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The Impact of Teaching All Subjects in Mother Tongue in the Foundation Phase of Selected Schools in Warmbaths Circuit, Waterberg Education District, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Zanele Constance Ledwaba

Student, Department of Humanities, Central University of Technology, South Africa

Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to critically examine the challenges faced by foundation phase educators when attempting to teach the various learning areas in the mother tongue of the learners and how these can possibly be overcome. Potential solutions should consider the respective roles that can be played by learners, educators, parents and the Department of Education. The study intends to contribute valuable empirical data on the significance of all role-players in the implementation of mother-tongue education in schools in the Waterberg circuit. The study also aims to contribute to the potential overall improvement of educator performance in the instructional process. The population of this study is comprised of selected managers (principals and heads of departments (HODs), educators, and learners, who are the primary role players in the context of this study. The study was limited to three schools and one circuit in the Waterberg Education District, which were randomly selected.

To conduct this study, the researcher used the qualitative approach, using structured questionnaires and interviews to collect the relevant data from the selected participants within their respective schools. Additionally, this study used the interpretivist research paradigm, which acknowledges the subjective diversity of how learners process and interpret the pedagogical information they are provided with in the classroom during the educational process. Once the data was collected, it was analysed and categorised in terms of the emergent themes.

The most significant finding of this study was the major significance of mother tongue in the education of foundation phase learners and how mother tongue usage evidently improved the learners' overall educational and personal development. The transition to mother tongue instruction will undeniably be a major challenge to all role-players, but the potential benefits should outweigh all the short-term obstacles. Given the right training and materials, as well as extensive managerial and departmental support, educators and learners should be able to achieve tangible results in the medium to long-term academic years.

Keywords: *Mother-tongue instruction, foundation phase, warmbaths circuit, curriculum*

1. Orientation and Background

1.1. Introduction

It is the contention of this researcher that the use of the mother tongue in the classroom can enhance the learning process and accelerate the learner's educational and personal development.

The mother tongue is defined as the first language a child is exposed to from birth, as it is the language parents use to communicate with the child (Saneka & De Witt, 2019). The use of the mother tongue in the classroom can serve to integrate both the mother tongue and the child into the wider education process (Maxmudovna, 2020). Using learners' native language can help them learn other languages (Denizer, 2017). The use of the mother tongue strengthens the child's personal, social, and cultural identity (Maxmudovna, 2020). Another benefit of the mother tongue is that it can help learners develop critical thinking, reading skills, and self-esteem (Duru, 2022). According to Nishanthi (2020), reading in one's mother tongue can improve curriculum comprehension. A study of the effect of mother tongue on learning ability by Awopetu (2016) showed that students do not need to mentally translate into their mother tongue to fully understand concepts presented in English. Using the mother tongue helped motivate students and, at the same time, increased their sense of security and self-confidence.

Mother tongue, or L1, is essential for learning because it helps learners improve their intellectual skills, as it contributes to the child's mental, moral and emotional development.

The researcher contends that children who have a solid foundation in their mother tongue before they start school have the advantage of later acquiring better literacy skills in school. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO, 2002), the language a child speaks has a profound effect on their intellectual development. If they

are initially instructed in their mother tongue, there is a huge possibility that their cognitive and related skills could be relatively greater.

If textbooks were to be made available in a variety of languages, mother-tongue instruction would greatly benefit. However, given financial, linguistic, and other related challenges, this has not been the case. The convenient argument has been that English language instruction is the great “equalizer,” as it provides greater access to education for learners from diverse cultural, social, and intellectual backgrounds.

South Africa recognizes eleven (11) official languages; however, it should be noted that in 2023, sign language was added as a twelfth official language). In terms of our Constitution and the South African Schools Act (SOSA, Act 84, 1996), the choice of instructional medium should be left to each community in which learners live. However, that is not the case in practice, with English mainly used as the universal language of learning and teaching (LoLT). So clearly, the practice does not speak to the legislative prescripts, even though the latest population figures show that less than 10% of South Africans view English as their first or home language.

Educators should encourage children to read home language books to help them develop cognitive, comprehension, and literacy skills in those languages, with the hope that this will help improve their overall educational and personal development (Pollard-Durodola, Gonzalez, Satterfield, Benki, Vaquero & Ungco, 2017). The move from English-centred education is not only overdue but urgently imperative. The benefits to the entire educational system and the country cannot be overemphasized enough. This approach will not only strengthen the learners' individual cultural identities but also help boost the development of the personal skills they need to blossom in the classroom.

1.2. Background of the Study

With the recent inclusion of sign language, South Africa recognizes twelve official languages, which are English, Afrikaans, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, TshiVenda, and Xitsonga. The nine black languages are used for teaching and learning during the foundation phase (grades R–3). From grade four upwards, English is the main language of instruction in most schools, with the exception of Afrikaans language schools. As stated above, the main reason for this is that English is fashionably regarded as an international language through which universal access to better education and greater opportunities can be gained. There is also the practical advantage of an extensive array of learning and teaching materials in English. So, this situation greatly prejudices learning and teaching in the mother tongue.

A study by Naketsana (2019), which was based in the Western Cape, found that grade three learners who had been taught in English from grade 1 had reading and writing difficulties and a poor grasp of English itself. This observation has been repeated in numerous studies, which have all found that many fourth-grade learners throughout the country have poorly developed cognitive, comprehension, and literacy skills. So, instead of opening doors, English actually seems to be an obstacle to learner development beyond grade three. In contrast, research indicates that learners who have acquired a satisfactory level of mother tongue mastery have a better chance of successfully acquiring English literacy and performing better in other subjects at a later stage (Naketsana, 2019). Once learners master the central linguistic concepts and principles of their mother tongue, transitioning to English usage is relatively manageable.

Another critical consideration for this researcher is the level of education of their parents. Without generalizing, the more educated or literate a parent is, the more supportive they are of their children's educational development (Naketsana, 2019). By extension, parents who have gained considerable mastery of their first language are also better able to enable their children to succeed at mastering that language at home, which should translate into better performance in the classroom. So, the role of parents in the successful use of mother-tongue instruction is critical.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The successful teaching and learning of intermediate-phase subjects can happen when learners can use the cognitive and related skills they acquired in the foundation phase. In other words, educational development needs to be a progressive process. Learners need to be able to transfer skills, not only from one level or grade but also from one context to another, such as from home to school (Nishanthi, 2020). Many skills, such as social, communicative, and cognitive, are more effective if they have been learned progressively. In other words, a learner builds on previous knowledge for the next phase of their development. Once a learner builds up sufficient proficiency in their mother tongue, mastering additional languages should, ideally, not be difficult (Nishanthi, 2020).

There appears, superficially, to be some merit in the contradictory view. Some researchers argue that many students who use their mother tongue during the foundation phase do not understand most subjects in the latter phases of education (Evans & Nthulana, 2018). The argument is that the lack of prior exposure to the basic concepts of English disadvantages students as they progress educationally. However, as Nishanthi (2020) has shown, a proficient grasp of linguistic and other concepts in the mother tongue should stand learners in good stead when they are later exposed to additional languages or to learning content in an additional language.

This study aims to investigate and then show how mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase can be achieved by focusing on selected schools in the Warmbaths Circuit.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of teaching all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue and what effect this practice could have on the learning process as it progresses towards the intermediate phase. This aim is motivated by many learners' failure to often transfer foundation phase knowledge and skills to the intermediate and successive phases.

1.5. Research Questions

Research questions are the questions that a study or research project aims to answer (Farrugia, Petrisor, Farrokhyar & Bhandari, 2010). These questions relate to a research problem to be answered through a scientific research project involving the collection, analysis, and interpretation of relevant data and then arriving at objective conclusions, followed by related recommendations (Ratan, Anand & Ratan, 2019).

This study used the following main and secondary research questions:

1.5.1. Main Research Question

This study's main research question was:

- What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

1.5.2. Research sub-questions

This study sought to answer the following research sub-questions:

- How does the use of mother tongue instruction affect foundation phase education?
- What challenges are faced by educators in teaching all subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?
- What possible solutions and recommendations can be provided for the successful implementation of mother tongue instruction?

1.6. Aim of the Study

The study aims to investigate the impact of teaching all subjects in the mother tongue in the foundation phase of selected schools in Warmbaths circuit, Waterberg education district, Limpopo province.

1.7. Objectives of the Study

According to Newman and Covrig (2013), research objectives specify the primary focus areas or targets a study intends to examine. The main aims and objectives of this study are to:

- Investigate the effects of mother tongue instruction in the foundation phase,
- Examine the challenges faced by educators in using mother tongue instruction and
- Suggest possible solutions and provide recommendations for the successful implementation of mother tongue instruction.

1.8. Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study will contribute to a more objective and factual appreciation of the role of mother tongue instruction in Warmbaths Circuit schools in the Waterberg District. Clearly, this can be better achieved through upskilling and appropriately training educational managers and educators, which this study emphasizes. According to Tadeo and Queroda (2020), the area of mother tongue instruction in education remains murky and fairly unexplored. As such, this research hopes to contribute to clarifying some of these grey areas.

Since the role of parents is critical, this study will show how parental involvement in a child's mastery of the mother tongue can have a profound educational impact. Learning the mother tongue is crucial for a child's complete development. According to Phindane (2018), when children acquire a solid cognitive foundation in their mother tongue, the acquisition of additional languages should be much easier.

1.9. Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study was the use of mother tongue instruction in the foundation phase in Waterberg circuit schools. For reasons that have already been stated, there are misconceptions, grey areas, and challenges that need to be dealt with in clarifying the role of mother tongue instruction in the foundation phase. The South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (SASA Act 84, 1996) explicitly encourages and motivates the use of the mother tongue in early education, stating that it facilitates "improved teaching practice, increases student participation, and reduces dropout rates." This researcher agrees with Nishanthi (2020) that, if properly implemented, mother-tongue instruction can lead to the development of a range of relevant educational skills.

1.10. Preliminary Literature Review

Mother-tongue instruction in the foundation phase can have many profound benefits for learners, educators, and the entire educational system.

According to UNESCO (2022), "education in the mother tongue is a key factor for inclusion and quality learning, and it also improves learning outcomes and academic performance." Children become naturally proficient, admittedly to varying degrees, in their mother tongue as their overall development progresses. Even though many urban South African communities are multilingual, the primary language that the child is exposed to in the home becomes their medium of communication, expression, and intellectual and cultural development. Parents communicate their ideas, cultures, and beliefs through their home language. Once the child becomes sufficiently proficient in that language, it can be assumed they are ready to transfer that mastery of the language to the classroom.

Nishanthi (2020) contends that, among other things, the mother tongue is essential for guiding the proper intellectual and emotional development of individuals. He states that "learning to speak in the mother tongue is very necessary for a child's comprehensive development." Being fluent in the mother tongue associates him with his culture,

ensures enhanced cognitive development, and supports the child in the learning of other languages. "A child first comprehends what is around them through the language they hear their mother communicating in. Nishanthi (2020) argues that many young learners in the developing world, by being taught in a foreign language, are thereby exposed to "foreign" concepts, which stunt their learning processes." Whatever they then learn in class is either limited, irrelevant or makes little practical sense to them personally, which explains the high failure and dropout rates in these countries.

Nishanthi (2020) suggests that, to improve the quality of education, national language policies need to take into account all the dynamics around mother-tongue learning, inclusive of potential benefits and disadvantages. He concludes that "models of education that ignore the mother tongue in the early years can be unproductive, ineffective, and have a negative effect on children's learning. "Mother tongue education, at least in the early years, can enable teachers to teach and learners to learn more effectively."

While this is the position of this researcher, it needs to be emphasized at all times that a child's mere mastery of their mother tongue does not always guarantee educational success. Several other factors also need to be considered, such as the quality of the education being provided, the quality and effectiveness of the instructional method and practice, as well as the child's response to the educational process. In other words, the mere use of the mother tongue does not simply translate into educational progress. This is supported by Spaul (2017), who states that supporters of the use of the mother tongue in education need to always "stress the importance of the quality of instruction, not only the language of learning and assessment. "The fact that the literacy and numeracy achievement of South African children is so low in grade 3 (prior to any language switch to English in grade 4) should give pause to those who argue that language is the most important factor in determining achievement, or lack thereof, in South Africa."

Sibanda (2019), citing research done in Mali between 1984 and 2000, states that "learners who received instruction in their mother tongue had a 32% higher pass rate than those taught in French" (Eloff 2017, cited in Sibanda, 2019). Such research findings have been replicated globally.

It is therefore not in dispute that the use of the mother tongue in the child's early education can facilitate learning and serve as a motivator when the child transitions from the mother tongue, with which they are already presumably familiar, to an additional language. However, mere proficiency in the mother tongue will not always guarantee automatic success through the education process. It always needs to be remembered that what is more important is the quality of the overall educational system and the skills of the practitioners tasked with bringing that education to life.

