand if they do not understand English.

HP 4 Language is very important in our lives. We also have sign language for those who cannot verbally communicate; that is a language for them and it is important. I think it would be impossible to live without a language. As teachers, it is important to talk to the learners and they talk back to you. If you use two different languages that learners do not understand, there is a breakdown in communication resulting in misunderstanding.

HP 5 As teachers, we talk to learners for different reasons. There are times when we give them information, times when we give commands and times when we entertain them with stories. Therefore, their listening here differs as they listen for different reasons. It is important for a teacher to draw the learners' attention to those purposes, not necessarily by telling them but by changing his or her tone and stress on the words. Learners understand such change of tone and its meaning when one talks to them in their mother tongue.

HP 6 The children we teach at school are from our society, we live with them and they are our children. And as we teach, we must always remember that, a school as an institution has its own culture, but it is not its business to destroy, despise, demean or belittle cultures from where the children come. It is, therefore, very important to have a teacher who knows and is part of the culture of the children he or she teaches. That will avert many social clashes between the school (teacher) and the community.

The point raised by the four participants is that there is no point in talking to learners in English if they do not understand what one is talking about. HP 6 states that the learners they teach come from the communities in which the teachers live. The learners expect the teachers to communicate with them the way they do outside school and a sudden change by the teacher confuses them. HP 5 states that there are different purposes of talking and in all those purposes the target is the learner and they should understand what is meant by the teacher otherwise there would be no need to talk. What comes out of the participants here is that teachers should talk to learners for the benefit of the learners. If they do not understand English, they should be spoken to in a language they understand.

HP 7 and HP 8 even referred to the constitution stating they knew what it said about indigenous language teaching but they preferred using English.

HP 7 I know what the constitution says about the teaching of languages, particularly the indigenous languages. And to be honest with you, the indigenous languages are used just as a way of explaining concepts that are not understood by pupils, otherwise we use English throughout. The use of English is because all other subjects, except Ndebele, are examined in English so it will be easy for the learners to get used to English as early as possible.

HP 8 Yes, I know what the constitution says but it is very difficult to implement its requirements considering that after grade 3 pupils drastically switch to English from their indigenous languages and that creates serious academic problems. However, teachers of the (Early Childhood Development) ECD classes up to grade 2 use Ndebele as the language of instruction.

Some heads (HP 7 and HP 8) said that, because of the result orientated education system, it was better for the learners to start using English as the language of instruction as early as Grade one. This was because the transition from using

Ndebele in lower grades to English in Grade 4 tends to confuse learners and often leads to poor performance in examinations that are all written in English except for the Ndebele language only.

Since the constitution states that, “The State must promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe, and must create conditions for the development of those languages”, (Zimbabwe, 2013) one hoped that the deployment of teachers from colleges and universities would be in line with this pronouncement. However, what was discovered during the research process shows a different scenario. Answers to the question, “Do you have a say in the deployment of teachers to your school and why?” were all – no. The heads stated that the employer, the Public Service Commission (the government department that employs civil servants) was responsible for deployment of teachers through an automated system as mentioned by the Permanent Secretary of Primary and Secondary Education when she apologised for the dismal pass rate in some schools in Matabeleland.

While it seemed a general concern that teachers were not deployed where they wanted to be, HP 15, HP 17 and HP 22 together with some teachers said that the Public Service Commission had created more enemies than friends in Matabeleland by its deliberate deployment of non-Ndebele speakers in Matabeleland primary schools. The heads had to work with the personnel deployed at their schools whether they were happy with the deployment or not. That raised questions if the Public Service Commission had any socio-cultural consideration for the region at all when they deployed teachers. Teachers who did not know Ndebele had been deployed to primary schools in Matabeleland. Such deployment sparked problems and conflicts that emanated from cultural differences between teachers and learners. In some areas, parents had to raid schools in protest against certain teachers who could not relate with the locals well because of the language differences. The deployment is, therefore, not in line with the dictates of the constitution.

5.5.3 Theme 3: Participants’ opinions about teaching Indigenous Languages

The following questions are the sources of this theme.

Heads

- How important do you think it is to teach indigenous languages and why?
- Who do you think should teach these indigenous languages at schools and why?
- Do you think teachers teaching Ndebele should have a special qualification and why?

Teachers

- Do you speak Ndebele as your Home Language? If NO, what is your home language?
- Did you study Ndebele as one of your subjects at school and to what level?
- What is your comment about the teaching of indigenous languages at school?
- Do you think a child in class has to be taught by someone who speaks his/her home language? Why?
- How would you feel if your child at primary school were to be taught by someone who does not know your home language and why?

All the heads stated that it was important to teach indigenous languages. However, regardless of the noted importance of indigenous languages, the languages do not receive the recognition they deserve. The following are some of the answers I got from the heads:

HP 9 *It is very important.*
If learners are not taught in their indigenous languages, they lose their culture that is carried through their mother tongue.

HP 10 *It is very important.*
When teaching learners in their indigenous language they participate fully in all activities because they are free to contribute without any fear of breaking the 'new' language or saying something offensive in the 'new' language unknowingly.

HP 11 *It is very important.*
It is bad to leave our own languages and learn some 'foreign' languages because that destroys our own languages and the culture and history carried in them.

HP 12 *It is very important.*
It lays a good foundation for understanding the information or what they should know, which is imparted to them by teachers.

As indicated by the examples above, all heads, HP 9, HP 10, HP 11 and HP 12 said it was very important for learners to experience their languages as that gave them the pride they deserve but had been denied for many years. The heads stated that indigenous languages served as a foundation on which other concepts could build on. They claimed that learners participated fully in class when taught in their language, however, the education system did not give much room for teaching or explaining concepts in mother tongue then translate that to English. HP 9, HP 10, HP 11, HP 12 and others voiced the same concern. English was the language of examination and so schools tried to get learners used to English as early as grade 1 so that they could understand it and be ready to be examined in English at grade 7 level and beyond.

Teachers were also asked about the teaching of indigenous languages (particularly Ndebele in Matabeleland) considering the following statement quoted from the 2015 – 2022 Curriculum Framework, "The language learning area comprises Indigenous, English and Foreign languages and emphasises use of indigenous languages in line with provisions of the Zimbabwe Constitution", (Education, 2015). To avoid using proper names for the participants the codes TP 1/2/3 and so on will be used meaning Teacher Participant 1/2/3 and so on. The following were their answers:

TP 1: *Everyone, child or adult has to be connected to his or her culture via language, therefore, teaching the indigenous languages connects the learners to their background and culture.*

TP 2: *Of all the statements or declarations made by the Ministry over the years, this is one of the best I have ever heard.*

TP 3: *This is good news to the people of different regions because as parents, our children will now learn and use our mother language at school. But I hope the teachers at the schools will all be able to handle the language teaching.*

TP 4: *It is good that all children be addressed using their mother tongue but let us wait and see if the government will stick to that, particularly in Matabeleland.*

TP 5: *I support the teaching of indigenous languages.*

TP 6: *It is fair since they teach pupils culture.*

Some teachers, TP 1 said that it was good for the learners to be taught in their mother tongue because through it they were going to learn their culture. TP 2 supported the idea and said that the "declaration by the Ministry was the best I have ever heard over the years". TP 3 and TP 4 stated that while they supported the idea they would wait to see if the Ministry stuck to that declaration. Others (TP 44, TP 50 and TP 54) added that language has a vital role to play in children's development; much learning takes place through the interaction of language and experience. They claimed that at an early age, between Grade 1 and 3 and even up to Grade 6, it was important to explain some concepts in the learner's mother tongue if they did not understand English. The same teachers (TP 46, TP 50 and TP 54) said it was important to explain some concepts in the learner's mother tongue added that language helps learners to clarify and interpret experience, to acquire new concepts, and to expand their understanding of concepts already grasped. In view of this crucial relationship between language and learning, TP 46, TP 50 and TP 54 said it was important to use mother tongue with the learners to allow for that facilitation and exploration of ideas, emotions and reactions through increasingly complex language as they furthered their studies, thus deepening the child's understanding of the world.

Only one teacher (TP 45) said teaching indigenous languages was a waste of time because they have no economic value to the learners. According to that teacher, time spent teaching indigenous languages would be better allocated to English and other "important subjects". The teacher said English is the language of employment, hence the need to prioritise it ahead of indigenous languages in terms of time allocation. The teacher further explained what she meant when she said it was useless to teach indigenous languages. She said as long as the government did not realise and accept the importance of indigenous languages in the education system,

it was pointless and a waste of time for schools to implement what the ministry did not value. She added that the ministry did not talk about indigenous languages when it gave analysis of Grade 7 results but always mentioned the English and Maths pass rate. That was why schools and teachers paid a lot of attention to those subjects so that they improved the results. Time for indigenous languages was, therefore, better spent teaching those two.

Looking at job advertisements posted in newspapers strengthens the one teacher's claim that teaching indigenous languages was indeed a waste of time because they (indigenous languages) are not a prerequisite for getting employment. Below are some advertisements proving the point discussed above. Figures, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3are examples of advertisements for enrolment to train as correctional services officers and primary school teachers respectively. These advertisements have a pass in English as one of the requirements and Figure 5.3 adds that those candidates with Chinambya and Tonga first language are "encouraged to apply". This does not seem to be a requirement as stated for English, because it does not mention a pass in those languages.

ZIMBABWE PRISONS AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICE

RECRUITMENT OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service (ZPCS) intends to recruit Correctional Officers to fill vacancies that have arisen in the General Duties Section.

Requirements

- ✓ Applicants must be Zimbabwean Citizens without criminal record.
- ✓ At least 18 years and not more than 30 years of age.
- ✓ A minimum of 5 ordinary level passes including English language at grade C or better attained in not more than two(2) sittings
- ✓ Physically and medically fit.
- ✓ Applicants should be fit to complete a stipulated road run in specified times.
- ✓ Successful applicants will be required to undergo a basic recruit training for a period not exceeding six (6) months.

In return, the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service offers;

- ✓ A competitive salary
- ✓ Pension Scheme
- ✓ Free Medical Benefits
- ✓ Generous Leave Conditions
- ✓ Free uniform

How to Apply

Only those candidates who meet the above selection criteria need to submit their applications to the nearest ZPCS Provincial Headquarters where preliminary screening will be done and those successful accordingly advised.

Applications with certified copies of academic certificates, birth certificate and national registration certificate to be submitted by not later than **10 May 2019.**

NB: Applications submitted before the publication of this advertisement will not be considered.

VISION: To become the best correctional service provider in the region and Beyond.

Figure 5.1 Recruitment Requirements for Prison Officers (The Sunday News, 2019)

Therefore, when research participants were asked if teaching indigenous languages had any economic value, the following were their responses.

> TP 45: I do understand the importance of teaching the indigenous languages … I personally do not see any value in it. … As long as indigenous languages are not at par with English, they will remain useless and a waste of time to teach. … English is the language that can get you or cost you a job; so why allocate a lot of time for indigenous language teaching when it does not earn one some economic value?

TP 3: For one to pass 'O' Level in Zimbabwe and qualify for employment or further education he or she must have 5 'O' Level passes including English as a compulsory subject and not any one of the indigenous languages mentioned in the constitution.

TP 7: … There is no economic value attached to the teaching and learning of indigenous languages (Ndebele being one of them). If one fails English in the final 'O' Level examinations he or she cannot get employment or cannot proceed with further education yet if one fails, the indigenous language he or she can still get employment as long as he or she passed English.

The views expressed by these participants above (TP 45, TP 3 and TP 7) are a true reflection of how the education system has relegated the indigenous languages into just means of communication amongst social groupings. This demoralises teachers and does not give them any incentive of diligently teaching the indigenous languages. Unless indigenous languages become part of the prerequisites for getting a job, teaching them will always be a joke.

When asked who they thought should teach indigenous languages at schools and why, the heads expressed the following:

HP 13: Teachers whose mother tongue is that language he or she has to teach should teach indigenous languages. This is because that teacher knows the cultural context of what is said and can handle it at any level.

HP 14: Indigenous languages must be taught by teachers who know that language – mother tongue speakers of that language or someone who knows the language and did it at school so that he or she will correct the spelling, pronunciation and general grammar.

HP 15: … It is not correct to assume that indigenous speakers of the language can teach it but I am sure they can do better than trained teachers who do not know the language. So, that being said, a qualified language teacher who has done that particular language at school as one of the subjects is the rightful person to teach it. This does not matter whether one is the mother tongue speaker of the language or not.

HP 16: Teachers qualified to teach indigenous languages are those who know the language well. Nowadays all languages have slang words

> introduced by young people and if someone does not know the language well, he or she will accept incorrect words in learners' writing and speaking. It does not matter whether the teacher is the mother tongue speaker of the language or not, what is important is the knowledge of the language as was done at school.

Some participants, HP 14 and HP 15 stated that being a qualified language teacher does not necessarily mean that one can teach any language. Language teachers understand that language is a tool for communication and learning a language involves mastery of both knowledge and skill hence the need for someone who knows that language, to be the role model of the learners. Even non-mother tongue speakers of Ndebele can teach it as long as they are qualified language teachers and they studied Ndebele at secondary school and college.