1.11. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework in research helps us explain, predict, and understand facts, variables, phenomena, events, and ideas for the purpose of affirming or even challenging pre-existing knowledge (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). A theoretical framework provides a context for the research. Vygotsky's (1976) socio-cultural theory of cognitive development guides this study. The crux of socio-cultural theory is the interrelationship between society and individual development, or more specifically, how social factors and values affect the way one develops. In the specific context of this research, it is evident that the cultural and linguistic factors in a society, or even in a home, have a primary effect on children's educational development. What language is spoken, both at home and in society, affects the child's language development, which will later, to some extent, affect the child's educational and overall development.

Children are not born in an intellectual or cultural vacuum. The ideas, values, and language they are primarily exposed to likely effect and even guide their maturation throughout life. Once they develop some basic comprehension and cognitive skills, Vygotsky argued that children could then later be able to absorb and even develop additional values and ideas.

1.11.1. Application of the Theory into the Study

It can never be denied that children grow and develop differently, both physically and intellectually. For Vygotsky and other cognitive theorists, it will always be imperative to be cognizant of the child's social environment. The educational process does not occur in a social vacuum. A person's socio-cultural environment is one of the primary influences that shape how a child develops in every sense of the word. However, it needs to be noted that even people faced with a similar set of socio-cultural factors will not necessarily respond to those factors in the same way. All the same, the conditions that provide our social context have an undeniable effect on our development. A child's primary social context is their home. The ideas, behaviours and experiences they encounter in that context will often leave a lasting impression on young minds. More specifically, for this researcher, the language a child is exposed to generally lays the foundation for their subsequent linguistic and intellectual development. If the socio-cultural and linguistic foundation is solid, it often leads to a stable developmental process in an academic setting. In other words, children who develop a certain mastery of their language and values are often certain to develop positively educationally. Nurturing children positively lays the foundation for academic success, according to Vygotsky (1976).

Vygotsky believes that language is a vehicle through which cultural and intellectual values can be transmitted from one person to another. A sufficient grasp of those values, if properly framed and used, can facilitate later academic success in children. According to cognitive theory, children who have assimilated their socio-cultural values, including linguistic proficiency, display higher levels of self-regulation and responsibility, thus needing little mechanical control from either parents or educators (Vygotsky, 1976).

In terms of cognitive theory, educators should use perceived learners' cognitive skills to guide their educational development (Wiens, Zizzi, & Heatwole, 2022). Since each learner is unique, interacting with all learners as if they were a homogenous group means the learners will not develop uniformly. The instructional process will impact different learners differently, thus making the whole process inequitable and largely unproductive for some learners. However, given the historical limitations and challenges faced by South African schools, it will always be a massive challenge for teachers, who already face a scarcity of resources and time, as well as overcrowded classrooms, to tailor specific educational programmes for individual learners. Unfortunately, there is often neither the time nor the resources for individual learners to be educated on the basis of their specific cognitive levels.

Within the Warmbaths circuit, perhaps teachers can organize additional lessons, maybe over weekends or during the holidays, during which learners can be grouped into specific categories based on their cognitive skill levels and then educated on the basis of those skills.

Another strategy for using socio-cultural theory in education is to create a collaborative learning environment, which occurs when learners work in small groups to solve a problem or answer a question (Polly, Allman, Castro, & Norwood, 2017). The groups are randomly picked and not necessarily based on cognitive skill levels. The expectation is that low-level skill learners could benefit from working with high-level skill learners, while the advantaged learners could develop further skills and thus further benefit both themselves and other learners.

The implementation of socio-cultural theory should ideally include parents and community leaders (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017) because the home and the community exist before the narrower school environment. These two thus provide the primary developmental context for learners.

According to Vygotsky's theory, language helps us create reality, but this is not a mechanical and straightforward process. There are subjective and often dynamic factors that add to the complexity of this process, such as individual cognitive skill levels and values. The importance of linguistic and socio-cultural factors in educational development cannot be denied.

1.12. Research Methodology

1.12.1. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm provides a philosophical framework through which research is conducted. It is a systematic context created by appropriate and relevant ideas that guide your research. Kuhn (1962) first used the word "paradigm" to refer to a philosophical way of thinking. The way these ideas are organized, the paradigm provides a model to be used in the research process. For Denzin and Lincoln (2008), a model is a human construct used by the researcher to ultimately give meaning to the data that has been collected.

Research models form the philosophical basis of every research project. Once a suitable research philosophy has been chosen, an appropriate methodology through which to conduct the research can then be selected.

Some of the major models or research paradigms include pragmatism, positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). Positivists argue that there is only one universal reality that can be scientifically measured and understood. As a result, they prefer quantitative research methods. Positivists tend to focus on the existence of a relationship between variables rather than why they exist.

Constructivists contend that there are many realities and not just one (Lee, 2012). As a result, they are inclined to use qualitative research methods, such as interviews or case studies. Constructivists focus on the "why" rather than the "what."

Pragmatists believe that reality must be interpreted and viewed in terms of newer and more dynamic knowledge. One's choice of research philosophy should, therefore, be determined by the research question itself. Pragmatists often combine positivist and constructivist approaches in the same research project, often using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a research project or the most suitable of them. For them, the best method is the one that works in a particular context or situation.

According to Skiba (2020), for interpretivists, there is no one best method of conducting research. All knowledge and meaning should be subjectively interpreted because all knowledge and ideas are intrinsically affected by how we think and reason (Hale & Napier, 2013). For interpretivists, social constructs like language can provide access to reality. For this researcher, the interpretivist paradigm was pertinent because the instructional process is always subjective, depending on a number of dynamic variables like individual cognitive skill levels and socio-cultural development. As stated previously, educational development does not occur in a vacuum but is shaped and influenced by the socio-cultural environment in which it is carried out.

1.12.2. Research Approach

The three main research approaches are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods. Quantitative research methods are often related to the positivist and post-positivist perspectives (Onwuegbuzie, Johnson, & Collins, 2009). The data that has been collected, whether numeric or not, is used to reach certain inferences (Tenenbaum, Gershgoren, & Schinke, 2011). In qualitative research, data is collected while studying specified behaviours or phenomena, and the data is analyzed to reach certain findings and conclusions for the purpose of making decisions (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Qualitative research seeks rich information on a phenomenon and moves, so to speak, from the particular to the general.

This study used a qualitative approach to study participants in their natural environment because this was the most suitable means of collecting as much data as possible. The researcher strove to avoid any undue influence, interference, and bias so that the participants could freely volunteer any required information that would help the researcher

investigate all the facets of the use of the mother tongue in the foundation of the identified schools in the Warmbaths circuit.

1.12.3. Research Design

A research design is a method or set of methodologies chosen by the researcher to conduct a study (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). Choosing a particular research design depends on a number of factors, such as the research question and the type of study deemed most suitable to answer that research question (Abbott & McKinney, 2013). A research design enables a researcher to select research techniques that are appropriate for the field to be studied (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016).

This study employed a case study methodology, which is an in-depth analysis of one phenomenon or target. In dealing with human participants, a case study examines nearly every aspect of that subject's life to look for patterns and behaviours and their potential causes (Cherry, 2019). The researcher seeks an extensive amount of information about that subject or group of subjects so that the resulting findings and conclusions can be applied to a wider population (Algozzine & Hancock, 2017).

According to Merriam (1998), case studies can focus on either an individual or a group or on a combination of the two. This research began by examining each individual participant separately and then proceeded to a group focus for purposes of comparison and analysis. In terms of school learning areas, the researcher focused on mathematics, Sepedi, English, and life skills.

1.13. Population and Sampling

In research, population refers to a wider collective that displays or possesses some of the factors and variables the researcher seeks to investigate. A sample is a smaller, more specific representative of that collective that possesses all the characteristics the researcher aims to study (Algozzine & Hancock, 2017). Schools in the Warmbaths circuit were the population of this study, while the selected schools and participants represent a sample of that population.

1.13.1. Population

In this study, the population consisted of all the schools with foundation phases in the Warmbaths circuit.

1.13.2. Sampling

A sample is a specific focus group that represents the larger population. In this research, the sample comprised selected foundation phase learners and educators in the Warmbaths circuit. They were chosen through convenience sampling, which is used to select participants from a conveniently available pool of respondents (Creswell, 2012). The researcher selected three foundation phase classes and their respective teachers (grades 1, 2, and 3) as well as learners aged between six (6) and nine (9) years. Each class was taught by one teacher who taught all the learning areas stated above.

1.13.3. Data Collection

Data collection is "the systematic process of collecting observations or measurements" (Kabir, 2016). Data can be collected variously through observation, interviews, and questionnaires, used individually or together. During observation, interactions in the classroom were recorded using a cell phone video camera. Each class was observed for the first time while teaching life skills and mathematics (Mmetse) in Sepedi (Mabokgoni and Bophelo). Then, interviews were conducted with the educators and the learners.

1.13.4. Data Analysis

Once the relevant data has been extensively collected, it has to be documented, arranged thematically, and then interpreted and analysed thoroughly in an attempt to answer the research question that motivated the study. Analysis has to be based on the collected data and what themes emerge from the data, not on the researcher's preconceptions and personal presumptions. It has to be objective, in other words and must lead to an objective conclusion instead of being used to affirm certain existing positions (Kabir, 2016).

1.14. Trustworthiness of the Study

According to Ratan, Anand and Ratan (2019), for research to be credible, the data must be collected from reliable, impartial, and freely acting sources; the data must be transferable, reliable, and verifiable under scientific scrutiny. To ensure the quality of this study, the following reliability criteria, as outlined by Korstjens and Moser (2017), were considered: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

1.14.1. Credibility

When the conclusions and findings of a qualitative research study are true and accurate, they are regarded as credible (Mohajan, 2017). For the conclusions to be credible, the researcher needs to be trustworthy and use objective, rigorous, and tried-and-tested methodology. In this study, the collected data was shown to the participants to ensure that it had been accurately recorded.

1.14.2. Transferability

Transferability is achieved when the findings from qualitative research can be applied to different contexts (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Admittedly, different studies deal with different research questions, use different approaches, and have different aims and purposes. However, at their core, credible and scientifically objective research studies should aim for transferability. Findings in one context should be achievable in another context using the same data, approach, and methodology.

1.14.3. Dependability

Dependability means that research findings are consistent almost perpetually or until newer data can affirm or refute these findings (Amankwaa, 2016). Here again, participants need to be actively involved in ensuring the data collected from them is accurately recorded and interpreted to preclude bias and inaccuracy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed an "inquiry audit" to establish dependability, through which another researcher not involved in the research examines the entire research process and provides an objective, impartial assessment of the process.

1.14.4. Confirmability

Confirmability is the ability of a study's conclusions to be independently and objectively verified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It supplements the credibility of a study and its conclusions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended the necessity of a confirmability audit, which is "a transparent account of the research procedures followed from the project's inception to the development and dissemination of findings" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

1.15. Validity and Reliability of the Study

1.15.1. Validity

Validity in research is the extent to which the outcomes, findings, and conclusions of a research study have achieved the stated aims and purposes of that study. Validity has to be scientifically measurable using objective criteria determined by academic rigour. The conclusions of a study have to be universally valid, meaning, for example, they cannot be valid for the Warmbaths circuit but be invalid elsewhere (Maree, 2010). Validity emphasises the objective accuracy of the conclusions resulting from a research project.

1.15.2. Reliability

Reliability emphasises the consistent achievability of a study's conclusions (Maree, 2010). The participants were asked certain questions repeatedly, and their consistent answers helped the researcher achieve reliable findings and outcomes.

1.16. Ethical Considerations

Any study should consider the needs of the participants (Cohen, 2015). Ethics means morality, empathy, and respect for the rights of each person. Ethics involves the recognition of what is objectively appropriate or inappropriate, right or wrong. It is an ethical consideration to protect the confidentiality of research findings and results and the identity of participants (Maree, 2010). The views of the participants have to be respected at all times.

The researcher made sure that all ethical requirements were met, using the guidelines provided by the institution. The purpose and implications of the study were explained to all five principals and ten participants from the selected schools. All participants were informed that their names and the names of the schools would not be used. Only pseudonyms were used. The participants were treated anonymously and confidentially. Participants were asked for their consent to be included.

1.16.1. Voluntary Participation Consent

According to Strydom (2011), "voluntary involvement is essential in research because it enables free will and places research responsibility on the participant." It is the researcher's main responsibility to ensure that participation is always voluntary. Nobody has to be coerced into taking part in a study. Participants in the study were not forced to take part and were not promised any rewards for participating. The researcher made sure participants understood that they could withdraw at any time if they wished.

1.16.2. Informed Consent

According to Flick (2016), through informed consent, a participant explicitly agrees to engage in the research project. The researcher should use a standard consent form, which is advisable in case disputes arise. The participants should know what will happen with the information they provide.

1.16.3. Confidentiality

Confidentiality entails not disclosing the information provided by the participants for any other purposes without the express consent of the participants. It also entails not disclosing the identities of the participants and using agreed-upon codes or labels to identify the participants (Flick, 2016). Only the researcher knew the identities of the participants, which will not be disclosed except with their written consent.

1.16.4. Anonymity of Participants

By not using the participants' true identities, anonymity was established. To help the participants feel comfortable throughout the interviews, they were made aware of their anonymity and confidentiality (Strydom, 2011). Schools involved in the research will be named schools A, B, C, or D.

1.16.5. Avoidance of Harm

Researchers are obliged to ensure the safety of the participants and ensure they are not exposed to any physical, emotional, or intellectual harm while they are involved in a research study. Participants were informed that whenever they felt threatened or potentially faced harm or risk, they were to notify the researcher of any possible remedy.

1.17. Limitations

Of the 189 schools in the Waterberg school district, only three (3) were surveyed, and only one (1) in nine (9) was selected for the survey. Only three schools from the selected schools participated.

1.18. Delimitation

A small sample of individuals from the Warmbaths Circuit in the Waterberg section of Limpopo province participated in the study. Circuit managers, managers, and HODs serving as supervisors were among the participants. The study sample was too small; just three (3) teachers and thirty (30) learners participated; therefore, the findings are not generalisable to all the district's schools.

1.19. Definition of Concepts

1.19.1. Mother Tongue

Mother tongue refers to a person's native language or the language they learn from birth (Khanyile, 2022). It is often referred to as a native tongue, a first language, or a dominant language. The terms L1 and L2, which refer to first or native language (the mother tongue) and second language (or studied foreign language), respectively, are also often used. The mother tongue is the first language, not only in terms of when it was learned but also in terms of significance and the speaker's capacity to learn its entire linguistic characteristics.

1.19.2. Foundation Phase

The South African basic education system is divided into three phases: the foundation phase (grades R–3), the intermediate phase (grades 4–6), and the senior phase (grades 7–9). The foundation phase focuses on literacy, numeracy, and life skills. In grade 3, learners learn an additional language. The foundation phase encourages children to be creative, imaginative, and have fun while learning becomes more effective. Teachers at this level should have knowledge of literacy, numeracy, and life skills and be able to integrate these subjects into their teaching practice.

1.19.3. Intermediate Phase

The intermediate phase runs from grade 4 to grade 6 and is the middle phase of schooling, where primary school content is introduced (Mbili, 2018). In this phase, more technical and academic skills are taught. Grade 4 subjects are mandatory for children aged 9–10 years old. They are set out in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). All schools in South Africa should follow this curriculum for their teaching. The mandatory Grade 4 subjects that all children study are home language, first additional language, mathematics, life skills, natural sciences and technology, and social sciences.

1.19.4. Language of Learning and Teaching

Schools must select one or more languages for teaching and learning according to the national official language rules (Churr, 2013). Most South African schools use English or Afrikaans rather than African languages, which are only taught as a subject. English is only one of eleven (11) official languages in South Africa. There is a perception that English provides greater opportunities for further education and work compared to African languages. However, at a more practical level, there are simply far fewer educational resources in African languages, thus hampering their proper use.

1.19.5. Home Language

The home language (sometimes referred to as the mother tongue) is one of the learning areas included in the school curriculum. This is the language the learner knows best and is most comfortable reading, writing, and speaking. The home language taught to the learner at school is often the same as the language the learner speaks at home.

1.19.6. First Additional Language

The first additional (FAL) is a subject taught in the curriculum to students as a second language. Although the student is less proficient in this language than in their native tongue, they will eventually reach a point where they feel comfortable speaking, reading, and writing this language.

1.19.7. Second Additional Language

A second additional language (SAL) is an additional language that forms part of the curriculum and will be counted as a third language for learners.

1.19.8. Additive Multilingualism

Additive multilingualism is when a learner's skills in their home language are well-developed, and other languages are later introduced into their curriculum. This is because the learner will be able to consolidate their linguistic skills in their home language and then easily acquire communicative skills in other languages.

1.19.9. Language Transition

Language transition is the change between the learner's native language (L1) used in the foundation phase (grades 1-3) and the FAL used in the intermediate phase (grades 4-6).

1.20. Chapter Layout

This section outlines how the research report is organised and provides a summary of what to expect in each chapter of this study.

- Chapter 1: Introduction: Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study and contains an introduction and background to the research. It also contains the problem statement, the research question, and sub-questions and outlines the significance of the study.
- Chapter 2: Literature Review: The second chapter is a review of the literature on the research topic.
- Chapter 3: Research Methodology: The study methods, including the research methodology, paradigm, design, tools, data collection, and analysis, are covered in this chapter.
- Chapter 4: Research findings: This chapter presents the findings of the study.
- Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations: This chapter discusses the summary, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from the research study.

1.21. Summary of Chapter

Teaching learners at the foundation phase greatly benefits the learner's overall development. The learning process starts out slowly at the foundation phase and develops progressively. Research indicates that where learners are taught in the mother tongue, positive outcomes often ensue.

1.22. Conclusion

The use of the mother tongue in foundational education presents an interesting development that deserves greater in-depth research. This chapter provided an overview of the research and what the rest of the document presents.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Language is the primary way people communicate with each other. Most African countries have multiple languages, but only a few are recognised as national languages (Smith, 2018). This causes issues for children when they begin school, as they struggle to understand what is being taught. For many children, this has a negative impact on their education, resulting in poor performance and dropping out without completing high school, leading to multiple social and personal crises.

The previous chapter clearly illustrated the potential benefits of mother-tongue instruction in the foundation phase of the education system. The attendant challenges, however, also need to be noted. These include poorly trained educators and either a lack of or a shortage of relevant resources.

The transition from the Foundation Phase to the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) can be daunting for many learners, as they would be learning things they were clearly not previously exposed to. Most schools provide foundation phase instruction in the native language, but the learners struggle when the language is changed to English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in Grade 4. Learners' workload increases substantially in Grade 4, which marks the beginning of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) phase. In Grade 3, learners should understand basic concepts and skills, while in Grade 4, learners are expected to think critically, be able to solve some problems and work independently.

Given our eleven official languages, reasonable academic literacy skills are necessary, so learners should be taught basic linguistic skills during the foundation phase (Madiba, 2020). Because each official language is legally protected and has equal status, at least in theory, parents can assist their children in determining the language of learning and education (LoLT) (Oyesomi, Onakoya, Onyenankeya & Busari, 2020).

Not all children make the transition from learning to reading to reading to learning. This transition is particularly difficult when students have reading or learning challenges and when many students originate from disadvantaged backgrounds and underresourced schools.

In the intermediate phase, learners are expected to acquire reasonable communicative skills in the LoLT to manage the emerging challenges of this phase. If they have mastered reading in their mother tongue, this should serve as a solid foundation for learning to read in English (Madiba, 2020). As previously indicated, learners who have sufficient mastery of their mother tongue should ideally easily transition to some acceptable proficiency in the additional language. Reading comprehension, problem-solving, and ascribing meaning to what appear to be foreign concepts should come easily to those learners who have acquired mother tongue proficiency.

Since 1994, the South African education system has been reviewed four times. First was the outcome-based education system (OBE), followed by the revised national curriculum statement (RNCS), the national curriculum statement

(NCS), and finally, the current CAPS system. According to Madiba (2020), CAPS did not aim at language proficiency and academic literacy but rather sought a multilingual approach that could facilitate linguistic transfer. CAPS advises that English should be taught as the FAL to grade 1 learners while acknowledging that learners have a home language, which is an important aspect of one's identity.

According to Naketsana (2019), during the transition of the learners from the foundation phase to the intermediate phase, there are a few linguistic issues that need to be addressed. CAPS has been criticised for appearing to de-emphasise languages, but this is complicated by the fact that some African parents prefer that their children should be taught in English rather than their native dialect, which has apparently led to their failure (Nkambule, 2018). According to Nkambule (2018), students who begin by studying in their mother tongue are better equipped to master a second language.

Learners with a solid educational foundation, especially in early childhood education, will perform well in subsequent grades (Sibanda, 2019). According to Sibanda (2019), our early childhood development (ECD) and foundation phase systems are in a tenuous state, as indicated by recent international benchmark tests (PIRLS), which revealed that 78% of foundation phase learners are unable to read and write. For Grades R–3, the Department of Education introduced a “no repeat” policy in which learners will be automatically promoted to the next grade, even if they have not mastered the requisite basic educational skills. Unfortunately, as they move on to the next stage, such children face endless learning problems (Sibanda, 2019).

According to Sibanda (2019), one of the causes of the extremely poor results is overcrowding in classrooms, with a national average of about 70 learners per classroom. In addition, many teachers are underskilled and overburdened, thus complicating an already unfortunate situation.

According to Bush (2015), the most common problems at the foundation phase are a lack of ECD education, a lack of qualified ECD educators, and insufficient parental education. Parental education is significant, as better-educated parents have a better chance of supporting their children through the educational process by helping children learn at home (James, 2017). According to James (2017), 50% of children have never read a book in front of their parents, which illustrates the massive problems faced by foundation phase learners.

In his 2019 State of the Nation address, President Cyril Ramaphosa said, “If we are to ensure that within the next decade, every 10-year-old will be able to read for meaning, we will need to mobilise the entire nation behind a massive reading campaign.” To coordinate this national effort, a National Reading Coalition (NRC) was formed. In addition, the president stated that “all foundation and intermediate phase teachers will be trained to teach reading in English and African languages, and a cohort of experienced coaches will be trained and deployed to provide high-quality on-site support to teachers.” (NRC, 2019). The formation of the NRC should be seen as a recognition of the importance of both basic literacy and mother tongue education.

Learning throughout the foundation phase should improve learners' preparation for the intermediate phase of school, and mother tongue proficiency in this phase is imperative. The lack of reading materials in African languages hinders efforts to foster a reading culture in communities (Mahugu, 2019). With this reality in mind, the “VulaBuka” programme offers free resources in African languages for grades 1-3, which can be downloaded from the VulaBuka website, along with teachers' manuals.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a set of linked ideas and intellectual assumptions that support a research study (Méndez Sibri, 2017). A theory explains the what, how, and why of the research problem. The theoretical framework is related to the concepts, vocabulary, research questions, and literature relevant to the research. More information should be provided because the theoretical framework shows an understanding of the ideas and concepts relevant to the research study issue (Méndez Sibri, 2017). Finding theoretical support for the investigation can be difficult (Lynch, Mudge, Knowles, Kitson, Hunter, & Harvey, 2018). The researcher must review lecture readings and key research articles to uncover theories and analytical models relevant to the subject of study you are considering. The decision must consider the theories of adequacy, applicability, and explanatory power.

Below are some ways the theoretical framework can enhance your research. Readers can critically evaluate theoretical assumptions if they are formulated explicitly. Researchers are linked to existing knowledge through a theoretical framework. Socio-cultural theory fits best in this study.

According to Lee and Bong (2019), there are several theories of learning and language acquisition (Lee & Bong, 2019). Piaget's developmental theory, Anderson's schema theory, Bandura's social theory, and Vygotsky's social composition theory are examples of learning theories. On the other hand, language acquisition theories include the cultural transition model of learning (Cummins, 2000), Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), and Kraschen's five theories. The overall aim of these theories is to predict, explain, and help us understand the phenomena related to a particular field and to affirm or refute existing knowledge (Méndez Sibri, 2017).

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1978) examines the contributions of social and cultural factors to a person's development and is perfectly applicable to educational development. This theory argues that educational development is a lifelong process that occurs within a particular social environment. The socio-cultural influences to which a learner is exposed act as a stimulus for their personal and educational growth. The home and the community thus act as the primary locations for educational development, with parents specifically ideally assuming the role of primary or frontline educators.

Linguistic development thus ideally begins in the home, continues during the foundation phase, and should be solidified in the intermediate phase of education.

According to Nishanthi (2020), language expresses ideas and knowledge. The way language is transmitted to a child frames their worldview. What is said to the child provides the child with an intellectual perspective. Once a child masters a language, they are ready to understand what is happening around them. As such, helping children acquire mother tongue proficiency goes beyond merely helping them speak; the process helps them think creatively, understand complex realities, and solve problems.

2.2.1. Application of the Theory into the Study

Socio-cultural simply acknowledges that society influences individual development. This extends socialisation in the school context, where the value of social interaction for psychological growth cannot be emphasised enough. Children's psychological, socio-cultural, and educational development is largely influenced by parents, educators, and certain members of their communities (Nishanthi, 2020). In certain instances, children automatically assimilate prevailing cultural practices and norms without even being told or instructed. The same applies to language—the most spoken languages become the vehicles of expression for children without being taught those languages. The impact is noticeable from there.

This adaptation mechanism will then later be used to acquire the skills and competencies required to succeed at the intermediate level, where clearly English will often be seen as a foreign medium (Naketsana, 2019). Throughout their academic development, learners continue to learn about their culture through exposure to different learning areas. The later use of English language instruction can often hinder that process of cultural development since language is a carrier of cultural values (Nishanthi, 2020).