One participant in this research, TP 12, gave his reaction to who should teach these indigenous languages by referring to an end of year (2013) Ndebele final examination paper which caused protests among the Ndebele people because of the register they considered vulgar for Grade 7 learners.

> TP 12: A qualified teacher who is a mother tongue speaker of that language or someone who did Ndebele at school and college. … What happened with the Grade 7 2013 Ndebele Paper 1 must not be allowed to happen again. That was naked disrespect of the Ndebele people by whoever set that examination paper.

TP 12 was referring to question 10 in the language section of the Ndebele Paper 1 (2013) Grade 7 end of year examinations. The question was:

PHANA IBALA ELIHLONIPHAYO ENDAWENI YALELI ELIDWETSHWE UMZILA

10. Ungaze uyibone inhle intombi kaSibanda, <u>likhikhitha</u>. (prostitute)
    A. ngumehlomehlo
    B. ngumangumba
    C. yisifebe
    D. libele lendlela

The person who set the examination (question), expected the word *'ikhikhitha'* (prostitute) to have been taught to the Grade 7s during the year for them to provide a euphemistic term for it. The assumption was also that the optional answers given

are words that had been taught. Teaching Grade 7 children about *ikhikhitha, umehlomehlo, umangumba, isifebe or ibele lendlela* would be considered inappropriate. Because of this, Ndebele people wondered if it was indeed a Ndebele speaker who set the paper as the ZIMSEC director claimed. Participants TP 12, HP 13, and others in this research condemned the type of language used in the 2013 Ndebele end of year examinations pointing out that while learners may come across vocabulary such as the words used in the examination paper, they cannot be encouraged to use them in their daily speech to warrant their inclusion in an examination paper. Such words are used in their language but not at their age.

The following was another response to the question asked about who the indigenous (Ndebele) teacher should be.

> TP 13: A qualified teacher who is also a Ndebele native language speaker or someone who did Ndebele at school. … the society expects us to be custodians of both the modern and traditional education. We are expected to teach children the correct register which entails: what to say, how to say it, when to say it, why to say it and to whom.

All participants in this research are qualified teachers, and the question asked was, "To what level are they trained to teach Ndebele as the indigenous language taught in most schools in the three provinces?" Requirements for one to train as a primary school teacher do not mention any specifications in indigenous languages. The following advertisements are examples of the requirements for teacher training places at two different colleges.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TEACHER TRAINING:

JANUARY 2020 INTAKE

Vacancies have arisen for a three-year Diploma in Education Course at Masvingo Teachers' College as detailed below:

1. DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION (PRIMARY)

Requirements

A minimum of 5 'O' Level passes with Grade C or better including Mathematics, Science and English.

2. DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION (SECONDARY)

Applications are invited for the following specialisations:

a) Agriculture & Geography;

b) Computer Science;

c) Mathematics, and

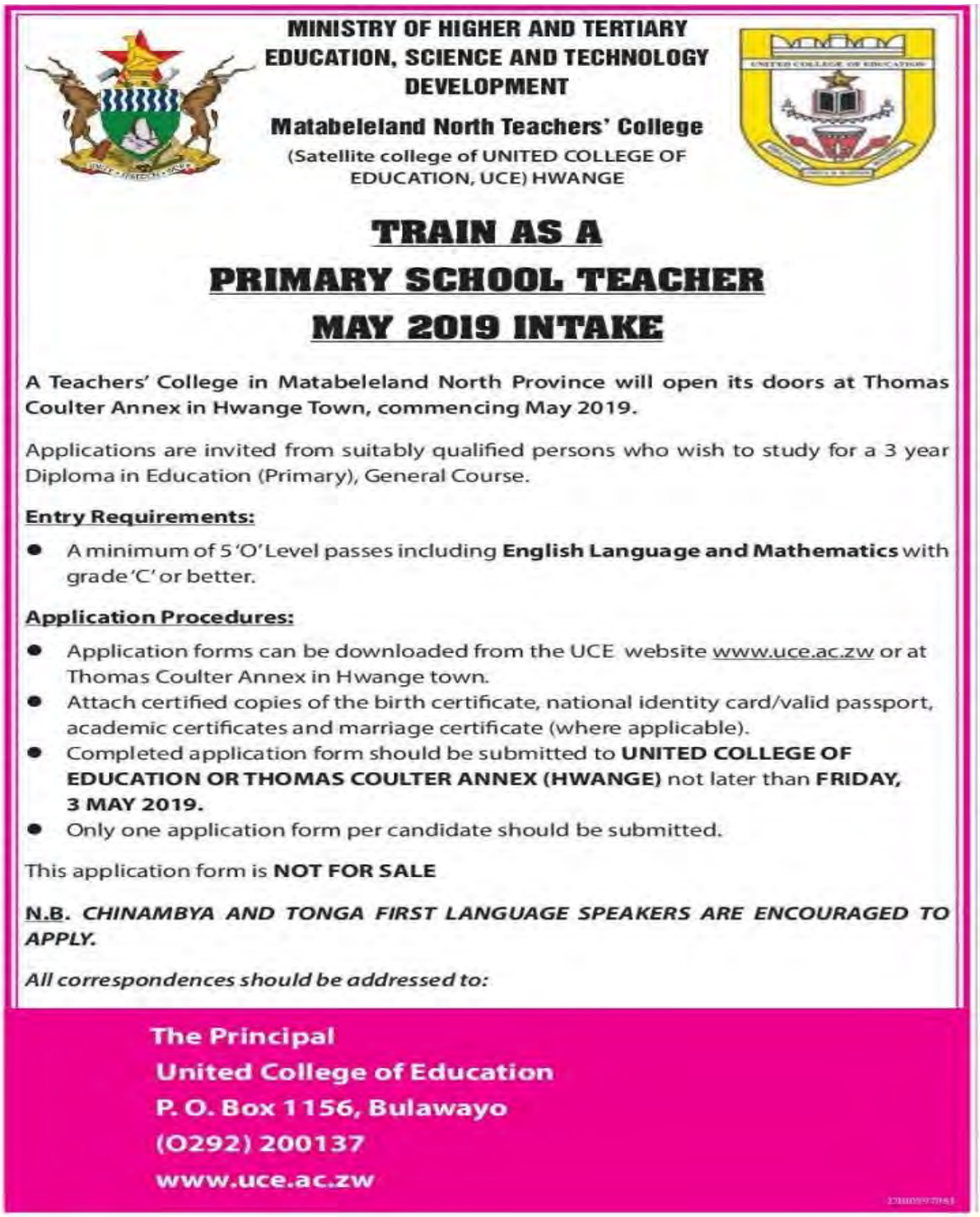
d) Science

Requirements

A minimum of 5 'O' Level passes with Grade C or better including Mathematics, Science and English with strong passes in the preferred subjects of specialisation. Applicants with relevant 'A' Level passes may also apply.

Figure 5.2 Masvingo Teachers' College Advertisement (The Sunday News, 2019)

While primary school teachers are trained to teach all subjects at primary school in Zimbabwe, language teaching cannot be treated as other subjects. One needs to know the language, understand a variety of language aspects such as culture-based issues, appropriate register for different situations, intonation and many others. With language, it is either you know it or you do not. One cannot teach a language by reading it from a book.



MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Matabeleland North Teachers' College

(Satellite college of UNITED COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, UCE) HWANGE

TRAIN AS A

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER

MAY 2019 INTAKE

A Teachers' College in Matabeleland North Province will open its doors at Thomas Coulter Annex in Hwange Town, commencing May 2019.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons who wish to study for a 3 year Diploma in Education (Primary), General Course.

Entry Requirements:

- A minimum of 5 'O' Level passes including **English Language and Mathematics** with grade 'C' or better.

Application Procedures:

- Application forms can be downloaded from the UCE website www.uce.ac.zw or at Thomas Coulter Annex in Hwange town.
- Attach certified copies of the birth certificate, national identity card/valid passport, academic certificates and marriage certificate (where applicable).
- Completed application form should be submitted to **UNITED COLLEGE OF EDUCATION OR THOMAS COULTER ANNEX (HWANGE)** not later than **FRIDAY, 3 MAY 2019.**
- Only one application form per candidate should be submitted.

This application form is **NOT FOR SALE**

N.B. *CHINAMBYA AND TONGA FIRST LANGUAGE SPEAKERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY.*

All correspondences should be addressed to:

The Principal
United College of Education
P. O. Box 1156, Bulawayo
(0292) 200137
www.uce.ac.zw

Figure 5.3 Matabeleland North Teachers' College Advertisement (The Sunday News, 2019)

When asked about the kinds of teachers who should be teaching Ndebele at the schools and what qualifications those teachers should have, the school heads had the following to say:

HP 24: … I also think that the qualifications should include or should state that a pass in one of the indigenous languages of Zimbabwe is a requirement for primary school teachers or everyone. The indigenous language passed at school will then be a determinant of where one is deployed.

HP 25: This is very simple, added to one's academic and professional qualifications should be your mother tongue. Your mother tongue should determine where one is deployed.

The answers above were also a direct response to the requirements for teacher training as stated in the advertisements. So, the heads expressed their wish that indigenous languages should be part of the requirements for one to teach that language. That means all primary school teachers in Matabeleland should have studied Ndebele at secondary school and at college as all of them teach Ndebele at school.

Answering another question, "Do you think a child in class has to be taught by someone who speaks his/her home language and why?" Some answers to this question were as follows:

TP 16: No. Any teacher who speaks any language can teach children. Teaching is not on what language you speak and it does not affect teaching at all.

TP 17: No. The teacher's mother tongue does not really have any effect on any child's ability to learn a language in class as the teacher has access to *Umthombo woMbalisi*.

(*Umthombo woMbalisi* is a teacher's guide with answers, for all activities in the learner's book, comprehension and language questions. I personally concluded that this answer was given by someone not a mother tongue speaker of the learner's language. Someone who is a mother tongue speaker of a learner's language cannot rely on a teacher's guide for answers or teach by using answers in the teacher's guide.

TP 18: No. As long as the teacher is able to read the language, more so, there is an answer book to any difficult question.

TP 19: No. teachers adjust to any given situation and children they teach also speak different languages.

Two groups emerged here, one with the answers quoted above and the other with the following answers.

TP 20: *Yes. At primary school learners still need to be guided into understand concepts that are sometimes difficult to understand in English so, a mother tongue speaker (teacher) will explain in the mother tongue language then the learner grasps the concept.*

TP 21: *Yes. Some topics are culture based and need a mother tongue speaker who will know what words to use and which ones to avoid when teaching.*

TP 22: *Yes. One duty of the teacher is to share knowledge of the subject, and other important parts of the teacher's role are:*

- *to help learners understand what they are taught,*
- *to encourage them to do better at school so that they will have a better life after leaving school,*
- *to instil discipline, self-evaluation, accountability and responsibility.*

  To carry out all these duties effectively the teacher has to be close with the learner and that can be done effectively when they speak the language the child understands best, (the child's mother tongue).

TP 23: *Yes. For maximum teacher – pupil interaction in case the learners are not fluent in the second language.*

Some participants (TP 20, TP 21, TP 22 and TP 23) said that teaching should be child-centred so that it benefits the intended beneficiary. According to (TP 20, TP 21, TP 22 and TP 23), that could be achieved if the learner and the teacher shared a common language. Because of that conviction some participants (TP 20, TP 21, TP 22 and TP 23) vehemently emphasised the issue of having mother tongue speakers being the ones teaching indigenous languages as long as they were qualified to teach it.

TP 24: Yes. A teacher has many roles to play at school. We are parents, we are role models, we are preachers, we are community leaders and we play many other different roles. In all those roles we play, we … have to teach our children the appropriate language to use in different situations.

TP 25: Yes. In Ndebele, (culture) teachers at school teach children that they cannot tell an adult that he or she is lying. But this Shona teacher has taught the children that it is correct to say that. (I am not sure if that is part of Shona culture or it is just mischief by this one teacher).

We teach these children their social obligations, what society expects from them as they grow older and move up the grades.

According to TP 25, a cultural clash was witnessed when a teacher told learners that it was correct and accepted to say an adult was lying yet that is not accepted in Ndebele. That creates a problem between teachers themselves at school and with members of the community (parents) when learners get home and tell them they are lying.

Most teachers and heads expressed Leech's (1974), functions of language when they discussed their understanding of socio-cultural importance of language as they used it at school. Someone speaks to convey a message. The listener has to interpret that message correctly, as language is used in many different ways.

Participants went on to express, "How they would feel if someone who did not know their home language were to teach their child at primary school". Answers to this question were emotional with two groups emerging: Here are some of the answers:

TP 26: Betrayed, despised and very angry.
It is very important for learners to be taught by a mother tongue language speaker because there are many aspects in teaching that need to be explained to the learners and those things are language and culture based making it difficult for a non-mother tongue speaker to confidently and comfortably handle the culture-based topics.