2.2.2. Socio-cultural Theory

Socio-cultural theory is based on Vygotsky's assertion of the educational importance of a child's socio-cultural environment (1978). The primary language a child is exposed to in their formative years is critical for their educational development, as language not only enables communication but also facilitates cognitive development and creative problem-solving. In terms of socio-cultural theory, successful second language acquisition presupposes some level of proficiency in the mother tongue. In other words, a child cannot learn a second language until they have sufficiently mastered their mother tongue.

Behaviourism states that language learning occurs through a series of stimuli and responses and that learning results from habit-forming reinforcement patterns. For Ferster and Skinner (1957), language is another form of human behaviour, only that it is verbal and not physical. Once there are observable changes in an individual's behaviour, there is then some degree of language acquisition.

2.2.3. The Constructs of Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT)

As previously stated, socio-cultural theory (SCT) asserts that socio-cultural circumstances play a central role in a child's cognitive development and that children often internalise what happens around them. This process occurs through several steps, including mediation, regulation, internalisation, the zone of proximal development, verbal thought, and activity theory.

2.2.3.1. Mediation

Mediation is the core principle of SCT (Vygotsky, 1978). Mediation refers to the various tools and mechanisms used by individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and ideas. These tools can be symbolic or physical, but they ultimately express or mediate what happens at the psychological level. For SCT, language is the most common and powerful symbolic tool people use to express their humanity and their position in the world as individuals and as members of distinct communities.

2.2.3.2. Regulation

Among others, regulation means to control an activity or a process, usually through rules. In socio-cultural theory, regulation refers to adhering to rules on how language is acquired and used to express emotions and ideas. The highest level of regulation is self-regulation when young learners no longer follow explicit rules of linguistic behaviour that were set either by elders or peers (Vygotsky, 1978). This level assumes that children have been sufficiently socialised into their socio-cultural communities and have now internalised the rules that govern all forms of behaviour.

2.2.3.3. Internalisation

Internalisation is the process of converting formerly external attributes, such as the guidance of parents, into internal attributes, such as judgement assessment, for the purpose of behaving appropriately (Vygotsky, 1978). Where formerly children were guided by others, they now assume a measure of control over their linguistic and other behaviours.

According to Thorne and Lantolf (2007), imitation, or mimicking, is one of the best ways to facilitate internalisation in language acquisition. The imitation may not be immediate but could actually be delayed over time as young minds try to process the behavioural information being displayed. Educators thus have to recognise the significant role of role-playing in both language acquisition and the wider educational process.

2.2.3.4. The Zone of Proximal Development

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) arose from Vygotsky's genetic law of cultural development, in which he envisaged two developmental stages in children (Vygotsky, 1978). The first is the skill level that the child achieves working on their own. The second is the potential or future skills level that the child, with the assistance of competent parents and educators, could attain. For Vygotsky, the ZPD provided a space where the child could develop beyond their potential developmental limits, provided they were afforded appropriate support and tools. The ZPD thus offers a prospective perspective for examining children's development.

2.2.3.5. Verbal Thought

Vygotsky also examined the relationship between language development and thought. In SCT, language acquisition involves the development of a language function and a mental function, which work in tandem (Vygotsky, 1978). Once these two functions merge, they should result in effective forms of social communication and social activities, which is then called verbal thought.

2.2.3.6. Activity Theory

Activity theory, which was devised by Vygotsky and later refined by Leontev (2016), asserts that human behaviour is actually a continuum because of the integration of social and cultural mediations. According to Vygotsky, activity is the outcome of mental or psychological processes, and to understand these processes, one simply has to watch human activity. The way language is used is thus a reflection of the psychological processes that preceded the linguistic expression.

2.2.4. Application of Social-cultural Theory in the Study

From the perspective of SCT, social interaction and cooperative learning are imperative in constructing reality. Human learning is a constant interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors. The way we use language, therefore, is the outcome of all these interactions. The more young learners interact, either with peers, parents, or the wider community, the more they perfect their linguistic skills. From an educational perspective, since language mediates expression, the more a child is exposed to a language and its dynamics, the more proficient they will be in that language.

2.3. Literature Review

The experts who reviewed the 2009 curriculum concluded that the transition from three learning areas in the foundation phase to eight in the intermediate phase was problematic and could be the reason for the decline in student performance in the later phase (National Curriculum Statement (NCS), 2009). They conclude that "beginning in Grade 1, all learners whose Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) is English will be required to take English as a subject. This means that English will be taught alongside home languages for learners in later grades who choose English as a Language of Learning and Teaching." English is taught as a subject in Grade 1 in accordance with recommendations accepted by the Council of Education Ministers in 2010. The NCS recommended that the primary language of instruction chosen by learners begin as a subject in the foundation phase of Grade 4. Starting in 2012, all children in the foundation phase (Grades 1-3) were required to take math, life skills, home language, and FAL.

The Department of Education reduced the number of subjects in the intermediate phase to guarantee that fundamental skills were strengthened. However, in the early grades, English was not a substitute for the home language. The foundation phase would provide instruction in the learner's mother tongue. Switching to English as the medium of instruction was especially appropriate for schools where English was not the primary language. Even though the minister acknowledged that the switch to English was still challenging, the department is committed to accomplishing this through several initiatives.

2.3.1. Challenges of Teaching English as a Home Language in the Foundation Phase

Karademir and Gorgoz (2019) found that foundation phase educators faced challenges in the four main areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Since learners in the foundation phase are first taught in their mother tongue, late exposure to English language instruction has created difficulties for these learners. English was foreign to them, and they could not freely express themselves in English. There was also a scarcity of usable materials and resources in English that they could use to transition from their mother tongue backgrounds.

In South Africa, there are similar challenges. There are not even teaching and learning resources in the mother tongues to enable effective teaching and learning in those languages in the foundation phase. Many educators do not possess the skills, qualifications, and competencies to teach foundation-phase disciplines in the mother tongue, and many actually believe it is not productive to teach in the mother tongue, as English will be the medium of education once these learners progress to tertiary education.

A major requirement is translating the curriculum into African languages so that they may be used to learn and teach languages in the classroom. The only subjects in the curriculum that are currently available in African languages are the African languages themselves, while English and Afrikaans are used to teach content subjects.

Literacy, numeracy, and life skills are the three subject areas covered in the South African foundation phase. The topic matter for literacy learning is written in the relevant native tongue. However, there are no African language versions of the texts for numeracy and life skills. It is difficult to adapt academic content to African languages and to increase their

capacity to engage in academic discourse. African languages must, therefore, be developed as academic and scientific languages.

As the number of subjects increases, the intermediate phase becomes increasingly complicated. There are eight learning areas: mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, arts and culture, economic and management sciences, life orientation, and technology. Languages (mother tongue and first additional language) are also included. Furthermore, some of the subjects contain additional learning areas. Natural sciences, for instance, include both physical science and biology, while social sciences cover both history and geography. As the learner advances through the grades, the curriculum for these learning areas gets more complicated in terms of depth and specialisation.

The language used to write textbooks, readers, support materials, teaching aids, guides, and literature must be understandable to students. To keep up with changes in these fields, they must be regularly updated. This is especially critical in mathematics, science, and technology, where many new words and phrases must be learned by educators and then taught to students.

Most countries have adopted English as a medium of communication to support their economies and improve employment opportunities for their citizens. There are also efforts to make English the primary language of instruction in basic education in sub-Saharan Africa, even though many studies indicate that students benefit from learning in their mother tongue in their early school years (Trujillo, 2020; Stoop, 2017; Saneka & De Witt, 2019).

Learners are more likely to participate in the learning process when instruction is given in their native tongue (Trujillo, 2020; Stoop, 2017; Saneka & De Witt, 2019). Mother-tongue instruction enables students to express new ideas while also asking questions. It improves the learners' self-esteem and affirms their cultural identity, which then positively affects how students perceive the value of education in their lives.

Students who speak and understand the language being used in their education learn better and more effectively, and they express great satisfaction when they realise that they can express ideas in that language.

It has been shown that skills learned in a learner's first language do not need to be taught again when a learner uses a second language (Trujillo, 2020; Stoop, 2017; Saneka & De Witt, 2019). A learner who is proficient in reading and writing in one language will often succeed in using a second language because knowledge and some skills can often be transferred between languages. It is thus evident that starting school in a learner's mother tongue increases the development of the skills required for success in formal education.

Using the pupils' first language in the classroom can facilitate a smooth transition from home to school. As students make progress in their education, they learn the basics of reading quickly. This also stimulates more creativity and originality in the educator, as they have to adapt to the learner's progress. The entire process will inevitably improve learning outcomes (Nishanthi, 2020).

2.3.2. Advantages of Mother Tongue Education

The child's first or native language is the language spoken by their parents. If a child's school and home languages are the same, their proficiency in that language will only improve (Sibanda, 2019). Similarly, Perez and Alieto (2018) found a significant link between a child's curriculum comprehension and the use of mother-tongue instruction.

For Nishanthi (2020), the development of a mother tongue is crucial for children since it helps them gain literacy and critical thinking abilities, which are critical educational skills. When they are later exposed to an additional language, these learners often easily transfer the original skills to the additional language.

Children who learn in their mother tongue understand educational content better (Mandillah, 2019). The skills acquired in the mother tongue do not need to be retaught when the child transfers to another setting. Such children also have relatively higher self-esteem and a desire to be more educated. The involvement of parents in their children's schoolwork also adds to this progressive disposition in the child, as the child not only wants to succeed but to do so demonstrably.

2.3.3. International Perspectives of Mother Tongue

Many countries around the world prefer mother-tongue instruction and recommend that children begin school in their native language (Essien, 2018). In Norway, schools provide adapted language education to children who are not fluent in Norwegian, as the aim is to slowly assimilate the learners into Norwegian linguistic proficiency so they can be taught in Norwegian.

Southern African countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania have adopted mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase, even though there is some resistance from parents and the authorities based on the misconception that English is a "universal language" (Mandillah, 2019).

Though mother tongue education has increased throughout Africa, Latin America, and Asia, the linguistic plurality of many societies often means that the language children are expected to learn in school is often different from the language they speak at home (McIvor & Anisman, 2018). As a result, about 40% of children globally are educated in a language that is not their mother tongue. In Uganda, the government launched a mother-tongue education programme in 2009 with the goal of improving the country's test scores. Learners in grades 1-3 were taught in the language of their region, with English instruction beginning in grade four. In Ethiopian rural schools, learners who scored highest in arithmetic and English were mainly taught in their mother tongues.

In Zambia, in 2014, the government introduced mother tongue instruction for primary school children, using Lavale, a regional language in many rural regions (Dangbégnon, 2021). As a result, reading and mathematics test scores improved.

According to the Rutu Foundation (2022), which seeks to make mother-tongue education a universal practice, children who learn in their mother tongue learn more effectively. Parental involvement is also significant since parents are the children's primary educators, thus making education a collaborative project. Children who are educated in their mother tongue value their cultural identity more since they are aware of its educational and transformative role.

According to UNESCO, pupils perform better academically the longer they study in their native tongue (UNESCO, 2018). In Thailand, the Asia Foundation piloted a programme called "My Community Reader," which aims to develop and distribute native books for Thai children, the majority of whom do not speak standard Thai, the country's official language. Thailand's first national language policy, developed in 2010, encourages schools to teach in their respective regional mother tongues. Every year on February 21st, UNESCO observes International Mother Language Day and continues to support mother tongue education as part of its sustainable development goals (SDGs).

2.3.4. The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Foundation Phase in African Countries – Challenges and Benefits

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) hopes to improve the curriculum by introducing technical topics such as coding, robotics, and data analysis at the university level and preparing learners to work in an ever-changing and increasingly digitised world. Some secondary schools will be transferred to concentration schools (DHE, 2017). By mid-2020, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) aims to complete the code and robotics curriculum for the R-9. Specialisations will be added to the emphasis on science, technology, and mathematics (STEM) at selected schools. Grants for STEM will cover the costs of workshops and laboratories, hardware, and support services for these schools, which will be feeder tertiary institutions.

The challenge here is the critical scarcity and even non-availability of scientific teaching resources in African languages. Much urgent work still needs to be done to ensure that African languages are a central component of educational processes in the technological age (Deyi, 2018).

2.3.4.1. Acquisition of Linguistic Proficiency

Learners can express themselves more effectively and freely by speaking in their native language in class (Nishanthi, 2020). Even learners whose command of the mother tongue is not advanced can improve this through regular involvement and participation in classroom activities, which also build up a learner's self-confidence.

2.3.4.2. Acquisition of Knowledge

Teaching learners to read for information is the primary goal of using the mother tongue, and once they have mastered their mother tongue, reading for information will be a natural habit for such learners. They will naturally use their mother tongue to understand and process ideas (Nishanthi, 2020).

2.3.4.3. Improved Mental and Emotional Development

One of the primary goals of mother-tongue instruction is to enable learners to express their feelings, thoughts, and experiences in their mother tongue (Nishanthi, 2020). To maintain a positive social environment in the classroom, teachers and learners should be encouraged to speak in their mother tongue. According to Naketsana (2019), translating an additional language into the learners' mother tongue simplifies the meaning of the additional language. Once the learner acquires a sufficient grasp of the additional language, they can also express their emotions and ideas in it.

2.3.4.4. Improved Creative Faculties

For Tainio and Satu (2016), once learners have mastered their mother tongue to a reasonable degree, learning an additional language will help improve their creative abilities. Exploring language stimulates a learner's imagination, and once they become proficient in an additional language, it improves their creativity.

2.3.5. Why the Mother Tongue Should Be Used in Primary Schools

The importance of using the mother tongue in primary schools cannot be overestimated. According to the Rutu Foundation (2022), a reasonable grasp of the mother tongue encourages a positive self-concept, can ideally improve family relationships, and ensures continuous mental development.

Properly designed mother tongue-based education (MTBE) programmes can improve literacy and overall academic learning (Nishanthi, 2020; Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). A learner's mastery of the academic programme rests almost entirely on their mastery of the mother tongue. As stated previously, language is a repository of knowledge, culture, values, and ideas, and once a child has sufficiently learned their mother tongue, their academic, intellectual, and emotional development will be much easier and quicker.

When learners appreciate the information and knowledge brought to them through the use of mother-tongue instruction, they not only appreciate the value of that knowledge, but the educational process as a whole becomes more effective (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016).

2.3.5.1. Characteristics of Mother Tongue Based Education (MTBE)

Knowing any language should presumably help a person better understand the world (Trujillo, 2020). Knowing their own language helps a child understand how their world works, and this will encourage the child to interact with and explore that world more and more. Once they have succeeded in that exploration, a positive self-concept can develop. This can, thus, be facilitated through mother tongue-based education (MTBE).

A child who has developed a sufficient grasp of their mother tongue can help educate others who have less developed skill levels (Nishanthi, 2020). MTBE can, thus, facilitate peer interaction and group learning once there is some reasonable proficiency in the mother tongue among even a few confident learners.

A language is enriched by its users, while it also enriches the grammatical skills of its users through repeated effective use (Duru, 2022). MTBE provides a controlled, formal environment in which grammatical enrichment can take place. Major benefits of enhanced grammatical skills include increased self-confidence, a better self-concept, and a more positive attitude towards the world. Such individuals ideally go on to be successful intellectually and in other aspects.

MTBE serves to mediate a harmonious merging of old and new information and knowledge (Hassanzadeh et al., 2017). The proverbial marriage of the new and the old often happens smoothly when mother tongue proficiency is used to explore newer ideas in other learning and focus areas. There are not many new mathematical concepts, for example, but when these are explored or translated into the mother tongue, they will often have an added significance for mother tongue learners, who largely struggle with the STEM learning areas as they are often seen as foreign and overly complex. Even complex literary texts, such as Shakespeare, for example, have been shown to excite new audiences once they have been translated.

2.3.6. Effects of Mother Tongue-Based Education (MTBE)

A child's proficiency in the mother tongue can often indicate their potential second language development. Research indicates a high correlation between learning to read in the mother tongue and subsequent reading achievement in the second language (Nishanthi, 2020). It is evident that supporting the development of the mother tongue can facilitate second language learning.

Mother tongue-based education (MTBE) views English as a second language learned only after the pupil appears to have mastered his or her mother tongue. This is meant to enable the student to easily understand English. Mother tongue proficiency thus enables native speakers to learn English while strengthening their cultural foundations by mastering their mother tongue (Saneka & de Witt, 2019).

2.3.7. Perspectives of Mother Tongue Instruction

As previously shown, mother-tongue instruction has many undeniable benefits. There are several perspectives that can be used to view mother tongue instruction, such as the psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, political, cultural, gender, and educational perspectives.

2.3.7.1. Psycholinguistic Perspective

According to the psycholinguistic perspective, every child is born with the ability to learn any language (Chomsky, 1968). This ability is embedded in their minds and provides the basic building blocks of later linguistic development, ideally in the first language. The same building blocks can facilitate second language learning.

2.3.7.2. Sociolinguistic Perspective

Sociolinguistics is an approach to language learning that recognises the contribution of social factors. Language learning may be an individual process, but that individual exists in a society that affects that person's language acquisition and development (Karademir & Gorgoz, 2019). The growth of globalisation has reduced the world to a big village, where different and distant cultures affect and influence each other and how people learn language.

2.3.7.3. Political Perspective

Political factors affect every society. Monolingual societies have different political dynamics compared to multilingual societies (Rutu Foundation, 2022). The more linguistically diverse a country is, the more complex its politics and the relationship between language and politics. The use of a common language can be used to bridge political and cultural divisions, while a specific language can be used by its native speakers to enhance cultural and political identity. Where a particular language is seen as a symbol of repression, for example, Afrikaans in apartheid South Africa, the use of a native language can assume political significance and be used as a form of political resistance (Rossi, 2022). A country's language policy must recognise its cultural and linguistic diversity, as language rights are entrenched in a country's constitution. The acknowledgement of the significance of mother tongue instruction is a recognition by the South African government that linguistic rights are human rights.

2.3.7.4. Cultural Perspective

A person's culture is expressed through language, which is arguably one of the most important components of culture (UNESCO, 2008). Therefore, the use of a particular language for educational purposes always has cultural significance. Since Afrikaans speakers often insist on being taught in Afrikaans for this reason, the same argument should be used for the adoption of mother tongue instruction by other cultural groups as well. However, a multilingual society like South Africa also has a nation-building program that acknowledges both individual cultures and the significance of national identity. Social cohesion recognises that all languages are significant for their speakers, but they can all contribute to a national identity.

2.3.7.5. Gender Perspective

Mother-tongue education is essential to promoting social inclusion and gender equality (UNESCO, 2007). Throughout the developing world, where girls are taught in their mother tongue, they remain longer in school and even

perform better than when they are taught in a foreign language. The female learners identify with the language and do not view it as a threat to their gender and social identities, thus seeing education as a route to self-fulfilment.

2.3.7.6. Pedagogical Perspective

The evidence for the pedagogical necessity of mother-tongue instruction is extensive (Naketsana, 2019; Nishanthi, 2020; Sibanda, 2019; Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). Children learn better and faster when taught in their mother tongue, and once they have mastered it, their overall educational development is often much easier than if they had started their basic education in a foreign language. The main challenges remain the lack of educational materials and insufficient teacher training, as well as poor policy planning and implementation.

2.4. *Benefits of Mother Tongue Education*

There are multiple benefits of mother tongue-based education:

2.4.1. Creates a Positive Teaching and Learning Environment

When learners are taught in their mother tongue, they acquire crucial skills such as critical thinking and reading ability (Kusumoto, 2018). A strong mother tongue foundation enables children to master other languages by applying their existing mother tongue knowledge to new languages (Sibanda, 2019). Such children are also eager learners who like to explore newer knowledge and learning areas, thus turning the classroom into a positive learning environment.

2.4.2. Enhances Knowledge of the Curriculum and Improves the Expected Outcomes

In the foundation phase, learners who have mastered their mother tongue perform better in overall curriculum delivery and across different learning areas compared to learners who struggle with linguistic development (Nishanthi, 2020). In other words, they do better across the curriculum and often perform above average.

2.4.3. Assists in Lesson Assessment

Assessment is a non-negotiable component of every proper educational process. Educators have to assess the progress of learners; educators have to assess their own performance in class, and learners also have to assess their own educational progress (Sibanda, 2019). The success of a lesson can be assessed through learner responses. When learners perform well because they understand the lesson, it means the lesson has achieved its goals. Mother-tongue instruction facilitates this process in the foundation phase because there are no linguistic barriers between the educator and the learner.

2.4.4. Assists in Professional Educator Development

According to Khanyile (2022), one of the major obstacles to effective mother tongue education in South Africa is educator resistance and underskilling. Many educators believe mother-tongue instruction is counterproductive since learners could ultimately reach tertiary education, where the main language of education is English. This can be countered through the extensive development of educational materials in the mother tongue and the extensive reskilling for educators to capacitate them for mother tongue education. These are clearly long-term projects, but they are enshrined in our national language policy and the constitution and so cannot be avoided.

2.4.5. Encourages Greater Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Participation

The use of the mother tongue can enable both educators and learners to actively participate in a wider range of extra-curricular activities because, once language barriers have been removed, there is no limit to what activities can be used to supplement educational development (Nishanthi, 2020).

2.4.6. Improves Administration of Resources and Record Keeping

The use of the mother tongue in the foundation phase allows for simpler administrative tools and better record-keeping because the language being used does not contain what appear to be foreign concepts (Nishanthi, 2020). Schools with better administrative processes have better management processes overall and ultimately perform better academically as well.

2.4.7. Improves Performance Appraisal System

Performance appraisal is related to assessment. Educators need to be appraised to determine whether they are succeeding or failing in terms of their primary mandate, which is teaching, and their other related responsibilities (Sibanda, 2022). A performance appraisal system for a foundation phase based on the mother tongue should acknowledge whether educators appreciate the various underlying assumptions that drive mother tongue education and thus operate within the parameters of that approach.

2.5. *Implementation of Mother Tongue Education in Schools*

2.5.1. Training and Capacity Building

As previously noted, one of the major obstacles to the effective implementation of mother tongue-based education (MTBE) is poor teacher training (Mohohloane, 2020). Educators need to be trained in the most effective, up-to-date

instructional practices and methods. The institutions that currently provide teacher training need to include MTBE courses in their modules. The DBE needs to be the main player in this initiative.

2.5.2. Planning for Implementation

Language policy planning has to be inclusive and progressive in terms of recognising the roles of as many role-players as possible and also being cognisant of the specific regional and local linguistic peculiarities (Khanyile, 2022). A one-size-fits-all language policy is a recipe for disaster, as language is specific and localised. Educational managers, principals, educators, school governing bodies (SGBs), parents, and learner representatives all need to be acknowledged by any language policy if it is to be effective.

The benefits of MTBE need to be sold to as many stakeholders as possible so that the eventual implementation of the policy can be a collective initiative supported by as many stakeholders as possible.

2.5.3. Pre-evaluation

Learners need to be systematically evaluated before they can be taught in their mother tongue so that educators can assess their comprehension, reading, and cognitive skills (Karagiorgi, Nicolaidou, Yiasemis & Georgiades, 2015). This is necessarily an ongoing process, as learners are dynamic actors who either progress, regress, or stagnate in terms of their educational development. The purpose of pre-evaluation is to customise instructional content and methods to better benefit learners. Learning has to be tailored to the learners' cognitive skill levels, while methods have to be adjusted based on their effectiveness.

2.5.4. Classroom Observation

Classical classroom observation is when a head of department (HOD), principal, or colleague systematically observes an educator in class and later provides feedback (Alford, Rollins, Padrón, & Waxman, 2016). The purpose of the exercise, if properly carried out, is to assist educators in being effective by improving their instructional strengths and reducing their weaknesses. The process can be both formal and informal. However, it is most effective when the observations are recorded and written down and when the process is regular, at intervals, to be determined either by the school or educational authorities (Alford, Rollins, Padrón, & Waxman, 2016). Formalised MTBE is a fairly underexplored area for many educators, and classroom observation can only benefit learners, educators, and the entire education system.

2.6. Challenges of Using Mother Tongue Based Education

2.6.1. Integration into Society

South African society is multilingual, and as such, foundation phase learners, depending on the linguistic characteristics of their communities, have to constantly move from the exclusive use of one language in class to another language outside school (Sibanda, 2019). For mother tongue learners, this is actually an advantage as it facilitates the acquisition of an additional language and thus further contributes to the learner's social integration. The more languages a learner learns, the more people they can interact with, and thus, the more they develop better social and interpersonal skills.

2.6.2. Lack of Learning Materials

Learning materials in the mother tongue is a perennial challenge throughout the entire education system in South Africa (Deyi, 2018). Greater commitment and other resources are required to overcome this challenge, and though this will admittedly take a very long time, a start needs to be made.

2.6.3. Unavailability of Teachers

For Khanyile (2022), another major challenge in implementing MTBE is the dire shortage of suitably qualified educators who can assist. There are not enough teaching and learning resources; many institutions do not offer MTBE courses, and many teachers see MTBE as counterproductive and wasteful since learners and parents believe English is the pathway to professional and personal success.

2.6.4. Lack of Policy Clarity

Even though South Africa has a national language in education policy, implementation is problematic because of grey areas in the policy. On paper, SGBs and parents have the right to choose which language their learners are taught in, but in practice, English is the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in almost all communities across the country. The policy says one thing, but the practice goes in a completely different direction altogether (Khanyile, 2022).