TP 27: Terrible.
I would feel very bad and if possible, transfer my child to some other school where a teacher who knows my language would teach him or her.

TP 28: Disappointed.
We expect the government to understand that our own languages need to be spoken and developed to high levels and so all the development that has to be done at school has to be done led by someone who knows the language.

TP 29: Extremely angry and disappointed.
… We expect the school to teach our children that part of the language we cannot teach at home so, we expect them to be taught by someone who is a mother tongue speaker or someone who speaks our language and has done it at school.

Answers to this question expressed anger, disappointment and betrayal by the government that deployed non-Ndebele speaking teachers in Matabeleland and brought in some tribal and political feelings and or opinions. One participant, TP 13, said:

TP 13: Very angry, horrible, despised and insulted.
This deployment of Shona speaking teachers to teach our children here in Matabeleland is political and aimed at getting our children to fail. There are no Ndebele teachers teaching in Mashonaland so, why are the Shonas here?

This brings in the political aspect with the claim that there is possible political influence in the deployment of teachers. Some participants, TP 13 and others, claimed that Ndebele-speaking teachers are only deployed to Matabeleland schools while the Shona-speaking teachers were deployed all over the country, including areas where they cannot communicate with the local people appropriately thereby causing social tension between themselves and the locals, (See Chapter 6, Section 6.4). If one looks at this issue in broader terms, it seems deployment of non-Ndebele teachers to schools in Matabeleland is not just an issue of deploying them, but stretches back to student teacher recruitment by Teacher Training Colleges.

The following are some of the answers from some participants, TP 30, TP 31, TP 32 and TP 33:

TP 30: I would not mind having my child taught by a teacher who does not know his or her mother tongue as long as my child is at school and has a teacher.

TP 31: I would be fine with the situation because my child would learn an extra language from their teacher.

TP 32: I won't mind as long as the teacher also learns the language spoken by my child and they both learn from each other.

TP 33: As long as the teacher is a qualified teacher there is no problem because he or she knows how to teach.

The answers above can actually be linked to those teachers who are not Ndebele speakers and feel they can justify their deployment in Matabeleland because it does not matter who teaches a learner – mother tongue speaker or not. Their claims that the child stands to benefit from the teacher's language, TP 31, and that both the learner and teacher will teach each other an extra language, TP 32 sounds just like a defensive statement with no academic merit at all.

One hundred, (74%) of the participants said it was crucial to use mother tongue in class when teaching, regardless of subject being taught, so that learners would grasp concepts faster. They claimed that some learners found it difficult to understand some concepts expressed in English, so the teacher had to explain to them in their indigenous language. The following are some of those contributions.

TP 34: At primary school, the learners' second language (L2) (English, has not fully developed. Learners still need to get some instructions in their mother tongue then that instruction be repeated in English for them to make a connection between the two languages.

TP 35: Some words in indigenous languages may mean two different things and the learner has to use a contextual meaning of that word to understand what is expected of him or her. The contextual use of words in any language needs someone who knows the language well.

TP 36: If we are to teach our children (learners) correct Ndebele, we cannot say that the type of language we speak with our neighbours or friends is enough knowledge to teach in class.

There were some participants who stated that there was no need to have a native speaker to teach a language and this was (15%) of the total participants. These were sentiments similar to those expressed by TP 30, TP 31, TP 32 and TP 33 who said they did not mind who taught their children as long as that person was a

qualified teacher. I do not think these were honest claims because there is no parent who would not mind his or her child being subjected to such kind of academic disservice.

TP 37: No. Any teacher who speaks any language can teach children. Teaching is not on what language you speak and it does not affect teaching at all.

TP 38: No. Because there is a need for that child to get the knowledge of other languages worldwide, by so doing that child will then get to learn his/her teacher's language.

TP 39: No. Languages are easy to learn. If one gets used to it, he/she can easily teach it.

TP 40: No. Any teacher can teach a child.

The remaining 11% said it was not necessarily important to have a mother tongue speaker being the indigenous language teacher. Their answers were as follows:

TP 41: *Not necessary – lessons to be conducted in English since National Examinations are in English and the official language is English.*

TP 42: *It is not necessarily important because many concepts are taught in English so it is an advantage to be fluent in all languages in Zimbabwe.*

The argument presented here is that it is not necessary for the learners to have a teacher who speaks their (learners') indigenous language to teach them because the examinations are not written in indigenous languages so, it would be better for them to know English. The arguments here by TP 41 and TP 42 do not take into consideration the preparation phase which is the teaching period. They only mention that examinations are written in English but do not realise that the examinations are based on what was taught. If the learners did not understand anything during the teaching period as they did not understand concepts they will fail because they are tested on what they do not know.

5.6 Grade 7 Final Examinations

Zimbabwean primary school education ends at Grade 7, where exit examinations are written. Ndebele Grade 7 final examinations consist of two papers (Paper 1 and

Paper 2). Paper 1 is divided into three sections, all comprehension passages and questions. These passages come in different forms. It can be a short comprehension passage, a dialogue, a poem or a letter. Added to the comprehension questions are some language questions derived from the comprehension passage and some general language knowledge. Paper 1 has 40 multiple-choice questions. Answer sheets are provided on which candidates shade a box corresponding with what they think is the correct answer.

Paper 2 is divided into two sections; Section 1 is composition writing. Candidates have to choose one topic from the given list and write a composition. Section 2 of this examination is another comprehension passage. The comprehension passage comes in different forms - a letter, a dialogue or any other form. The difference between the passage in Paper 1 and the one in Paper 2 is that the one in Paper 1 has multiple choice while Paper 2 does not.

Some language mistakes, of different types, were noted in examination papers between 2013 and 2016. The following are examples of those noted mistakes paper.

(i) Paper 1 2013

- *Ungavuli ugwalo lolu ungakayaziswa.*

The last word of the sentence above is not correct Ndebele. The sentence was supposed to read: *Ungavuli ugwalo lolu ungakaziswa.*

- Some questions in Paper 1 raised a lot of concern because of the language (register) used in questioning, e.g.

Imibuzo

INDABA YOKUZWISISA

Bala indatshana elandelayo ube usuphendula imibuzo.

"Asihambeni makhiwa abaya ethawuni. Yeyi baba uyahamba yini ngapho? Misa jeki utopi uyahamba!", watsho uMbuso etshaya isivalo semota. Lakanye yema imota wangena uSiziba.

Imibuzo

1. Kule indaba ‘ikhiwa’

    A. Ngumnikaziwemota

    B. Ngumlungu

    C. ngogadayo

    D. nguMbuso

All the underlined words are deemed to be incorrect register used in Ndebele. They are commonly used in informal communication and their use in the examination paper caused some discomfort in many people who said they were not supposed to be used. The claim that such words were not supposed to be used comes from the fact that the question on them does not describe them as incorrect register not to be used but instead the question tests the knowledge of the synonym of such an incorrect word. If ever such words are used in class, they will be examples of bad language that is not supposed to be used in formal conversation.

Below are two examples of questions (10 and 11) asked in the language section:

- **PHANA IBALA ELIHLONIPHAYO ENDAWENI YALELI ELIDWETSHWE UMZILA**

10. Ungaze uyibone inhle intombi kaSibanda, <u>likhikhitha.</u>

    A. ngumehlomehlo

    B. ngumangumba

    C. yisifebe

    D. libele lendlela

11. Ukhona <u>osesuzile</u>, yindabasekubetha umoya ongayisiwo?

    A. osezitshiyile

    B. osevimbile

    C. osezenzele

    D. osekumphunyukile

The underlined words were the cause of unhappiness. *Ikhikhitha* and *ukusuza* are not part of the Grade 7 register. The assumption again here is that this kind of

vocabulary was taught during the year and or it is the language the learners use on their day-to-day communication. Such vocabulary is not used with Grade 7 children (between 13 and 14 years of age) and the words are considered taboo words that children can never say in contexts where there are elderly people.

(ii) Paper 1 2014

- Wayelezinkomo, izimbuzi, izimvu labobabhemi. Zazicitsha ilanga zisiyanatha, ngoba zazizinengi okubatshazwayo. Zaziseluswa ngamadoda amahlanu.

Yet another spelling mistake; the underlined word is supposed to be, *zazinengi*. While it can be claimed that ***zazizinengi*** is a correct variation of *zazinengi* there is no justification for the second ***zi***. The first ***zi*** is a noun concord for the listed animals and the presence of the second cannot be justified.

(iii) Paper 1 2015

> Esigabeni seMbembesi amanye amadoda aquma ucingo epulazini elithiwa yiLundi Ranch, elikaZikhali ayelithenge kumlungu uRoss owayedumile esigabeni. Lokhu kwabonwa nguNkezo umfana owelusa inkomo zikaZikhali edinga ezazilahlekile. Wahlolisisa ucingo olwaluqunyiwe wabuye walukhangelisisa langaphansi. Wananzelela ukuthi zazingalahlekanga, zazintshontshiwe..

Yet another mistake; the underlined word ***owelusa*** is in the wrong tense (the whole passage is in past tense and so should be the word in question). The underlined word in past tense should be *'owayeselusa'*.

- **YIWUPHI UMUTSHO OBHALWE NGENDLELA EQONDILEYO?**

A. *"Maye! inkawu isidle amahalantshisi" ami watsho uKhethiwe.*

B. *"Maye! inkawu isidle amahalantshisi ami, watsho uKhethiwe"*

C. *"Maye! inkawu isidle amahalantshisi ami," watsho uKhethiwe.*

D. *"Maye! inkawu isidle amahalantshisi ami watsho" uKhethiwe.*

This is another punctuation mistake pointing out to a lack in the development of writing skills. An exclamation mark is one punctuation mark indicating the end of a sentence. That means the word after the exclamation mark has to start with a capital letter. The correct answer is supposed to be C, according to the marking guide. So, again there is no correct answer here, but the correctly taught candidates will suffer if they do not choose C as the correct one.

(iv) Paper 1 2016

- Ngangikuthapha ngamehlo ngekele.

Ngensuku zalamuhla akusela muntu olemvumo yokuhlukuluza abantwana ngoba amalungelo abo aseqakathekiswa. Khathesi sekulohlelo lwabo lokucebela labo ababahlukuluzayo okuthiwa yi “Child Network”.

Unina wayefuye inkuku zokuthengisa lezi okuthiwa ngama “broilers”.

The underlined words are incorrect. We tend to write what we say and, in this case, someone does not know how to pronounce the words. The first one is supposed to be *ngiyekele* and the second one *lokuceba*. As for *ngekele* the intention of the speaker is to say he or she just looked at whatever it was and took no action. But *ngekele* does not mean just starring at whatever hence the appropriate word for that action is *ngiyekele* – meaning and took no action. *Ukucebela* is a verbal inflection meaning reporting on behalf of someone. In the context of that sentence that word does not mean this. It means children nowadays have a programme where they report their abuse (not report abuse on behalf of someone else). This is why it is important for learners to be taught indigenous languages (their mother tongue) by someone who knows their language and can dictate such mistakes. The last one is a spelling mistake, it is supposed to be, *inkukhu*. Someone again (in cases of the first and second words) may talk about variation, but if we stick to that then we will end up accepting every wrong word as variation. Some people will talk about variations to justify their mistakes they do not want to correct. The word like *inkukhu* is read or pronounced with an aspirated h, and in the absence of that h it is incorrectly pronounced.

5.7 Summary

This chapter presented the data collected about the Ndebele primary school syllabus, the Ndebele college syllabus and demographic information about my participants in this research. Also presented are participants' answers to questions on the questionnaire and errors in Grade 7 examination question papers. The data collected indicates that all but one teacher participating in this research support the idea of teaching indigenous languages, stating that knowledge of one's mother language enables the acquisition of knowledge in other areas of the curriculum. There is a clear link between the college syllabus (for teacher training) (section 5.3) and the school syllabus (5.2) indicating the preparedness of the trained teachers to teach Ndebele. Also, the set book (*Inyathelo*) has its topics laid out clearly with a clear link between the child's prior knowledge and the new knowledge to be taught. There is that content development from the known to the unknown. Although the examination question papers had some questionable issues here and there, generally they seemed to cover what the language is about.

CHAPTER 6: DATA DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the data presented in the previous chapter. The discussion will be done and presented under themes developed in chapter 5, tabled below. The table also presents sub-themes developed for this discussion.

Table 6.1 Themes and Sub-Themes for Data Discussion

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Teaching and Training.	a) Aims and objectives of the primary school Ndebele syllabus and the teacher training college Ndebele syllabus. b) The participants' academic and professional qualifications as well as whether they did Ndebele at school.
3. Language Teaching Policy and Teacher Deployment.	a) Language policy and language teaching in Zimbabwe. b) Primary school teacher deployment in Zimbabwe.
4. Participants' feelings about teaching indigenous languages.	a) Participants' general feelings about teaching indigenous languages. b) Economic value of teaching indigenous languages.