2.6.5. Lack of Funds

Developing appropriate teacher skills, creating the required learning materials, and implementing all of the desired measures to ensure effective MTBE requires massive financial support. The funds have to come from national, provincial, and even local authorities where they are involved in educational development. However, the private sector has to be encouraged to contribute financially to this project since socio-economic development depends largely on the success of educational development. Parents and schools themselves have to devise initiatives to raise funds to finance MTBE.

2.7. Models for Implementing Mother Tongue Based Education

According to Nishanthi (2020), children with a good foundation in their mother tongue at school have better reading skills in that language and in other additional languages and learning areas. Research indicates that learners who come to school with a better grasp of their mother tongue have more advanced reading and writing skills in the language used at school (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016; Trujillo, 2020; Agoke, 2019; Awopetu, 2016; Beka, 2016). The following models can be used to implement MTBE:

2.7.1. The Central Control Model

When decision-making power is centralised in education managers and principals, they then also have the responsibility to implement MTBE (Carter, 1998). All decisions and action steps are directly in their control rather than with national and provincial authorities.

The advantages of this model include:

- Accountability is held at the local level;
- Decisions are direct and clear, and
- Implementation can be monitored very closely.

The disadvantages of this model include:

- The model is top-down and can thus be authoritarian;
- There may be differences in opinion between managers and educators, and
- National and provincial authorities may be excluded from the process.

In this model, principals and the circuit manager have to play a major role in the successful implementation of MTBE in the school. They have to lead by example while educators enact their decisions.

2.7.2. The Self-Accounting Model

Based on the training they have received, educators use their discretion to decide on the best and most effective strategies for implementing MTBE. They are, however, still obliged to report to the HOD and the principal.

2.7.3. The Consumerist Model

This model presupposes a partnership between the educator and the learner, in which the educator is a dispenser or vendor of knowledge while the learner is the consumer (Bovill et al., 2016). The immediate problem with this model is that it presupposes a high level of choice and independent action and behaviour by the learner, and at the foundation phase, this is clearly not the case.

2.7.4. The Chain of Responsibility Model

In this model, commands, or directives for implementation, originate at the level of the equivalent of the circuit manager and then cascade downwards to the educator, who has to implement the MTBE without being part of the decision-making process. The educator asks no questions, except perhaps for clarity, and simply implements directives they may not even agree with.

2.7.5. The Professional Model

Educators are role-players whose mandate requires constant professional development to effectively implement MTBE. Unfortunately, many tertiary institutions do not offer appropriate MTBE courses, and educators will, in the meantime, have to rely on workshops organised by the DBE in conjunction with selected service providers. The aim, however, is for educators to be upskilled into effective professionals who can implement MTBE at the highest level.

2.7.6. The Partnership Model

In this model, learners, parents, educational authorities, and educators are viewed as partners in the MTBE process. They are all responsible for the successful implementation of that process, and one, without the active participation of the others, cannot succeed. Educators may be the dispensers of knowledge, but during the educational process, they also learn from the process itself and from learners and other stakeholders (Wood, 1998). Possible variations of this model include the following:

2.7.6.1. Teachers Can Trade Classes for an Hour, a Day or Even Longer

Teachers of one grade or subject can change to other grades or subjects, provided they can teach them, with the hope that the experience will benefit all participants.

2.7.6.2. Co-Teach a Lesson, Project or Course

More than one teacher can be involved in teaching a particular subject in any one grade.

2.7.6.3. Teach Collaboration

Collaboration entails setting up groups in which learners will work together to implement MTBE, always with the educator as a caretaker or steward of the process.

2.7.6.4. Give Learners Chances to Reflect

Instead of teaching all the time, the educator should take some time to engage with learners and gauge their opinions of the MTBE process. Their opinions could then be used to fine-tune the process for educational effectiveness.

2.7.7. Staff Development Model

Teacher training is a fundamental prerequisite for school improvement (Khanyile, 2022). Educators have to be continuously trained to be effective role-players in the MTBE process. There are always newer practices, approaches, and theories in the educational process, so staff development is essential and imperative.

2.8. Supervision of Mother Tongue Based Education in Schools

2.8.1. The School District

The following guidelines can be used by school districts to monitor the implementation of mother-tongue-based education:

- There needs to be regular and formal interaction between all role-players on how MTBE is being implemented. Both successes and failures need to be highlighted to refine the process.
- Newer teaching methods need to be implemented gradually to avoid confusion and frustration for both educators and learners.
- Education managers need to conduct regular workshops where common experiences are shared in order to improve the system.
- Feedback loops and channels need to be created for the purposes of instant feedback and communication between all the stakeholders to avoid delayed information sharing. Educators may sometimes require urgent feedback, and these channels could offer immense assistance.
- Education authorities need to set short-, medium-, and long-term goals for the implementation of MTBE. All stages, however, need to be formally monitored and recorded for improvement purposes.

2.8.2. School Management Teams

School management teams (SMTs) have a crucial role to play in the implementation of MTBE, as they comprise educators, HODs, and the principal and their deputies. They thus have a front-seat view of all implementation challenges in the MTBE process. They also have a relationship with educational authorities and can always discuss emerging developments internally and externally.

2.8.3. Educators as Peer Supervisors

Peer assessment is beneficial in teaching because it provides an opportunity to share experiences and allows fellow educators to learn from each other (Paul, 2021). It also fosters collaboration, professional and personal improvement, and motivation to be better educators. The role of the superior, namely the HOD, does not necessarily become obsolete but is supplemented by fellow teachers working at the same professional level.

2.8.4. Staff Development Team

The purpose of staff development is to enhance professional skills and improve content knowledge. When teachers constantly improve their skills, this can improve children's educational development (Paul, 2021). In addition to gaining new knowledge, constant training exposes educators to newer technological tools. This is the mandate of a staff development team whose primary responsibility is regular teacher development.

2.8.5. Development of Educational Resources

Because of the critical scarcity of mother-tongue educational resources, implementing MTBE requires translating the curriculum into the mother tongue (Parba, 2018). Once this is done, learning materials in the mother tongue will be developed.

This will admittedly be a long-term process involving academics, specialists, and many other role-players, and the costs involved will be considerable (Matlala, 2019). Mother-tongue terminology will have to be developed, and technical and scientific concepts will have to be translated into African languages (Prah, 2017). The process does not necessarily occur in a linguistic vacuum, as surely some terminology already exists in African languages.

2.9. The Benefits of Successful Implementation of Mother Tongue Education by Supervisors

There are indisputable benefits to having children learn their mother tongue in the classroom (Stoop, 2017). According to Nishanthi (2020), children are already familiar with the language spoken at home and are able to express themselves in that language. Transferring their cognitive and related skills into the classroom should ensure developmental continuity, as they already presumably possess some basic, comprehensive skills when they begin the foundation phase. According to Manan (2019), "The use of English as a teaching tool complicates basic academic learning." Teaching children in English often excludes the required parental support when these children are at home.

When teachers speak a language and the learners are familiar with it, the learners enjoy learning more, and their academic performance should invariably improve (UNESCO, 2018). It is easier for parents who are fluent in their native language to participate in their children's educational development and to communicate with their children's teachers.

Language is one of the most important ways to keep culture alive (McIvor & Anisman, 2018). Learning one's mother tongue often fosters a sense of belonging and cultural identity. Learners develop a strong sense of self-identity and pride.

The use of the mother tongue in the foundation phase offers the following advantages:

2.9.1. Literacy

Learners often acquire reading skills without much effort, provided there is sufficient support from parents and educators (Nishanthi, 2020; Rutu Foundation, 2020; Mandillah, 2019). Reading in one's mother tongue can help to develop reading skills that can be applied to other languages.

2.9.2. Former Knowledge

Through their exposure to existing knowledge at home and in the community, mother tongue-speaking learners have the advantage of possessing some previous knowledge that can accelerate their educational development (Nishanthi, 2020). They have the ability to move from the known to the unknown and from the specific to the general.

2.9.3. Cognitive Development and Higher Order Thinking Skills

The use of the mother tongue provides a solid foundation for cognitive development and academic excellence. The acquisition of a second language is also made easier if the learner has sufficient comprehension skills in the mother tongue (Nishanthi, 2020). By enabling the discussion of concepts in their mother tongue, MTBE fosters critical thinking in foundation-phase children.

2.9.4. Consolidation of Linguistic Skills

Well-developed language skills can be observed through listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Rutu Foundation, 2020). Once learners have sufficiently cultivated these skills, they can then easily develop more complex comprehension and cognitive skills, even in the additional language they will acquire later. Their proficiency in the second language will thus be bolstered by their proficiency in the first language.

2.9.5. Teaching for Meaning and Relevance

As has been stated, children with a strong mother tongue base generally have better reading and writing skills in a school language if it is different from their mother tongue (Nishanthi, 2020). More importantly, though, children with a well-developed range of comprehension and cognitive skills in their mother tongue perceive the educational process as an affirmation of their cultural and intellectual values and related belief systems. In other words, MTBE affirms the worth or meaning of their value systems because it speaks to what they hold dear morally and intellectually.

2.10. Evaluating Teachers' Performance in MTBE

Effective teachers transform the classroom into a source of valuable and often lifelong knowledge (Lee & Mamerow, 2019). Learners come from very diverse backgrounds, whether socially, personally, or intellectually, but the common ground is provided by their need to be educated. From the MTBE perspective, a proper evaluation of teacher performance should assess not just how education is delivered but, more importantly, whether it transforms learners into self-assured and confident personalities that can make sense of a complex world mediated through language.

2.11. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the literature on mother tongue-based education. The various models of MTBE implementation were discussed at great length, with the advantages and disadvantages of each model and approach being illustrated. In conclusion, the real value of MTBE can only be assessed when it transforms learners and even educators into positive role-players in the educational process.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Every research project necessarily adopts a particular formal framework through which it investigates a particular phenomenon. The research methodology followed for this study is discussed, justified, and presented below.

3.2. Research Paradigm

This study uses the interpretivist paradigm, which recognises that each person perceives and interprets the world around them in their own way. The premise of this approach is that each person creates their own reality as they view the world from a subjective perspective (Creswell, 2012).

For this study, the importance of MTBE lies in the personal experiences and perspectives of the participants. How the participants view and approach the MTBE process provides their perspective on the process, and these perspectives will not be distorted by the researcher's bias, as it is their experiences that can enhance the implementation of effective MTBE.

According to Scotland (2012), interpretivism seeks to extract new knowledge on a particular topic from participants through data collection. In this research, this was done through the use of exploratory case studies, which

explored each individual participant's experiences. This was a qualitative approach which aimed to uncover rich meaning from the individual perspectives of the participants.

3.3. Research Approach and Design

A research design is the overall framework used to conduct a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.3.1. Research Methodology

A research methodology comprises the formal scientific tools, methods, and techniques used to gather data on a particular phenomenon under investigation. There are three main research methodologies: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.

This study used a qualitative research approach, which is defined as "an emergent, inductive, interpretive, and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations, and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world" (Yilmaz, 2013). In this study, the people under investigation are foundational phase learners and teachers, while the phenomenon being studied is mother tongue-based instruction.

According to Maxwell (2008), qualitative researchers are interested in "recording, analysing, and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behaviour and experience, including contradictory beliefs, behaviours, and emotions." Qualitative research seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' individual experiences, and the inferences resulting from the analysis of that information can then be generalised to a broader population or context. In this study, the researcher sought a deeper understanding of the impact of mother tongue-based education in the foundation phase in selected schools in the Warmbaths circuit. These findings could be applicable to the broader foundation phase in the Waterberg region and beyond.

3.3.2. Research Design

A research design facilitates how data is collected, analysed, and presented to arrive at credible conclusions regarding the research topic (Creswell, 2012). The research design provides the overall structure for the procedures the researcher follows, the data the researcher collects, and the data analysis the researcher conducts – in summary, the research design is planning (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

This research used the case study approach, through which detailed data on a phenomenon is collected to obtain an objective outcome. According to Merriam (1998), case studies can be descriptive, exploratory, or even both. Descriptive case studies seek to provide in-depth detail on a phenomenon, while exploratory case studies seek to obtain new information on a phenomenon. This study was both descriptive and exploratory, as it provided detailed information and pursued newer information on mother tongue-based education in the foundation phase.

According to Merriam (1998), case studies can be conducted individually, collectively, or as a combination of the two. This study sought information on the experiences of individual participants but also sought to understand their collective experience of dealing with MTBE in a classroom, which is a group setting.

3.4. Population and Sampling

3.4.1. Population

Fleetwood (2020) defines a population as a broader group or pool from which a smaller sample is drawn. The foundation phase teachers of twenty (20) primary schools in the Warmbaths Circuit were the population for this research.

3.4.2. Sampling

Fleetwood (2020) defines a sample as a focused, smaller representation of the broader population. To select this sample, the researcher used purposive, convenient sampling, which is the opposite of random sampling. The researcher used her judgement and informed discretion to select the sample on the basis that it shared certain characteristics with the population that it represents.