6.2 Theme 1: Teaching and Training.

The quality of any education system depends on the suitability, ability, hard work and dedication of the teacher. There are many factors that shape the quality of education. These include political ideologies (the beliefs of the ruling party about education), existing infrastructure, socio-economic needs and theories and practices of teaching and learning. Amongst all these, a well-defined teacher education programme becomes the key factor as teachers are an important part of any nation's assets. The country mainly depends on the quality of teachers for excellence hence the great need for teachers' colleges to train and produce quality teachers to achieve the goal of having a successful nation. For a successful and quality education system, there should be a strong link between the national

education policies, the curriculum, teacher training colleges and the schools. That link is evident when one looks at the curriculum, the teacher training syllabus and the school syllabus discussed in the following sections below.

6.2.1 Discussion of the Aims and Objectives of the School Syllabus

Looking at the aims of the school syllabus as presented in Chapter 5, Section 5.2, particularly aim number 4 which states: “develop in learners the desire to develop and preserve their language demonstrating their humanity”, one is left convinced that the syllabus aims to achieve the general aims of primary education. Some of these aims are to give a child a full life after school where they realise their potential that the school will have developed in them. The other aim is to facilitate the child’s development into being a social being to fit in the communities and societies in which they live.

According to Constructivists, (theory discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3) learning is a social activity carried out by people through interaction with each other. Vygotsky (1978), in McLeod, (2019: 2), “… believed that community plays a central role in the process of "making meaning." The environment in which children grow up will influence how they think and what they think about”. This belief by Vygotsky, is manifested by the objective above in that learning aims to develop in the learners the love for their language through which they preserve their humanity.

The curriculum, from which the syllabus is drawn, aims at fully developing the child’s potential that includes spiritual and moral aspects that foster an ethical sense that enables him or her to make good choices in life. It also attempts to equip children with the knowledge and skills that will serve them later in their adult lives. It also aims at developing the children’s capacity for critical thinking, creative expression and response as well as promoting their emotional and physical development.

To achieve all the above, language has a vital role to play as it enables the child to understand, explain and interpret experience, to learn new concepts, and to strengthen concepts already learnt. The application of constructivists’ ideas in the classroom is done when“… the teacher makes sure he/she understands the students’ pre-existing conceptions, and guides the activity to address them and then build on them” (Oliver, 2000 as cited in McLeod, 2019, p. 4). This can only be done

by a teacher who knows and understands the child's language and culture, hence the concerns of the community members in some parts of Matabeleland where non-Ndebele speaking teachers were deployed. Furthermore, the syllabus incorporates verbal communication and discussion as a central learning strategy in every subject. This promotes the exploration of ideas and expression of emotions, thereby strengthening the child's understanding of the world.

All the aspects of child development mentioned above are possible through the quality of teaching more than anything else. The quality of teaching learners get determines their success in learning and development at school. As trained personnel, teachers interpret the child's learning needs and respond to them. The positively cultivated relationship between the teacher and the child is important in the learning process. The teacher's general interest in the child's academic and social life forms the basis for the creation of a supportive environment that can facilitate the child's learning. Such relationship creates an environment in which the child is happy in school and motivated to learn. One main benefit of applying constructivists' ideas of teaching and learning is that it promotes social and communication skills in the classroom. The constructivists' approach to teaching and learning creates a classroom environment that emphasises collaboration and exchange of ideas where students learn how to communicate their ideas clearly which is essential in the real world, since they will always be exposed to a variety of experiences in which they will have to interact with others in the communities in which they live.

Another aim of the Ndebele school syllabus is to develop in learners the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Ndebele school syllabus aims to develop in the learners all the four language skills. To achieve these aims means that the teacher should be someone who knows the language and be a good role model for both written and spoken aspects of the language since constructivists believe that learning is interactive and new knowledge is a result of building on what the student already knows. According to Semmar & Al-thani, (2015), Vygotsky (1978), a constructivist himself, the teacher takes a central role in the learning of the child. The teacher has to be knowledgeable to clarify issues and concepts for the child when they get stuck.

Role models are emulated by those who look up them. In this case, the teacher is imparting knowledge to learners and, therefore, correct and accurate information has to be given to the learners. That should be done by someone who has the knowledge to be passed onto learners. In language teaching, this has to be a teacher who knows the learners' language so that they can clarify instruction when the child is confused.

The constructivists' idea of "a knowledgeable other", as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2, is highlighted again indicating that there is always a need for a role model that learners have to copy. Therefore, the teacher should be a knowledgeable expert who has to lead the class. This role model point in teaching is further strengthened by Rowell & Palmer, (2007: 4), who state that "… *social constructivists* stress the organization of "communities of learners" in which "more expert" adults or peers provide assistance to the less skilled learners".

The other aim of the Ndebele syllabus is:

- Learners should be able to present their views clearly.

The idea is to develop presentation skills in learners and that learners should do so with clarity. This is where the art of language is displayed by those who know the language. This is the section where language artistry comes into play through the use of proverbs, contextual vocabulary and other sayings that are not ordinarily used in everyday speech. There is need for a good role model for the learners to emulate and rely on; otherwise, they may not develop the required skill.

While it is true that parents are the child's primary educators, and that the life of the home is the most crucial factor in the child's development during the primary school years, it is the responsibility of teachers to create a conducive learning environment at school. This requires teachers to plan their work properly, make decisions about what content to use and how to sequence that content even though there is a syllabus from which to extract that content. According to Rowell & Palmer, (2007, p. 5), "… a constructivist approach requires that educators consider the knowledge and experiences that students bring to the learning task". This, according to Vygotsky, is scaffolding and that needs a knowledgeable teacher who is going to take learners through their learning process step-by-step. According to Semmar &

Al-thani, (2015), Vygotsky (1986) believed that a child's thought process is developed when the child interacts with an adult. A teacher is that adult who deepens the child's thought process by modelling and guiding the child through asking questions that lead to an acceptable answer.

In some cases, some prescribed material (particularly textbooks) may be lacking in depth in certain content and will need supplementary material for effective learning to take place. If the teacher does not know what material to use and where to get it, then effective learning is hindered. It must be noted that there is a continuing process through which the child's less formal developmental experience of the home and the family interacts with the formal learning experience in school. Some missing pieces of the puzzle from the informal learning at home may need to be fitted at school by the teacher. This could be content that is culture-based needing thorough understanding of the language culture of the child. If the teacher does not know the child's language, the learning process is slowed down. The effective partnership between parents and teachers, close co-operation between the home and the school, benefit the child's learning process.

The connection between home and school is supposed to be strengthened by the teacher who is supposed to connect the child's home background and language knowledge to the activities at school. The college training teachers undergo is supposed to prepare them for their lifetime job. The following section is an analysis of the college's objectives of teaching the Ndebele language as part of training for the student teachers.

6.2.2 Discussion of the Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic's Diploma in Education (Primary) teaching objectives

- One of the college's training objectives is to: develop the speaking skill through using drama/plays, imitation, folktales, songs, riddles, debate and quiz.

Speaking is a fundamental language skill primarily used to communicate information. Teachers must be mindful that teaching involves more than simply using words to articulate what people are thinking, and there is more at play than simply asking students to say the words that they know when they deal with teaching

speaking. According to Garside, (2020), the speaking skills involved in daily interactions with others in different circumstances are called communicative competencies that involve much more than accuracy of language.

According to Garside, (2020, p. 2),

> When teaching speaking in a given context, think about how people actually speak in that situation. Find recordings of people interacting in restaurants, banks, or wherever your lesson will be set, and think about the functional steps of the interaction as it happens.

This assertion by Garside justifies the teaching approaches that are chosen by the college in teaching the speaking skills. In drama or play, one plays the role of a certain character and has to behave and speak like that character. Expressing themselves through controlled speech, as they follow the script teaches learners to express themselves, and once that skill is developed through reading their lines, they later apply the skill in their own lives. In drama and play there, is a lot of interaction that takes place between individuals and according to Semmar & Al-thani, (2015, p. 3),

> Play is another well-established component in early childhood education. Make-believe play allows for the development of self-regulation, allowing for peer interaction, pretend play aids in the development of necessary skills that allow children to concentrate, pay attention and be considerate of others.

Interaction is achieved through drama and play as a learning and teaching tool used to teach speaking skills at Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College. This interaction is a key tenet under the constructivist learning theory. It is a guided activity led by the ‘knowledgeable other’ as discussed in chapter 3, section 3.3.2.

- The other objective is to develop the listening skill using voice recorders and audio devices.

Teaching listening is an activity in which the learners pay attention to and try to get meaning from something they hear. It involves understanding a speaker’s accent and pronunciation, his grammar and vocabulary and in the process grasping what the speaker means as they are speaking. According to Haydarova (2017) Listening is the “aural medium that gives the way to language acquisition and enables learners

to interact in spoken communication" (p. 1). This means that students with good listening skills are able to participate effectively in class, better than those who do not possess such skills. In addition, students learn to speak, read and write by listening to others and imitating them one way or the other. This could be the reason for the Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic for using recordings and live broadcasts as one of the tools for teaching listening. Nation & Newton (2009) observe that listening is the way of learning a language. They further state that listening is firstly important for oral communication and it influences the development of reading and writing. Lastly, they state that listening plays a very important role in one's academic success since learners learn through listening to their teachers.

To conclude this point on teaching the listening skill, it is important to teach the listening skill properly to learners at school. Learners spend half, if not more, of the classroom time listening to the teacher, therefore, the listening skill should be developed properly instead of leaving it to be developed as part of a learner's general education and training. It is a vital means of learning that may be as important as reading. In order to teach listening properly and effectively, appropriate approaches, relevant material and qualified staff should be deployed. While teachers develop the listening skill in learners, they should not neglect other language skills.

Children would struggle to grow academically without reading skills as reading is the basis of all academic subjects and also influences the child's ability to write. According to Adele, (2020, p. 1), reading has the following benefits:

- It helps you to discover new things by enabling you to educate yourself in any area of life you are interested in and to do your own research and thinking.
- It helps develop the mind and imagination and the creative side of a person.
- It helps to improve (vocabulary and spelling) communication both written and spoken.
- It plays an important part in building a good self-image.

- It is a function that is necessary in today's society. In order to accomplish success, one needs to have good reading and comprehension skills.

It is very important for learners to acquire strong reading skills for academic and social success. This is closely related to the listening skill in the sense that when reading, the teacher must be accurate for learners to understand what is being read to them and get the meaning. Teaching reading needs someone who understands that by listening, the listener is learning, so, whatever is read must be read appropriately and accurately for the listener to learn, (Haydarova, 2017). The approaches of language teaching implored by Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic, as indicated in their syllabus indicate that their teacher training programme aims at producing teachers who will be able to teach the language skills appropriately after qualification.

Listed below are some of the ways in which the writing skill could be developed

- Writing phonics
- Writing correct words/spelling
- Writing sentences
- Writing paragraphs

According to Klimova (2015, p. 147) "Writing has a unique position in language teaching since its acquisition involves a practice and knowledge of other three language skills, such as listening, reading and speaking". Walsh, (2010) as cited in Klimova, (2015, p. 147), states that:

> Writing is important because it's used extensively in higher education and in the workplace. If students don't know how to express themselves in writing, they won't be able to communicate well with professors, employers, peers, or just about anyone else. Much of professional communication is done in writing: proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mails, and more are part of the daily life of a college student or successful graduate.

The Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic Ndebele syllabus addresses the requirements of language teaching in developing the writing skills. Looking at the school syllabus, as presented in this study's chapter 5, section 5.2.1 and the college

syllabus presented under section 5.2.3, one sees a connection between the two documents. The content listed in the school syllabus is taught at college as preparation for teachers to apply it in class.

Inyathelo 1 used as a set book at primary school has a detailed table of contents indicating topics to be covered and the aspect of the syllabus that topic addresses. The same applies with *Inyathelo 3*. This shows the connection that exists between the content taught at college and what is taught at school with the source of that material. A close analysis of the tables of content of the two books shows that there is emphasis on the two language skills, speaking and listening. These are the two language skills taught first before the other two. About listening, LeLoup & Pontero (2007) as cited in Professional Development Service for Teachers PDST (2014, p. 6), say,

> Listening is arguably the most important skill used for obtaining comprehensible input in one's first language and in any subsequent languages. It is a pervasive communicative event. We listen considerably more than we read, write or speak.

Listening skill leads to the development of the other skills that is why development of the skill is prioritised in the lower grades of primary school. In week 1 of the term, in *Inyathelo 3* the topic is *Uyangazi na?* (Do you know me?). This is a topic meant to discuss *Ulwazi ngomuntu* (Knowledge about a human being/person). That topic develops the speaking and listening skills. This is part of the introduction at the beginning of the year where learners introduce themselves to the whole class, developing their speaking skills while others listen, developing their listening skills. According to Kurniasih (2011, p. 73),

> Although speaking is the most common form of communication, due to several reasons, listening is the first skill to master in order to be proficient in a language. First, no one can say a word before listening to it. Thus, the teacher must take into account that the level of language input (listening) must be higher than the level of language production (speaking).