The participants were conveniently chosen because they were available to the researcher. The researcher selected five (5) foundation phase teachers (grades 1, 2, and 3) and five grade 4 teachers at five schools, namely, Modderspruit Primary, Malebone Primary, Mmamakwa Primary, Khabele Primary, and Hleketani Primary. Each class is taught by one teacher who teaches all the subjects.

Participants	Number of Participants	Background in the Teaching and Learning Process	Experience of Participants
Foundation Phase Teachers	5	They teach in the foundation phase and are familiar with the challenges the learners experience in MTBE.	Participants' teaching experiences varied from 10 years to 15 years in the Foundation Phase.
Intermediate Phase (Grade 4) Teachers	5	They teach learners in the intermediate phase (Grade 4) and are familiar with the challenges the learners experience in using English as LoLT.	Participants' teaching experiences varied from 10 years to 15 years in the Intermediate Phase.

Table 1: Participants Involved in the Study

These participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which, according to Palinkas et al. (2015), is used in qualitative research where “certain elements that fulfil specified criteria are sought.” Teachers were selected on the basis that they were involved in the teaching and learning process in the foundation and intermediate phases.

3.5. Data Collection

Data collection is the systematic process of collecting relevant information through observation, interviews, and/or documents such as questionnaires (Creswell, 2012). This study used observation and interviews to collect the data the researcher needed for the investigation of the impact of MTBE in the foundation phase. During these observations, the researcher recorded her interaction with the participants using a cell phone camera. Each class was observed during lessons to teach life skills (Mmetse) and mathematics in Sepedi (Mabokgoni a Bophelo). Then, interviews were conducted with the teachers and learners.

The table below shows how data was collected.

Research Questions	Participants	Data Collection Instrument(s)
(Main) What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?	All Participants	Interviews Lesson Observations
(Sub-questions) What is the impact of teaching all subjects in mother tongue in the Foundation Phase and then transferring the learned skills from mother tongue to English at the Intermediate Phase?	All Participants	Interviews
(Sub-questions) To what extent does mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?	Intermediate Phase teachers	Observations Interviews
(Sub-questions) What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in mother tongue?	Foundation Phase Teachers	Interviews

Table 2: Data Collection Plan

3.5.1. Lesson Observations

Observation is important when collecting data in a case study (Morgan, Pullon, Macdonald, McKinlay & Gray, 2017). In this case study, observations were made in the classroom to better understand what was happening while teaching in the mother tongue and in a second language. All classes were observed daily for two (2) weeks. Interactions in the classroom were recorded using field notes. A video recorder was also used to record some of these interactions.

Five (5) lessons from each of the teachers that participated were observed to evaluate their teaching in their mother tongue and in a second language (English). According to Kerbelyte (2018), lesson observations are important as they give the observer an opportunity to receive immediate feedback during an activity.

The teachers introduced the researcher to the class and explained the purpose of their visit. The learners were assured that the data would be used solely for the purpose of the study and that it would not be made available to the heads of the schools or other persons.

Through observations, the researcher was able to see the impact of teaching all subjects in the foundation phase using their mother tongue and how this affected learners as they progressed to grade 4. The researcher was, thus, able to describe these experiences from lesson observations. Through these observations, the researcher was able to check how learners were taught in English and what challenges they had as a result of this language shift.

3.5.2. Interviews

Unstructured interviews were conducted with the teachers. The teachers and learners were interviewed weekly after observation. That is, two interview sessions were conducted. Interviews with the learners were conducted in a chat room format because they were minors and might not be able to attend formal interviews. All the interviews were audio-recorded.

3.6. Data Analysis

Once the data has been collected from the participants and written down, it has to be analysed for meaning (Creswell, 2012). Data only makes sense once the researcher has interrogated it to understand how it addresses the research question. Where there are gaps, they necessitate follow-up interaction with the participants. Where the data appears meaningful, it is then categorised and arranged in terms of the themes that it produces. Data analysis in this study occurred in two forms: within-case analysis and cross-case analysis.

3.6.1. Within Case Analysis

Data from individual cases (within-case analysis) were analysed using thematic analysis. According to Dr. Dawadi (2020), thematic analysis is “A qualitative research method that researchers use to systematically organise and analyse complex data sets. It is a search for themes that can capture the narratives available in the account of data sets.” Thematic analysis in this study involved the following six phases:

- Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data: The researcher read the observations, transcripts of the interviews, and field notes to make sense of the data. She made notes as she read through the data.
- Phase 2: Generating initial codes: The researcher re-read the data to code the data that was relevant to the research questions. She then noted the emerging themes.
- Phase 3: Searching for themes: The researcher clustered codes that were similar and formed a pattern. From these patterns, emerging themes were noted.
- Phase 4: Reviewing potential themes: The developed themes were reviewed during this phase. The researcher re-read all the data to check whether the themes adequately captured the dataset. Newer relevant themes were added, and irrelevant themes were discarded.
- Phase 5: Defining and naming themes: In this phase, extracts for each theme were identified and set as examples for each theme. These extracts provided the basis for the data analysis. The researcher also labelled each theme according to how it related to the research questions.
- Phase 6: Producing the report: The final stage was reporting on the themes. The most prominent emergent themes in phase 5 were reported.

According to Creswell (2012), cross-case analysis follows within-case analysis in multiple case studies. After analysing each case separately in a within-case analysis in this study, common themes across all cases were identified and matched.

3.6.2. Cross-Case Analysis

A cross-case analysis was conducted to deepen the researcher's understanding of MTBE (Creswell, 2012). Cross-case examination is an exploratory technique used to examine the information gathered from individual investigations with the purpose of producing new information or affirming existing information.

3.6.3. Data Triangulation

Data triangulation, according to Guion, Diehl and McDonald (2011), entails making decisions on the basis of information derived from different sources. The purpose of triangulation is to enhance the validity of the collected data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The use of different sources and perspectives in one study should improve the credibility of any research project (Rashid, Rashid, Warraich, Sabir & Waseem, 2019).

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of teaching all courses in the mother tongue. Data were gathered using a variety of approaches, particularly classroom observation and interviews, from a variety of sources, using foundation phase educators and learners as respondents.

Method triangulation was also used in this study, which entailed using various approaches to gather information about the same phenomenon (Polit & Beck, 2012). Interviews and classroom observations can be employed in this sort of triangulation, which is used in qualitative research.

3.7. Quality Criteria

Quality criteria always improve the significance of any research project (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). To enhance the quality of this study, the following criteria were adhered to: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.7.1. Credibility

Credibility means that research findings are plausible and trustworthy. To establish credibility, the researcher should ensure alignment between the research questions, data collection, data analysis, and the resulting outcomes (Stenfors, Kajamaa, & Bennett, 2020). The researcher should also ensure that the correct sampling strategy, data collection, and data analysis were used in the study. To establish credibility in this study, data was taken back to the participants to verify that it was correctly captured.

3.7.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study may be transferred to another setting, context, or group (Schloemer & Schröder-Bäck, 2018). Transferability is established by providing readers with evidence that the research study's findings could be applicable to other contexts, situations, and target groups. Transferability was ensured through the use of a representative sample and the thorough analysis of the data collected.

3.7.3. Dependability

Dependability relates to how consistent research findings are and measures the extent to which the research could be replicated in other similar conditions (Forero, Nahidi, De Costa, Mohsin, Fitzgerald, Gibson & Aboagye-Sarfo, 2018). To establish dependability in this study, an audit trail was used. Thorough checks were conducted to ensure that the collected data was used appropriately and objectively to avoid doubt and vagueness.

3.7.4. Confirmability

Confirmability means there is a clear link or relationship between the data and the findings (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). The study's findings have to be completely based on the participants' accounts rather than the researcher's presumptions. In this study, confirmability was established through an audit trail and triangulation.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are moral principles and values that should be followed while conducting research (Gajjar, 2013). These ethical considerations ensure that the researcher does not harm her respondents or the wider population in which the study is conducted. In this study, the following ethical considerations were adhered to: permission, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and respect (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

3.8.1. Permission

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Limpopo Department of Education (Annexure E) and the principal of the school where it was conducted (Annexures A and B).

3.8.2. Informed Consent

According to the Department of Health (2015), parents of children under the age of 18 should give permission for their children to participate in a research project. Therefore, in this study, since the foundation phase learners were minors, consent letters were sent to their parents to sign (Annexure C). Parents were also informed that they were free to remove their children from this study if they felt that their children were not protected. The teacher participants were also given a consent form to complete.

3.8.3. Anonymity and Confidentiality

When gathering, analysing, and reporting data, confidentiality and anonymity are imperative to protect the privacy of the participants (Coffelt, 2017). When researchers maintain confidentiality, they take precautions to prevent the identity of a research subject from becoming unduly known. This researcher used consensual identifiers that only she and the participants knew.

3.8.4. Respect for Participants

The participants were assured that they would be treated respectfully throughout the research process (Kraft et al., 2021). The parents of the learners were also assured that their children would be treated with respect throughout the process, and they were advised that they were free to withdraw their children if they felt this was not the case.

3.9. Summary of the Chapter

The primary objective of Chapter 3 was to discuss the research approach and technique used in the study. The research questions were thoroughly discussed. The chapter discussed in detail the various aspects of conducting research, such as determining a population and a sample, data collection through interviews and lesson observations, data analysis, trustworthiness, and triangulation. Finally, the researcher discussed the ethical considerations that are important in any research project. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the collected data and its interpretation.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed the research instruments used in the collection of data through lesson observations and interviews. These research instruments were used to collect data from a selected group of mathematics teachers from two primary schools in Warmbaths District of Limpopo Province on the challenges of teaching foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue.

This chapter analyses and interprets the data collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The primary objective of this study was to assess the impact of MTBE on the foundation in the Warmbaths circuit by examining the individual experiences of educators and learners. The findings discussed below thus relate to this research objective.

4.2. Personal Information of Participants

The table below lists the personal information of this study's participants in terms of gender, school, and age group.

Participants	Male/Female	Experience	School	Age Category
FPT 1	F	40	A (Modderspruit)	50-59
FPT 2	F	10	B (Malebone)	30-39
FPT 3	F	15	C (Mmamakwa)	40-49
FPT 4	F	10	D (Khabele)	30-39
FPT 5	F	8	E (Hleketani)	40-49
IPT 1	F	4	A (Modderspruit)	30-39
IPT 2	M	8	B (Malebone)	40-49
IPT 3	F	15	C (Mmamakwa)	50-59
IPT 4	M	7	D (Khabele)	30-39
IPT 5	M	9	E (Hleketani)	30-39

Table 3: Participants' Personal Information

Table 3 above lists the participants' gender, experience, name of school, and age group of the foundation phase teachers (FPT) and the intermediate phase teachers (IMPT) who teach Grade 4 only. Participants have a minimum of four (4) years and a maximum of forty (40) years of experience, and their age groups range from 30 to 59 years.

4.3. Qualitative Data Analysis

4.3.1. Description of Participants in Semi-Structured Interviews

4.3.1.1. Foundation Phase Teacher (FPT 1)

FPT1 teaches Grade 1 only, has been teaching in the foundation phase since 1990, and falls within the 55–60 year age bracket. She has a Further Education Diploma from the University of South Africa (UNISA). The teacher frequently attends OBE and NECT workshops for all four (4) subjects in the foundation phase. She is a member of the school's admission committee, the music coordinator, and a delegated educator in the school's national student nutritional programme (NSNP).

4.3.1.2. Foundation Phase Teacher (FPT 2)

FPT2 teaches Grade 2. She started working in 2012 and is in the 25–30 age bracket. She obtained a Bachelor of Education degree from UNISA in 2010. She frequently attends foundation-phase departmental workshops. She is a member of the school's sports and recreation committee and the events organising committee. She is also a member of the SGB as a delegated financial officer.

4.3.1.3. Foundation Phase Teacher (FPT 3)

FPT3 teaches Grade 3 and is the Departmental Head (HOD) at her school. She possesses a Higher Certificate in FET and a B.Ed. from UNISA. She falls within the 40–50-year age bracket. She is a member of the school's SGB and the SMT.

4.3.1.4. Foundation Phase Teacher (FPT 4)

FPT4 teaches Grade 3 and has a postgraduate certificate (PGCE) from UNISA. She falls into the 30- to 39-year-old age group and has taught for ten (10) years.

4.3.1.5. Foundation Phase Teacher (FPT 5)

FPT5 teaches grade 2 and has a PGCE from UNISA. She has taught for 8 years and falls within the 40-49 year age group.

4.3.1.6. Intermediate Phase Teacher 1 (IPT 1)

IPT1 has taught Grades 4–7 since 2019. She falls in the age bracket of 30–40 years. She has a postgraduate degree in education from UNISA. She also has a certificate in an online Mathematics Problem Solving (MPS) course. She regularly attends workshops in mathematics and English. She is a member of the SGB and the school's scholar transport committee.