During such lessons, the teacher corrects mistakes made by learners in their pronunciation of words, intonation and register. The Ndebele vocabulary is also developed in such lessons because learners must know the vocabulary used to refer

to relatives and other people. They do not have to describe the relationship. For example, they are not supposed to say *my mother's brother,* but my uncle (not *umnewabo kamama* but *umalume*). This is why it is important to have a teacher who knows the language as his or her mother tongue and or one who did it at school since he or she will have been taught all this vocabulary and register.

6.2.3 The Participants' Academic and Professional Qualifications

The basic qualification for a primary school teacher in Zimbabwe is 5 'O' Level subjects, including English language, plus a Certificate or Diploma in Education. Any degree (academic or professional) is an added qualification and advantage. The training that the teachers undergo at college aims at developing them professionally as they get equipped with skills to impart knowledge, manage their classrooms and assess their learners. Once equipped with such skills, the teachers are able to reflect critically on their practice and are able to approach new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy, and learners. Rahman et al., (2011, p. 151), emphasise on the importance of training teachers by stating that "… training and development can be thought of as processes designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students".

Table 5.4 in Chapter 5, shows that all the 135 participants were qualified teachers. Being a qualified teacher, however, does not mean that one can teach any subject including what he or she does not know. In Zimbabwe, a primary school teacher teaches all subjects, meaning that all the 135 teachers who participated in this research have their own classes where they teach all subjects including Ndebele. Out of the 135 participants, 35 of them (26%) did not study Ndebele at school. What this means is that the learners taught by these 35 teachers may not benefit optimally from the teachers because the teachers themselves may lacking certain fundamentals of the language they are meant to teach. The learners may have a bad foundation with wrong pronunciation of words and spelling mistakes. This shows the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's negative attitude towards the teaching of Ndebele as one of the indigenous languages.

As discussed in Chapter 5, language teaching is not as easy as it may appear. Each skill requires certain knowledge from the teacher who has to plan lessons properly

for the development of that skill. Teachers are trained at college to teach these skills and if the teacher did not study Ndebele as a subject at school and at college there is no way they can teach these language skills effectively.

Eighty participants (59%) were Ndebele home language speakers and 55 (41%) had other languages as their home language. Of the total participants, 100 (74%) studied Ndebele at school (including those who are not Ndebele by origin) and 35 (26%) who did not. The languages spoken by the 41% are, Kalanga, Shona, Sotho, Tonga and Venda. As numbers indicate that 100 participants studied Ndebele at school, it means there are 20 participants (15%) who are not Ndebele but studied Ndebele at school. Anyone who has studied a language up to 'O' Level has an understanding of that language, knows the structure, phonetic system, lexicon array, and the rationale behind the way the language semantically groups its terms, (Angel, 2005). These aspects of a language are taught at school as part of the syllabus, therefore, teaching what you know from school becomes easy as one can dictate mistakes made by learners at all levels. Such aspects do not necessarily need one to be a mother tongue speaker of that language. Spelling and phonology are also equally relevant when learning or teaching a language. In written form, for instance, misspelling a word might distort the meaning of a word, just like what mispronunciation of a word does to a word. Furthermore, intonation is an element of utmost importance in Ndebele because it determines meaning and sense in certain words. The 35 participants that did not study Ndebele at school may not know this aspect of the Ndebele language.

6.2.4 Indigenous Language Teaching and the Job Market

Knowing that the new constitution of Zimbabwe has listed 16 languages as 'officially recognised' there comes a new dimension of teacher development. One would assume that for one to qualify to teach at a primary school, they must have an added requirement, one of the indigenous languages listed in the constitution. However, as seen in the recruitment advertisements, figures 5.2 and 5.3, colleges still do not consider indigenous languages as an important requirement in recruiting for teacher training. Such qualifications would make deployment of teachers easy as they would be deployed where their languages are spoken to the benefit of learners. Such

deployment will foster the teaching of indigenous languages as stated in the new curriculum framework.

Mother tongue is essential for learning as a part of intellectual ability. Mother tongue is the language human beings acquire from birth. It helps the child in his/her mental, moral, and emotional development. According to Noormohamadi (2008, p. 26),

> When children are learning through their mother tongue, they are learning concepts and intellectual skills that are equally relevant to their ability to function in their entire life. In other words, according to the 2008 newsletter of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), "Learning in the mother tongue has cognitive and emotional value…".

Research shows that "… the greater [the] children's vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, and writing skills in their home language, the more easily they transfer those abilities to their second language" (Bialystok, 2001 as cited in Escobar, 2013, p. 6)

As a means of communication, a language requires a good teacher as expressed by 80% of the participants in this research. They said that it was important that their children learnt their mother tongue. They said that it was very important for learners to be taught by teachers who know the indigenous language well. They highlighted that a language of a people carries their culture and as such it was important to teach these languages. It is important for the school to offer proper language teaching to the children as the school becomes an extension of the home in terms of language teaching. They said with or without economic value, indigenous languages had to be taught for the sake of cultural purposes. Given the arguments presented by the participants on the way indigenous languages are viewed by the African leaders, one could be safe to conclude that these indigenous languages will remain poor and weak currencies that cannot buy one anything – it is pointless teaching them.

The participants added that it was important that their children learnt their mother tongue from a native speaker or someone who had knowledge of the language because language carries their culture. They said culture-based issues had to be handled by a teacher who knew the culture of the children, a teacher who

understood the culture of the children and a teacher who appreciated that culture. Because of that, it is necessary for the Public Service Commission to consider the teachers they deploy to all primary schools across the country. They stressed the importance of learning one's culture and knowing their history, and said that such knowledge came through one's language. Having a teacher who does not have a solid background of that culture creates social problems that may lead to socio-cultural tension.

However, 20% of the participants said they did not mind who taught their child as long as that teacher was trained. They said it did not matter whether the teacher knew the mother language of the children or did not. It was surprising to get answers such as, '… it is not necessary to have a teacher who speaks the same language as learners because they will use English for communication', from teachers who, had strongly expressed their full support for the government decree to have learners using their local languages at school for at least the first three years on Question 8 of the questionnaire. Probably such answers were a way of defending one's employment at that school pretending they did not mind. The following section deals with another theme derived from answers given to questions asked.

6.3 Theme 2: Language Policy and Teacher Deployment.

In the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015 – 2022), the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education places emphasis on the use of mother tongue in teaching, "In pre-reading and pre-writing, learners develop animation reading, book and pre-writing skills. Learners achieve mastery of language through the mother tongue as the medium of instruction," (Education, 2015). This framework emphasises use of indigenous languages in line with provisions of the Zimbabwe Constitution. Indigenous languages remain important as avenues for fostering early literacy. According to Mak (2016, p. 27), "Teaching in reality is a complex practice occurring mainly in classrooms, where instructional activities and interactions happen". He also says, "Nowadays … becoming a teacher in most modern education systems is based on academic qualifications and professional credentials. Proficiency is related to the language ability of the individual".

6.3.1 Language Policy and Language Teaching in Zimbabwe

Until Zimbabwe's 2002 language policy, the post-colonial language policy was based on the Education Act of 1987; discussed in chapter 1, section 1.3.2. That Act was influenced by the colonial language policies, dating back to the 1930s, recommended by Doke's 1930s study on the linguistic landscape in Zimbabwe. According to Mumpande & Barnes, (2019) the colonial language policy turned Zimbabwe into a two-indigenous languages country by promoting English, Ndebele and Shona while suppressing other indigenous languages. That suppression of other indigenous languages even continued after independence.

However, following immense advocacy pressure from ethnic minority groups, who felt their languages were disadvantaged and neglected, the Zimbabwean government eventually took heed to these groups' demands. As from 2002, the language policy allowed the teaching of minority languages and that was cemented by the 2013 national constitution that recognised the official use of 16 languages, as discussed in chapter 2, section 2.6. However, as in previous efforts to teach the indigenous languages, Hang'ombe & Mumpande (2020) state that there were two common features in all the circulars, one, they raised the hope of language promotion in the speakers of those marginalised languages and two, there was never a budget from central government to bankroll the production of books written in those marginalised languages and there was no training of teachers to teach them.

This sums up what has characterised the Zimbabwean language policy and language teaching. There have been numerous pronouncements and paper declarations aimed at introducing indigenous languages at school, but no visible implementation has taken place. So far, only Tonga and Nambya have been successfully taught and examined at Grade 7 level, starting with Tonga in 2011 followed by Nambya in 2012, (see chapter 1, section 1.3.2). Language teaching involves a lot of planning which the Zimbabwean government, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, never committed to embark on. Commenting on this failure to plan for indigenous language teaching, Hang'ombe & Mumpande (2020, p. 90) say,

> The provisions of the 2020 amendment may be viewed as progressive yet they are quite deceptive in the sense that the teaching of the languages is subject to their having teachers, examiners, textbooks and other relevant teaching/learning materials. However, government has not made any effort to ensure that there are enough textbooks and teaching materials to facilitate the teaching of these languages. This can be said to be a case of declaration without implementation that the Zimbabwean government is well known for (cf Chimhundu, 1992).

If a language policy is put in place but is not implemented, then there is no guarantee that the marginalised languages, as is the case with Zimbabwe, will be protected. The indigenous languages of Zimbabwe can be protected through their teaching at schools and use in communities and business transactions. This, however, needs commitment by policy makers, politicians and those who want the official recognition of their languages. A user-friendly language policy in Zimbabwe will benefit learners at school through the Constructivist idea that, “The students’ role is to construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences”, (Wijayanti, 2013, p. 1). Learners can only construct their own understanding and reflect on their experiences when they have understood what was taught to them and they can relate to it. It is, therefore, necessary to have a teacher who will teach and explain concepts to these learners in their mother language. The Constructivist theory also states that, “students construct the meaning of certain things by assimilating and accommodating through their own experience”. In all this, teachers guide learners through questioning them in order to create the situation in which learners construct meaning on their own. It is important, therefore, that learners and teachers understand each other and share same experiences in terms of background, language and culture.

6.3.2 Primary School Teacher Deployment in Zimbabwe

As a background to this section, there have been complaints about poor results in primary schools in Matabeleland, particularly in Ndebele, for over a decade and questions have been asked if it is effectively taught. Writing for (*The Sunday News*, 2015), Ncube (2015) says that “the continued low pass-rate of schools in the entire Matabeleland region, including Bulawayo, is raising eye-brows with government critics attributing the decline to a myriad of problems, including politics, regionalism and poor infrastructure”. Answers to the questions if Ndebele is taught effectively

have always pointed to the wrong personnel deployed to do the job. Piper & Miksic (2011) say that teachers' language abilities are very important in implementing successful language policies. They say teachers who lack language competencies have two choices to make when teaching; they can ignore the policy or they can try to follow the policy but at the level of their abilities. Whatever way they choose the objective of teaching is not achieved and the end result is that learners fail to acquire knowledge and literacy skills. This may be true about the situation in Matabeleland. Looking at the 2019 Grade 7 final examination results and others recorded before, concerns are raised as to what is taught at school and or who is teaching.

According to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) regional officer for Southern Africa, Moses Mukabeta, Zimbabwe has failed to meet United Nations guidelines in teacher deployment, particularly at primary school. The guidelines stipulate that learners should be taught in indigenous languages in the first six years of schooling, (Reporter, 2019). The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has also failed to meet the requirements of the country's constitution of language teaching and promotion.

While the constitution does not state what the deployment of teachers should be, the fact that it says that all institutions and agencies of government at every level must ensure that all officially recognised languages are treated equally; and the state must promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe, must influence teacher deployment. Schools are the main institutions that accommodate large numbers of learners at any given time with the main duty to teach, so, they remain the leading institutions in promoting all the sixteen officially recognised languages.

In the 2019 final examinations, 25 primary schools, 15 in Matabeleland North and 10 in Matabeleland South, recorded 0% pass rate, including in the Ndebele subject. That raised questions on the qualification and deployment of teachers at primary schools. A newspaper article on 6 December 2019 reported:

> The ministry would like to apologise to the nation, the affected communities and recruited teachers for any inconveniences caused as the ministry goes through e-recruitment for the first time in order to improve efficiency and subsequently root out possible corruption in the recruitment process, (The Sunday News, 2019).

In this report, the Ministry is accepting the blame for the 0% pass rate. The article went on to say that, officials in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education were blaming a “computer-based teacher deployment software that they used to deploy teachers across the country and "possible corruption" for the error, which caused outrage in Matabeleland, and Bulawayo in particular”. Blaming the “computer-based teacher deployment” is an admission that teacher deployment contributed to that 0% pass rate, meaning a teacher has a great impact in the learning that a child or learner goes through. The ministry officials cannot blame this computer-based teacher deployment software in 2019 when communities have been complaining for many years about the deployment of non-Ndebele speakers in the Matabeleland schools, particularly at primary school. Locals asked, by the newspaper reporter, about the results recorded at the 25 schools and other poor results across the Matabeleland provinces said most of the teachers recruited at the beginning of the year 2019 were Shona speakers. That kind of recruitment was against government policy that stated that the language of command for infant classes and the first three years of primary school is the mother language of the majority of pupils.

The poor examination results could be attributed to, among other reasons, many years of incorrect teacher deployment. Tables 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 in chapter 5 may shade light into what has culminated in these results that the secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education describes as “glitches in the e-recruitment process”. Table 5.3 shows that there are 8 heads out of 27 who did not study Ndebele at school and Table 5.4indicates that there are 55 non-Ndebele speaking teachers in the 27 schools where the research was carried out. These numbers have a great impact in the teaching of language as indicated in chapter 5 under section 5.2 where objectives of the syllabi were discussed. Citing Piaget (1954), John, (n.d.), says, “Language … is best acquired or learned when it is taught in the environment where it is used as a means of social interaction, thereby enabling learners to construct meaning about the language”. This quote strengthens the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education’s claims and that of the Matabeleland communities that the 0% pass rate was a result of poor or no teaching at the affected schools.

6.4 Theme 3: Participants' Feelings About Teaching Indigenous Languages

Participants in this research said that as a social institution meant to impart knowledge to children, and because of its role in human life, it was important for a school to have skilled personnel to teach... Leech (1985) states that some of the ways in which we use language are for providing information, to express ourselves or to give directions. These key roles of language are not expressed if learners are denied that chance by the education system that imposes English on them. That imposition tends to give an unfair advantage to English speakers who then enjoy the benefit of the use of their language while non-English speakers battle with English and the concepts they have to learn. This confirms observations by Bamgbose (1991) and Bourdieu (1991) that some languages act like valuable currencies at the expense of others in the linguistic market. Bambgose, (1991), says that a language is like a currency, the more it buys the more value it has and Bourdieu (1991, p. 18) says,

> On a given linguistic market, some products are valued more highly than others; and part of the practical competence of speakers is to know how, and to be able, to produce expressions which are highly valued on the markets concerned.

The issue of the education system being result oriented defeats all efforts of teaching indigenous languages to all learners for the first six years of primary education as stated by UNESCO (2010). This also shows that the teaching of indigenous languages has no economic value attached to it. Much time and effort are channelled toward teaching English and getting learners to speak and write English properly because it is the language of greater economies. This economic relationship between English and the job market was vehemently expressed by one teacher (1.35%), who said teaching indigenous languages was a waste of time because these indigenous languages have no economic value for the learners. According to that teacher, the time spent teaching indigenous languages would be better allocated to English and other important subjects because English dominates all the spheres of life from the job market to the courts. This was a true and honest answer because a full certificate at 'O' Level does not have to include an indigenous language, but must include English. English is the language that that is a prerequisite to get a job, it then becomes futile to allocate a lot of time to indigenous

language teaching when it does not earn one any economic value. The politics of a country determine the status of indigenous languages. If political leaders do not attach any economic value to a language, then that language will only remain a means of communication and nothing more. Looking Job advertisements shown in Figure 5.1, Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 in chapter 5, section 5.4.3 prove the one teacher's observation that teaching indigenous languages is not something one would prioritise at all because they are not a prerequisite for getting employment.

An analysis of more responses to teaching of indigenous languages versus the use of English indicates an existence of a big problem with the Zimbabwean education system that upholds an ideology that associates English with good results, yet failure to master that English is the major contributor to poor results. This means that the indigenous languages of the country are not economically valuable in the job market and so, they will always play a secondary role to the better currency - English. Better results are assumed to come through the knowledge of English hence the claim by some participants that teaching indigenous languages is a waste of time in an education system attaching a lot of value to English.

Besides the economic value that seems to be less or non-existent in the indigenous languages, all participants agreed that it was crucial to teach indigenous languages because they are a vehicle of culture. That confession is supported by Hinkel (1999, p. 3) who says,

> In general, anthropologists are concerned with culture as the way of life of people, the social constructs that evolve within a group, and the ways of thinking, feeling, believing and behaving that are imparted to members of a group in the socialization process.

All the Heads of school (100%) asked about the teaching of indigenous languages said it was of great importance that indigenous languages be taught for the benefit of the learners and development of the social fabric that moulds what children become in life. They said that if indigenous languages would be taught at school, that would not only give learners an academic gain in the language but would also give many social gains. With a language taught as a subject at school, comes social cultural factors that affect thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Such factors include

attitudes, tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences and many other social expectations.

As long as the labour market does not place any importance on indigenous languages, there is no way indigenous languages will be developed to the level of English. Employers seem to be content with English as the language of communication, business and all other functions, which attracts the description of its use as language imperialism. McKay (2002) as cited in Fernández (2005, p. 86) states that

> The position of English in the world today, and the uses we make of it, give English the status of the language for international communication worldwide. Besides, it is used between individuals of the same country (e.g. India) and therefore, it is an international language in both a global and a local sense.

Fernández (2005, p. 90), goes on to add that English "acts as a gatekeeper for education, jobs and social mobility, favouring a monolingual elite". This emphasis on English makes "certain fields of employment inaccessible to many people and causes many minority languages to disappear" (Pennycook, 1994 as cited in Fernández, 2005, p. 90). The advertisements in Figures 1 – 3 confirm that English is indeed a gatekeeper in education. One cannot enrol at any tertiary institution for further studies if they have not passed English. The importance place on the English language makes it clear that there is no motivation to learn indigenous languages because they do not count as important subjects for further education or employment.

Besides indigenous languages being carriers of a people's culture they are also identity markers as expressed by Stoop (2017, p. 2) who posits that

> It is also true that there is a strong relation between one's mother tongue and one's identity. One's mother tongue is also an important connection between one's culture and one's history. … Moreover, the protection of one's mother tongue is fundamental for the protection and safeguarding of one's own culture and existence, and also for the recognition of a need for a sense of "belonging" and shared heritage.

Some benefits of using one's mother tongue are that mother tongue defines one's personality giving that individual social pride. Knowing and using one's mother tongue boosts one's confidence, creating awareness in one's mind while also helping them connect with their cultural identity. Mother tongue also helps in providing a definite shape to our emotions and thoughts as it is the language which a child starts hearing after birth. Therefore, learning in one's mother tongue becomes crucial in enhancing other skills such as critical thinking, skills to learn a second language and literacy skills. In this sense, the mother tongue can be used as an important and effective tool of learning. According to Hikwa (2015, p. 98) "The importance of language in any society cannot be over-emphasised". Moja (n.d.) as cited in Hikwa, (2015, p. 99), explains six facts about the importance of language in form of the following table.

Table 6.2 ***Importance of Language in Society***

The Importance of Language	Explanation
Medium of communication	Mirrors one's identity and is an integral part of one's culture. It is the soul of culture.
Means of expression	Allows the participation of people in community activities and fosters a culture of democracy.
Captures memory	It encapsulates human creativity and originality and peepholes ideas nurtured over time into explainable heritage, local traditions and customs.
Source of power	It creates opportunities for cultural identity and upward social mobility.
Guarantees biodiversity	Biodiversity and knowledge of local ecosystems are guaranteed through eco-linguistic preservation.
It is a right	It emerges as a reason or pretext for conflict or pedestal for tolerance through the exercise of language rights.

The facts presented on the table above sum up the purpose of teaching and learning a language. However, no one seems to accept that the use of indigenous languages

in the education system could produce good results which is why indigenous languages have not been given as much time as English in schools.

Many researches across Africa and Europe have proven that a developed mother tongue makes it easy to acquire a second language and new concepts in other subjects. According to Benson (2005, p. 3),

> Use of a familiar language to teach beginning literacy facilitates an understanding of sound-symbol or meaning-symbol correspondence. Learning to read is most efficient when students know the language and can employ psycholinguistic guessing strategies; likewise, students can communicate through writing as soon as they understand the rules of the orthographic (or other written) system of their language.

Stoop (2017, p. 1), adds weight to what Benson (2005) says about mother tongue use in education by stating that

> The importance of the mother tongue, and more specifically of mother tongue education, is recognised globally. The use of the mother tongue is regarded as one of the most effective ways to act and perform cognitively, socially and communally.

The positive impact of mother tongue (use of Ndebele as a medium of instruction or using it to explain some concepts in other subjects) on learning other concepts cannot be realised as long as mother tongue teaching has no chance in schools. Its advantage and power cannot be realised overnight but like any other process, it will take time and unfortunately, that is the time it does not get. Mother tongue use in schools should be given time rather than have assumptions that it will not work.

6.4.1 Economic value of teaching indigenous languages

In addition to the socio-cultural aspect of language, there is the economic part of learning a language. This theme seeks to address the economic value attached to the teaching of Ndebele. Mutasa (2003) in Rheede (2009, p. 2) states that,

> The people do not see much value in African languages …? Authorities seem to be reluctant to ensure that African languages, by appropriate legal provisions, assume their rightful role as of official communication in public affairs, administrative and educational domains. No one seems to take African languages seriously. They seem to have nothing to offer except in everyday

> communication between members of families and informal conversation with friends and colleagues.

All the participants (100%) confirmed this claim by highlighting that studying Ndebele does not prepare one for job opportunities and does not offer economic advantages that should make indigenous languages attractive. English has remained the gatekeeper language.

In an interview on the dominance of English rendering indigenous languages useless, Fernández (2005, p. 99) states that a participant from Rwanda answered,

> It's a great problem with lots of African children who don't know their language, their culture also because: we haven't been exposed that much, went to English schools, studied English, you know, we know pop music and that sort of thing, you really are not exposed in the media to your own language and culture as much as you'd want to.

Language is a vehicle for cultural imperialism as people are forced to learn it, then teach it and finally practise the culture carried by that language. Language colonisation has continued in almost every country in Africa and being proud speakers of English, the speakers of the language become subjects of the English culture that comes with the English language. It is not surprising, therefore, that most, if not all African education systems still consider and treat English as the language of employment. Learning, understanding and fluently speaking English opens up a world of opportunities, especially in today's globalised economy. African nations put a lot of emphasis on perfecting English at the expense of indigenous languages.

The issue of indigenous languages not treated equally with English or placed at the same level with English as expressed by TP 45, in chapter 5, section 5.5.3, is not just peculiar to Zimbabwe but many other African countries. In Ghana for instance, Bodomo (1996, p. 39) argues that,

> English, though foreign to Ghana, is one of the most important languages in the country; it has been used as an official language since the country was colonized by the British and still enjoys an overwhelming position as the language of education and of mass communication vis a vis the indigenous Ghanaian languages.

It seems African governments are indebted to their colonial masters. It is unfortunate indigenous languages that are important means of communication in African

societies are not widely used in the formal educational systems. They are not languages of national government and of mass communication either.

The job market needs a workforce that is qualified to do good work. Employers want qualified personnel at their work places and so, the school is supposed to teach learners for the jobs they will do after their academic life. As one teacher said, the indigenous languages seem not to be part of the requirements for any job.

6.5 Political Interference in Education

Education can never be free from politics since each and every ruling party wants to implement its own political ideologies and policies. The political environment and temperature of a country or region can have a huge impact on how someone's speech is viewed and understood. Politics can affect people because of geographical location, tribal grouping and many other factors. The political effects can either be positive or negative and it is always a problem when the effect is negative. The heads of school were asked about the political interference in education as some communities claimed that there was political influence in the deployment of teachers at schools and the following were some of their responses.

TP 43: There is a serious problem in terms of teacher deployment because Shona speaking teachers are deployed here and they are expected to teach grade 1, 2 or 3 classes. The teacher does not know the local language (Ndebele) but has been deployed to teach here. The same thing does not happen in Mashonaland from where these teachers come. The constitution states that the local language of the area has to be the language of instruction. How does such a teacher teach? This is a tribal war escalated to political levels.

TP 44: I seriously do not understand why Shona teachers must be deployed in Matabeleland (rural areas for that matter) where they will find it difficult to communicate with the community. I don't mind if they are deployed at secondary school because they are deployed to teach specialised subjects. At primary, how are they going to operate? This is tribalism coming via politics to destroy the Ndebele people as they did with *Gukurahundi*.

See definition of Gukuraundi below.

According to Ndlovu (2017), Gukurahundi was a Zimbabwean army trained by North Koreans that was deployed in Matabeleland to deal with the dissident issue. However, that army ended up murdering civilians (over 20 000) in pursuit of those dissidents. Unfortunately, the murdered civilians were only Ndebele speaking people and that raised eyebrows as whether the Gukurahundi was after dissidents or was deployed to kill Ndebele people.

According to Mustapha & Argungu (2019, p. 513),

> Language is an important tool that every human uses as a specific and common means of expression, communication and conveyance of different thoughts. It is also important as the way of impacting knowledge, instruction, and teaching at in our outside classroom.

Language is both instructional and dynamic. In education, the teacher and learner are engaged in language use in order to achieve significant educational objectives and goals. Effective communication in the classroom, therefore, directs learners' attention to the learning materials. In the classroom, language use involves the sender (in most cases, the teacher) and the receiver (in most cases, the learner) in constant action of encoding and decoding of meaning hence there is need for effective communication to aid thinking and understanding. Mustapha & Argungu (2019, p. 13) add that,

> If the language is one with which the learners are familiar communication is enhanced and learners can participate actively in the learning process on the other hand if the language is strange to the learners learning may be adversely affected.
>
> This means that if the teacher cannot communicate effectively with the learners because of language barrier, there will not be any meaningful teaching and learning. It would also be hard for the teacher to communicate with parents on the learners' educational needs.

TP 44 (a participant in this research) says that the deployment of teachers who do not know Ndebele is another way of destroying the Ndebele people as was once done through *Gukurahundi*.

The above issues were raised as political interference in education. Some participants claimed that the government had not separated politics and education as teacher deployment was political. Shona speaking teachers who could not speak Ndebele well were deployed at primary schools in Matabeleland and failed to teach Ndebele as expected leading to the high failure rate. TP 44 equates this deployment to the murder of Ndebele people by Gukurahundi, which was both political and tribal.

It is evident that there is a deep-rooted tribal, political and language problem. That problem needs a resolution sooner than later. In situations like schools, Bakshi (2015, p. 46) states that,

> If there are many languages spoken in the country, there will be need for a properly planned language policy. A robust language policy can only be achieved if a proper planning process has been adopted by the state. … In such circumstances, the response of the nation to this language problem is either to adopt a foreign language (former coloniser's language), which does not have the shortcomings of the native language, as the standard language or to initiate a process of language planning in order to create a policy for rectifying the problems of the native language.

It does not look like the government of Zimbabwe is prepared to come up with a language policy that will be satisfactory to all parties concerned, the speakers of the affected minority languages and those currently enjoying the dominance of their language – Shona. There is a document, titled, "The Grand Plan", whose authorship is unknown. This document details the Zimbabwean situation to which TP 44 is referring, as it is now. Part of document, reads:

> Roughly 95% of Government jobs in Matabeleland and almost 100% in the rest of the country are held by Shonas. Training in tertiary institutions has played a very significant role, as it is critical that in manpower development due attention is paid to giving skills to the Majority indigenous Shona who will be able to take up employment opportunities always. Teachers' Colleges, Polytechs, Universities, all reflect in their enrolment, Shona dominance regardless of where the institution is located in the country. The most educated people are Shonas consequently.

> The resistance to the teaching of Shona in all schools in Matabeleland will soon fizzle out. More and more teaching posts are being taken up by Shona college graduates and appointments of Shona school heads have already been won. Students/pupils in all schools in that part of the country will, in the not-too-distant future be mostly Shona. We must not forget what Nathan Shamuyarira once observed in the 1979 Grand Plan "the only way to weaken the Ndebele is to deprive him of an education." Shona is taught in all teachers' colleges countrywide but Ndebele is confined to Matabeleland colleges and pressure must continue to be applied to limit the teaching of Ndebele to those few who happen to be enrolled.

While this document is of unknown authorship, the practice on the ground follows it to the last letter. To deny the Ndebele people education, as the document instructs, has come in the form of deploying teachers who do not understand local languages and, therefore, cannot teach properly leading to low pass rates.

6.6 Linguistic and socio-linguistic knowledge and skills necessary for language teaching

It is difficult to split and discuss linguistic and socio-linguistic knowledge and skills from qualifications critical for teaching Ndebele and the deployment of teachers because language skills have to be taught by qualified personnel deployed to schools. The knowledge and skills to be taught at school are listed in the curriculum and syllabi and illustrated in the textbooks. Through such official documents, it becomes clear what is valued as important to teach and learn. The big question then is whether those tasked with the responsibility of interpreting and transferring knowledge to learners are playing their role properly.

According to Angel (2005, p. 3), linguistic knowledge is,

> Comprehending and utilizing a language, and knowing why one says what one says in the situation where one utters such statement. Knowing a language is more than knowing words and meanings; more than handling combinations of structures to transmit ideas and thoughts; and more than being familiar with the reasons why expressions are put together in a particular way. Knowing a language implies understanding the generation of new

> meanings and the ability to decode complex sets of concepts that are not necessarily literal or tangible.

The quote above explains the importance of linguistic knowledge which is a very important prerequisite for a language teacher. However, being a trained teacher is one thing and teaching a language is another. Thirty-five teachers claimed that as long as one is a trained language teacher then they could teach any other language, particularly the indigenous languages of Zimbabwe. However, teaching a language is like teaching any other subject; one cannot teach what they do not know. Teaching a language goes beyond conversation level. One needs to know the correct words, spelling and pronunciation as discussed before.

A teacher has to know the difference between slang and formal language and it is the teacher's duty to make sure slang is not used in formal learning and in formal writing and communication. With the advent of social media spellings have been compromised. If not monitored and taught well, learners use such spellings in formal writing. If the teacher is not conversant with the written form of that language, then learners will continue to use such words with no one to correct them.

Every society has its own language and in the vocabulary of that language, there are contextual words and registers. One needs to know the language well to use those appropriately. Sociolinguistic knowledge is understanding the relationship between language and society (Angel, 2005). This understanding deals with how language use interacts with social factors and how it is affected by the same social factors such as gender, ethnicity, age or social class. That means,

> … knowledge of a language transforms language speakers into agents that can take the knowledge recorded in the language to generate new dimensions of knowledge allowing speakers to distill degrees of truth and falsity in data in order to classify information (Angel, 2005, p. 3 - 4).

This dismisses the claims made by TP 37, TP 38, TP 39, TP 40, TP 41 and TP 42 that they teach Ndebele in their classes because:

> … I speak Ndebele with my neighbours and I know it. I also have been teaching it and my classes have passed.

> … As a qualified teacher, trained to teach all subjects at primary school, I can teach Ndebele because I understand it and can speak it.

Angel (2005, p. 1 – 2) states that,

> Every language has a structure, a determinate phonetic system, a lexicon array, and a rationale behind the way it semantically groups its terms. Spelling and phonology are also equally relevant when utilising a language appropriately in one of its respective formats. In written form, for instance, misspelling a word might cause a term's meaning to change and if someone mispronounces a word confusion might arise, for example, when not being aware of the different 'I' sounds in ship and sheep. To add more, tonality is an element of utmost importance in some languages where tones determine meaning and sense in a word.

Claiming that one can teach a language because they speak the language with colleagues or family and friends is unprofessional. Knowledge of language determines speech production. It is important to teach learners proper registers and words appropriate to their age and level of education.

6.7 Document Discussion

A document relates to some aspect of the social world in which the study is carried. Documents are of different types and serve different purposes. Official documents are socially produced and intended to be read as objective statements of fact. One of the documents analysed in this research is the primary school Ndebele syllabus. A syllabus is a guide to a course detailing what will be taught and learnt, and what is expected of the learners in the course. It generally includes course policies, rules and regulations, required texts, and a schedule of assignments. It provides the learners with a guideline about how a course will be run and what will be expected of them. Surbhi (2017, p. 2) defines the syllabus as

> … the document that consists of topics or portion covered in a particular subject. It is determined by the examination board and created by the professors. It helps the students to know about the subject in detail, why it is a part of their course of study, what are the expectations from students, consequences of failure, etc. It contains general rules, policies, instructions, topics covered, assignments, projects, test dates, and so on.

A syllabus is drawn from a curriculum and a curriculum refers to what is offered by a learning institution. The government or the educational institution plans, designs

and guides the curriculum. It is the overall learning experience that a student goes through during the particular course of study with the aim of physical and mental development of a student (Surbhi, 2017).

A set book may be a novel or text book that an institution requires learners to use in their studies. *Inyathelo*, for example, was the set book for the whole primary school Ndebele syllabus during this research. Learners are examined on the topics found in this set book. In this study, therefore, the set book *Inyathelo* is one key document discussed in the teaching and learning of Ndebele at primary school.

The third document discussed in this research is the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015 – 2022). It is a document that provides guidance in the practice of primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe for the stated period. Its discussion in this study focusses on what the document states and what happens on the ground. The document mentions the use of teaching and learning materials stating that teachers should use a great variety of materials around for the benefit of the learners. These materials vary from chalkboard, charts and magazines to ones which can be bought such as the television and projectors for different subjects. However, the mere use of these materials does not guarantee effective communication or effective teaching; rather it is their careful selection and skilful handling by the teacher that renders them useful in facilitating learning. This strengthens the point raised before that an indigenous language teacher must be one who knows the language well so that he or she will relate effectively with the learners and the material they have to learn providing relevant learning materials that includes the selection of appropriate materials found around.

6.8 Summary

The chapter presented my analysis of the data as was presented by the participants. There are several issues to note in the analysis. Economic connections between language and the job market were presented and from what the participants said, teaching indigenous languages has no economic value as they, indigenous languages, are not a prerequisite for one to get a job or proceed with further education. And of course, as long as English is still treated as a better currency, or a gateway to success, the indigenous languages will still be looked down upon. Teacher deployment is not aligned to the constitution's dictates that all officially

recognised languages must be promoted by all government institutions and learners must be taught in their mother tongue from grade 1 to 3. It emerged that there is political interference in teacher deployment and that may have been done through the guidance of “the grand plan”, a document without a known author but detailing exactly what is happening. The teaching documents analysed are related to the teaching of Ndebele but some personnel meant to use them is not qualified to do so because it did not study Ndebele to enable them to teach it.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the research and reflects on the statement of the problem around which the main argument was developed. It offers the major highlights from the preceding chapters laying the ground for a general reflection on the statement of the problem and how the research questions were addressed. The chapter gives recommendations related to language acquisition planning as it relates to the teaching of Ndebele at primary school level in Zimbabwe before making an overall conclusion.

7.2 Summary of the Study

The study was inspired by problems emanating from the large numbers of primary school learners failing the end of year examinations and also the listing of Ndebele as one of the sixteen officially recognised languages in the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013). The study therefore, sought to examine the causes of such failure and practical linguistic and socio-linguistic features embedded in an official language, that is, a language used by government in judiciary, legislature and or administration. The study sought to determine if the teaching of Ndebele at primary school level reveals the socio-cultural and political ideologies underpinning language planning in Zimbabwe. The constitutional support given to the teaching of Ndebele and other indigenous languages became a momentous status planning milestone in the history of the Ndebele language which had been politically placed in third place in the language hierarchy, with English coming first and Shona second. It is this new description of Ndebele as an ‘officially recognised’ language that attracted the investigation of the teaching of the language at primary school. This was achieved by answering the research questions as outlined in chapter one of this study.

- How should corpus development activities be undertaken in Ndebele to address the functional needs of the language following its constitutional recognition as an officially recognised language?

- Beyond mere constitutional recognition, what practical opportunity planning steps are necessary to expand the utility value of Ndebele in official and powerful societal domains in Zimbabwe?
- How should the Language-in-Education Policy be crafted to align it with the country's language policy espoused in the Constitution of Zimbabwe to encourage the learning and use of Ndebele in schools and communities where English has long been used as the dominant language?

This study was mainly inspired by the constitutional language provision (Article 6) as also captured by the research question: "What does the teaching of isiNdebele reveal about the socio-cultural and political ideologies underpinning language planning in Zimbabwe?" The following are sub-research questions stated in Chapter 1 that guided me in answering the main research question.

Question 1: What socio-cultural, political and economic value is attached to the teaching of Ndebele in Zimbabwe?

This question dealt with the social and cultural factors within the Ndebele people that should be reflected in the teaching of the Ndebele language at primary school level. One of the key factors in teaching such aspects is to mould, in these children, culturally groomed individuals who will be respectable community members who know and respect the norms of their community. To nurture such individuals starts at primary school or at home before the child attends school. Parents and other elderly people at home become a child's first teachers. The school takes over from home to then teach the child what could not be taught at home, but as just a further step and development of the language. Data presented in chapter 5 and discussed in chapter 6, section 6.4 indicates that research participants agree that it is important to teach indigenous languages at school and these indigenous languages must be taught by teachers who know them, either by being mother tongue speakers of the language or by having learnt the language. The school heads emphasised that if indigenous languages would be taught at school that would not only give learners an academic gain in the subject (language) but also many social gains.

School heads also added that a language taught as a subject at school carries on it socio-cultural factors that affect thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Such factors

include attitudes, tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences between individuals, and many other social expectations. A language carries a people's culture and social norms which include language registers. Teaching of such aspects needs a knowledgeable individual who can role model the learners. Each language has its own culture-based register that has to be understood and known when to use and when not to use. That becomes difficult for someone who does not know the language.

Data collected also indicated that teaching indigenous languages has no economic value and there is no hope that things will change in the near future. This claim was strengthened by job advertisements (chapter 5, figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3) that did not have a pass in indigenous languages as a prerequisite for getting a place for training. This on its own undermines the teaching of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe. Some participants said instead of spending time teaching indigenous languages they used part of that time teaching English and mathematics because those were 'very important' subjects that qualified one to apply for training or a job. This also undermines the teaching of indigenous languages at school because having passed that subject (language) at school does not add any value to the pass. A full certificate in Zimbabwe, that qualifies one to study further or get a job, does not require a pass in any indigenous language but a pass in English and Maths. That requirement undermines the teaching of indigenous languages as expressed by the participants who said it was a 'waste' of time to teach what did not add value to job requirements. This also defeats the whole idea of teaching and promoting indigenous languages as expressed in the Curriculum Framework and the 2013 Constitution.

Question 2: What linguistic and socio-linguistic knowledge and skills, based on the syllabus, are meant to be developed through the teaching of Ndebele at primary school level in Zimbabwe?

This question deals with language as used within a society. This pertains to acceptable and unacceptable language (register) in certain gatherings, functions or situations. As discussed in chapter 6, section 6.6, sociolinguistic knowledge is understanding the relationship between language and society. This means that a language teacher must be one who knows the language being taught so that

learners gain from the language lessons taught by the teacher which should also equip the learners with skills of interacting with society. Research participants raised concerns that some teachers deployed in the Matabeleland primary schools did not know Ndebele and they struggled to teach the language and communicate with members of the community. Learners have to gain language that shows respect from the teacher who is the adult and the knowledgeable other, as stated by Vygotsky in the constructivists' learning theory. In these modern times speech has a lot of slang words that are not accepted in formal settings. It is the duty of a language teacher to highlight such language so that learners know the difference between what is accepted and that which is not accepted.

The curriculum framework, syllabi and teaching materials analysed for the purposes of this research (grade 1, grade 3, grade 7 and teacher training college) all indicate a well-planned out indigenous language teaching process. Two of the *Inyathelo* series books *were* sampled (Table 5.1 and Table 5.2) to show the planned teaching of Ndebele at Grade 1 and Grade 3 levels. The content to be taught reflects a connection between home and school so that learners see the relationship between the two institutions. What was then discovered during the research was that the planning of teaching and developing the Ndebele language was done in line with the curriculum framework, syllabi and the materials to be used but what lacked is implementation. This confirmed the sentiments expressed in chapter 1 by Hadebe and Moyo. Hadebe expressed that, "... the personnel entrusted to administer the language by the education ministry are not proficient in the language", and Moyo said that, the state of Ndebele as a language in Zimbabwe was bad and seemed to neglect the fact that, "Your language identifies you; your language is your culture, your language is your heritage and above all your language is your right...".

Question 3: What qualifications are critical for Ndebele teachers for the primary school in Zimbabwe?

This deals with who the Ndebele language teacher at primary school level should be. The 2013Zimbabwe constitution states that for the first three years, the mother tongue of the area must be used as the language of instruction at school. This means, therefore, that learners at primary school level must be taught by a mother

language teacher or someone who knows the language and studied it at school as a subject. This assists in that the teacher role models learners into knowing the dos and don'ts of the language spoken in the community. Data analysis in chapter 6 indicates that learners can only construct their own understanding and reflect on their experiences when they have understood what was taught to them and they can relate to it. That on its own shows that it is necessary for a primary school learner to have a teacher who will teach and explain concepts to them in their mother language, relating concepts to their social and cultural environment.

The reality at primary schools in the three provinces where the research was done (presented in chapter 5 and analysed in chapter 6) indicates that some learners are taught by teachers who are not mother tongue speakers and did not study Ndebele as one of their subjects at school, so they fail to construct the meaning of certain things through assimilating and using their own experience, as proposed by the Constructivist theory in chapter 3. For learning to take place the teacher has to guide learners through questioning in order to create a situation whereby learners construct meaning by themselves. It is important, therefore, that learners and the teacher understand each other and share same experiences in terms of background, language and culture. However, research data (chapter 5) indicated that there is disengagement between some learners and their teachers because of language differences. Any indigenous language teacher has to have an in-depth knowledge of the learners' language so that they can be academic, social and cultural role models to the learners they teach.

Question 4: What considerations are made in deploying Ndebele teachers at primary school to ensure that the envisaged language skills of the learners are properly developed?

As discussed in chapter 6, section 6.3.2, the Zimbabwe constitution of 2013 says all institutions and agencies of government must ensure all officially recognised languages are treated equitably and the state must promote and advance the use of all languages. This must be the basis of deployment of language teachers at schools, particularly primary schools. Research data presented in chapter 6, about teacher deployment, does not reveal deployment strategies that promote indigenous languages development and primary school results in the whole of

Matabeleland do not reveal that either. Instead, there were complaints about teacher deployment of non-Ndebele-speaking teachers.

According to Cherry (2019) Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory that stresses that learning has its basis in interaction between learner and teacher has a lot of meaning in educational settings. The theory can be put into practice in the classroom in the following manner: The teacher's understanding of the zone of proximal development can be helpful in that teachers can arrange their classrooms by first assessing learners to determine their current skill level. After that, they can then offer instruction that stretches the limits of each child's capabilities. At first, the learners may need assistance from an adult (the teacher) or a more knowledgeable peer, but eventually, their zone of proximal development will expand. Teachers can help promote this expansion by:

> (i) Planning and organising their instruction and lessons: For example, the teacher might organise the class into groups where less-skilled children are paired with students who have a higher skill level.
>
> (ii) Using hints, prompts, and direct instruction to help kids improve their ability levels.
>
> (iii) Scaffolding, where the teacher provides specific prompts to move the child progressively forward toward a goal, (Cherry, 2019, p. 4).

Since the study aimed to establish if language acquisition planning within the primary education system in Zimbabwe catered for the acquisition and development of Ndebele as a home language to most learners in the three provinces of Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South, it was established that Ndebele as an indigenous language to many is not treated as a respectable language as it does not have the functions of an official language as stated in the 2013 Constitution.

7.3 Recommendations

Research findings of this study show that the national government's nation building agenda, especially its language-in-education policy and practice pays little attention to the promotion, development, teaching and learning of Ndebele and other "official" minority languages. The linguistic hegemony of English and the politics of language

embedded in the nationalist ideology of nation building were cited by research participants as some of the factors that contributed to the lack of development of the Ndebele language. It emerged that the high status of English and that of imposed Shona as national languages subdued efforts of promoting the development, teaching and learning of Ndebele and other minority languages as official languages. The development of other languages besides English and Shona is viewed as a threat to the nationalist ideology and national unity.

Listed below are some recommendations on how Ndebele and other minority indigenous languages can be developed or uplifted to give them a true status of "officially recognised" languages.

- All languages must be treated equally as stated in the Constitution (2013). No language is better than the other and, therefore, all languages must be afforded the status granted by the Constitution.

Ndebele as one of the sixteen languages is not accorded the status mentioned in the constitution which is demeaning to the people who speak Ndebele. Ndebele should be regarded as good as English, Shona and other officially recognised languages and be used for business transactions, be used in the judicial system and in government. The constitution states that all languages must be promoted in the areas where they are spoken, so, the language of the majority – learners – is what the teacher must use in class not to impose his or her own language.

- A language teacher should be a trained teacher who is a native speaker or someone who has learnt the language up to a certain level at school and knows how to teach the forms of the language.

It is crucial that a language teacher be a good role model for learners to learn from the teacher. Language carries the culture of a people, so, it is important to have a teacher who represents the society teaching the culture of that people.

- As stated in the Constitution (2013), all languages must be treated equally and mother tongue must be used as the language of instruction at school for at least the first three years of schooling.

Findings of this research show that there is a huge presence of non-Ndebele-speaking teachers who also did not study Ndebele, but are teaching learners, using their own languages in a class. According to Mallikarjun (2012, p. 41 - 42),

> Part of that change in the external setting is a new or changed contact between the linguistic community that shifts from its traditional mother tongue to the language of other linguistic and cultural communities. As a result of new sociolinguistic contact, there will be a change in the attitudes towards their mother tongue.

The imposed language is predominantly used in all the other functional domains in which the mother tongue was supposed to be used. This leads to the extinction of the mother tongue as learners no longer use their languages but that of the teacher. As such, it can be said that many linguistic groups have become minorities because of their politico-economic and cultural subordination. This condition is a final stage of language death.

Some of the ways that can be used to promote indigenous languages to the level of the globally glamorised English and the nationally imposed Shona would be to:

- Make sure the governments give indigenous languages equal legal status in education and the courts.
- Strictly monitor that the minority languages are taught as primary or equal languages in schools so that all students in their home regions learn an indigenous language.
- Make all official legal documents, and all court proceedings to be available in indigenous languages.
- Enforce that all printed material include translation into regional indigenous languages.
- Allow political devolution, such as regional self-rule, so that each region enjoys the use of its own indigenous language.

7.4 Conclusion

Indigenous languages in Zimbabwe (Ndebele included)) are in danger and need to be accepted as official languages for them to be fully developed. While the Constitution fully supports the teaching and development of these languages, the

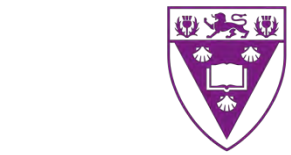
language policy is not practised. This research established that schools do not use mother tongue as the language of instruction citing the result-oriented system of education as the reason for not using mother tongue as English is used for examinations and not mother languages. That on its own endangers the mother tongue and renders it useless. Results of this research and other studies reveal that a language is endangered when the children in the community are not speaking the language of their parents and when there are only a small number of people left in the ethnolinguistic community using the language. Mallikarjun (2012:, p. 43), says,

> A language is endangered when its speakers are using it in fewer and fewer communicative domains and/or are ceasing to pass it on from one generation to the next. Language endangerment may be the result of external developments and policies (whether military, economic, religious, cultural, or educational).

This can be a fair conclusion about all minority languages in Zimbabwe as they have been relegated to near extinction by English and Shona. While Ndebele has, to some extent, also enjoyed the wide use by many people it has suffered the same fate as other minority languages.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Questionnaire used in the research



Questionnaire for the School Head

My name is Seabird Masuku and I am studying for my Doctorate Degree with Rhodes University. My research topic is "Language Acquisition Planning in Zimbabwe: The Case of isiNdebele within the Primary Education System". The information you give to me will be confidentially treated and used for academic purposes only.

Province: _____ District:_____School: _____

1. For how long have you been at this school as Head?

   _____

2. What is your highest qualification? ('O' Level, 'A' Level, Degree)

   Academic _____
   Professional _____

3. What is the language of instruction at this school and at what level?

   _____

4. How many teachers do you have altogether?

   _____

5. How many are trained to teach at primary school?

   _____

6. How many are not trained or unqualified?

   _____

7. Do your teachers all have the same mother-tongue?

_____

8. If the answer to question 7 above is NO, what mother-tongue do others speak?

_____

9. a) For your trained teachers, what languages were they trained to teach?

i) _____
ii) _____
iii) _____
iv)_____

b) Are they teaching those languages here at your school?

_____

10. If the answer to question (b) above is NO, please explain why they are not.

_____

11. To what level were they trained to teach the languages?

_____

12. How important do you think it is to teach indigenous languages and why?

_____

13. Who do you think should teach these indigenous languages at schools and why?

_____

14. What kind of resources do you have for the teaching of Ndebele (as one of the indigenous languages) across all the grades?

_____

15. Do you think teachers teaching Ndebele should have a special qualification and why?

_____

16. Do you have a say in the deployment of teachers to your school and why?

_____

17. If you would have a say in the deployment of teachers across this district and region what would you say and why?

_____

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Questionnaire for Teachers

My name is Seabird Masuku and I am studying for my Doctorate Degree with Rhodes University. My research topic is "Language Acquisition Planning in Zimbabwe: The Case of isiNdebele within the Primary Education System". The information you give to me will be confidentially treated and used for academic purposes only.

Province: _____ District: _____ School: _____

1. For how long have you been at this school?

   _____

2. What grade are you currently teaching and for how long have you been teaching it?

   _____

3. What other grades have you taught before and for how long?

(i) _____
(ii) _____
(iii) _____
(iv) _____

5. What is your highest qualification?

   Academic _____ ('O' Level, 'A' Level, BA Degree or MA)

   Professional _____ (Certificate, Diploma, B Ed, M Ed, Grad Ce.)

6. Do you speak Ndebele as your Home Language? If NO, what is your Home language?

   _____

7. Did you do Ndebele as one of your subjects at school and to what level?

   _____

8. If the answer to question 5 above is NO, what happens to your class if

it has to do Ndebele?

_____

8. What is your comment about the teaching of indigenous languages at school?

_____

9. Did you choose to be deployed in this

Region? _____
District? _____
School? _____

10. a) If there is a YES in anyone of the above answers, please tell me why.

_____

11. If the answer to anyone question in 9 above is NO, how then did you get deployed here?

_____

12. Do you think a child in class has to be taught by someone who speaks his/her home language? Why?

_____

13. What is your comment about the random deployment of teachers done by the Ministry of Education?

_____

14. If given a chance to deploy teachers yourself, how would you do it and why?

_____

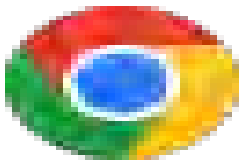
15. How would you feel if your child at primary school would be taught by someone who does not know your home language and why?

_____

Appendix B – Primary School Curriculum

Curriculum Framework for Primary Education 2015 – 2022

Appendix C – Grade 1 – 7 Ndebele National Syllabi



Primary Ndebele
Syllabus Grades 1 – 3

1 - 3

Primary Ndebele
Syllabus Grades 4 – 7

4 – 7

Appendix D – Ndebele Set books

Inyathelo 1

Inyathelo 3

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