4.3.1.7. Intermediate Phase Teacher 2 (IPT 2)

IPT2 teaches grades 4–7. He has an additional IT qualification and falls within the 40–50-year age bracket. He regularly attends workshops on natural science and technology and is a member of several committees at his school.

4.3.1.8. Intermediate Phase Teacher 3 (IPT 3)

IPT3 has been teaching for 15 years and is part of the SMT. She is in the 50- to 55-year-old age bracket. She majored in English and Sepedi for her Primary School Teacher's Diploma (PTD). She has attended several departmental and external workshops.

4.3.1.9. Intermediate Phase Teacher 4 (IPT 4)

IPT4 has been taught for 7 years and falls into the 30- to 39-year-old age group. He has qualifications from the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).

4.3.1.10. Intermediate Phase Teacher 5 (IPT 5)

IPT5 has been taught for 9 years and falls into the 30- to 39-year-old age group. He has qualifications from the University of Limpopo.

4.4. Data Analysis

4.4.1. Lesson Observations

The purpose of lesson observation is to assess if learners are being taught effectively (Spencer, 2018). They assist educators in improving their curriculum delivery methods. This researcher analysed the lessons she observed using two analysis methods: within-case analysis and across-case analysis. In each instance, the aim of the researcher was to observe the impact of the use of MTBE. The researcher treated each teacher as a case by observing how they contributed to the impact of MTBE and concluded that each situation was unique and possessed different characteristics.

4.4.1.1. Within-case Analysis

According to Goertz and Mahoney (2013), within-case analysis is a qualitative methodology through which the researcher has to conduct observations from within their individual cases.

The researcher observed that foundation phase educators generally had a positive perception of the role of mother tongue instruction. However, they believed that MTBE could still be improved through courses, appropriate resources, and newer instructional technologies. The researcher observed that educators tried very hard to expand the learners' knowledge by using tools and equipment that the learners were familiar with.

The intermediate-phase educators had mixed responses to the use of mother-tongue instruction. The vast majority felt that not enough instructional foundations were laid in the preceding phase, as many learners displayed learning challenges in terms of comprehension of themes and concepts.

The data collected showed clear gaps between the learners in each phase. There was an undeniable difference at the intermediate phase that could be remedied at the foundation phase if sufficient attention was paid to the resources available to educators.

4.4.1.2. Across Case Analysis

Across case analysis aims to simplify the comparison of differences and similarities between events and activities within one specific research study (Samia & Van Wynsberghe, 2008).

In the foundation phase, the researcher noticed that each teacher (each case) was different in the classroom. The researcher noticed that learners found it easy to respond and take instructions when a common language was spoken. Mediation between their mother tongue and a new language (English) was even quicker when symbolic or common tools were used to enhance their understanding of what the teacher was trying to teach, while this was less successful at the intermediate phase. The learners were fully exposed to the new language in all aspects of teaching and learning. The researcher noticed this in the learners' attempt at regulating the difference in languages. For example, learners would repeatedly try to speak a sentence in English even when they were struggling to articulate the words correctly.

4.4.2. Interviews

The emergent sub-themes include empowering educators at both the foundational and intermediate phases through courses and resources such as texts and technology and increasing parental involvement, which has been a historical challenge in predominantly black schools.

4.4.3. Research on the Use of Mother Tongue Instruction at the Foundation Phase

4.4.3.1. Foundation Phase Teacher 1 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *Mother tongue is a specific language a child is born with. When a child learns in their mother tongue, it allows them to understand better and express themselves better.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *Yes. When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in their mother tongue, they can read the mother tongue instruction language (Sepedi) and are usually able to transfer to a second language (English) in the intermediate phase.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *In the first term, learners tend to have difficulties since it is their first time being taught in a full second language. Sometimes, they don't understand what is being taught. As time goes on, the learners eventually adapt and understand the new language being taught.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *There are many problems, including a shortage of textbooks in the mother tongue, limited reading materials, and dictionaries in the mother tongue that are used to explain difficult terms to our learners.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *No. There are no sufficient instructional tools and materials that help educators facilitate a proper mother tongue lesson. As explained in question 4, there is a shortage of such tools in the Department of Basic Education as a whole. If there were sufficient tools, all learners would be excelling as they would not lack materials to improve learning.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Yes. Educators are sufficiently skilled as they are taken on workshops and training to gain more skills and knowledge of how to instruct learning. They also get teaching guides and materials that fully equip them for the job.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *No. It does not add any value as the foundation phase is just for that phase. As kids transfer to another phase, they are introduced to a new language, and understanding and adapting to the new language of learning becomes a challenge for them.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive, and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *Yes, it will add value because the mother tongue is the language they use in their daily lives. It makes it easier for learners to understand instructions and content which will ultimately improve their educational and intellectual development in the foundation phase only, not necessarily in the future phases to come.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *No. It does not add value as multiple variables need to be altered so the education system can be better. For example, a better system will result in a higher passing rate and provide more provision for educational materials.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *At the foundation phase, the mother tongue can be made effective by repetition of content and instructions. If the learners listen to one thing over and over again, effectiveness is advantageous.*

4.4.3.2. Foundation Phase Teacher 2 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *Learners tend to succeed with their tasks and perform excellently as they are familiar with the language they are being taught in.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *No, they do not because they are unable to transfer the information from their home language to their first additional information, resulting in them not giving correct answers when they are asked for content in the first additional language as they don't understand it.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *Although they do excel in their home language, learners find it very challenging to transfer the acquired knowledge to other subjects where the language of learning and teaching is not in their mother tongue.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *The communication does not reach its common ground as in other subjects. When learning in their mother tongue, learners do not understand some of the things they need to acquire to pass.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *No. There are insufficient tools and materials to enable proper learning in the foundation phase. DBE always has a shortage of textbooks for every individual learner to take home. Therefore, their learning is only limited to school hours, and no sense of responsibility is instilled within the young learner.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Even though they are skilled and prepared, due to the lack of tools and materials needed, they will not be able to transfer the skills that the learners acquire.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *No, it will not add value. Learners are unable to transfer knowledge from their mother tongue into the first additional language; this makes it more difficult in the education system as this will eventually result in challenging comprehension of the first additional language in the intermediate phase and other future learning phases.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive, and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *No. There are already communication barriers between the educator and the learner. This results in difficulty for the learner to transfer information and acquired skills which subsequently are poor educational development.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *No. Already, we are facing challenges of learners not being able to read and write due to a late introduction to their first additional language (English). This way, the education system is not being developed, as the skills and knowledge that were supposed to be acquired at the foundation phase are non-existent as the learner grows old. The education system does not benefit, as that learner will not produce good marks.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *It can only be effective if it is taught and offered as a subject only and not as a language of instruction. It will benefit the education system and the learner to teach all other subjects in the first additional language (English) to avoid communication problems when the learner has to transfer the acquired knowledge and skills to the intermediate phase.*

4.4.3.3. Foundation Phase Teacher 3 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *Teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue has only a short-term positive impact, as it is easier for the learners to understand learning content when it's presented in a language they use in their daily lives. However, in the*

long term, it results in a negative impact as the foundation language is no longer used from the intermediate and above phases.

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *No. The only skills that are transferred to the intermediate phase are those that have been acquired in the mother tongue language, of which only the home language subject in the intermediate phase benefits from these skills. Learners don't transfer skills to other subjects in the intermediate phase.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *The mother tongue is the only language a learner knows and understands when transferring to the intermediate phase. This makes it very challenging for a learner to adapt to the first additional language (English) as the language of instruction and learning in the intermediate phase. It goes as far as a learner not being able to ask for the bathroom because they are in an English lesson where only English is spoken. The impact goes beyond the intermediate phase because the lack of foundation-level English results in poor reading and writing for the learner.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *Foundation phase educators experience no to little encounter. The main issue in the foundation phase would be parents who cannot help their children with homework activities after school hours because of illiteracy and differences in mother tongue at school and mother tongue at home. Intermediate-phase educators are the ones that encounter a lot of problems, like changing lesson plans to ensure the learners are adapting well to the new language of instruction and introducing extra lessons after school hours for learners who are still struggling to understand lessons.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *No. The Department of Basic Education fails dismally to provide teachers and learners with the proper tools and materials needed to teach in their mother tongue. There is a lack of home language books, a poor home language curriculum, and a lack of skilled educators.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *In the mother tongue language, most educators are skilled based on experience and not qualifications. However, the DBE creates programs and workshops for educators to enhance their teaching skills and knowledge. Tools like lesson plans and schedules prepare educators to better facilitate teaching in the foundation phase.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *No, it will not add value. When learners get to the intermediate phase, they are unable to transfer knowledge from their mother tongue into the first additional language; this makes it more difficult in the education system as this will eventually result in challenging comprehension of the first additional language in the intermediate phase and other future learning phases.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *No. A huge part of a learner's intellectual, cognitive, and educational development is dependent on language. English is the language of instruction in today's world, making it very important to understand and interpret. If learners fail to figure out an English question in the intermediate phase, it shows that the learner did not get the proper foundation of the language. As a result, there is no educational development taking place, and reading, learning, remembering, logical reasoning, and paying attention are affected.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *No. The educational system will continue to have no improvement as the foundation phase language is not a language that is also used in the remaining phases of education. A developing system is one that is showing improvement in both learners and teachers. The decline of an individual learner's pass rate from the foundation phase to the intermediate phase is proof that the foundation phase is not helping in the development of education.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *The only way we can effectively implement mother tongue teaching in the foundation phase is by making it a second language. In this way, learners are not detached from their home language cultures but instead, they get English as a foundation level. This will result in an improved and much more developed educational system.*

4.4.3.4. Foundation Phase Teacher 4 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *Learners learn quicker because they understand the language of instruction.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *To be honest, learners don't always transfer skills to other subjects in the intermediate phase, which explains the decline in achievement in this phase.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *It's very challenging because when the learners are exposed to a new language, it takes time for them to understand.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *Intermediate-phase educators encounter a lot of problems because the learners are still trying to adapt to the new system.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Simply put, no. The DBE seems not to have invested enough in our system.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Not many teachers are well-prepared in terms of skills, but some attend courses and workshops when they are available.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *In the short-term, there will be many problems, but maybe after ten years, things will improve.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *Not really. Many parents believe the best education is in English.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *Yes and no. The use of the mother tongue will enrich our education since our languages are also important. However, in our modern world, people see English as the way out of poverty.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *It must be done gradually. Teachers need to be retrained, our curriculum must be changed and materials need to be created.*

4.4.3.5. Foundation Phase Teacher 5 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *It's very difficult. You can see they are struggling to follow the lesson.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *Not always. Some skills are transferred, but then they learn new skills in the other subjects.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *The impact is huge. Some concepts are English and do not have mother tongue equivalents, so teachers will always struggle to make sense of them.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *Communication is the main problem. You have an idea of what to say, but the learners are not on that level, so one struggles a bit to make things clear for them.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *No. The department has failed to provide teachers and learners with the right materials needed to teach in their mother tongue.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Many educators have the experience because they are also mother tongue speakers, but many are not formally qualified.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *To be honest, one hopes there will be some value, but it's only a hope. The reality is very different. One sees problems on a daily basis, but many teachers are trying.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *Maybe there will be changes, but they won't happen in the short term.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *Unfortunately, many parents believe it is the passport to a better life and more opportunities for their children.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *Teachers need to be skilled, materials must be provided, and the curriculum needs to be restructured.*

4.4.3.6. Intermediate Phase Teacher 1 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *The impact is that they excel and enjoy everything they do because they are given instructions in a language; they understand well without register struggle.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *No. It becomes very difficult for them to adapt to a new foreign language as it is for the time, and it results in language barriers for both learners and educators.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *It does have an impact in the intermediate phase as the language of teaching and learning is the first additional language except for the home language. Learners struggle to register content as it is their first time learning the English language.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *When it comes to mathematics, it is very challenging as some native languages don't have mathematics registers/jargon. It then becomes the teacher's responsibility to make sure that the learner understands what is being asked in English. This tends to waste a lot of learning time for the learners.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *No materials are limited in the foundation phase. There is a lack of posters, audio materials, visual materials, and other educational tools to help accomplish/reach learning objectives.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Yes. They use different and simple strategies during class time that are very understandable in their mother tongue and home language. The DBE further provides workshops that help educators acquire new skills for teaching foundation phase learners.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *No. It can only work at the foundation phase. When learners proceed to the intermediate phase and other future phases, it will result in drastic learning challenges and communication barriers.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *No. Learners should be introduced to their first additional language (English) at an early stage so that it can expand and improve their cognitive, intellectual, and academic language proficiency level in education development.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *No. When it comes to competitions that develop the education system in an enjoyable manner for the learners, learners are instructed in English and this makes them not understand the question they are being asked since it is not being asked in their home language.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *It can be implemented effectively if the mother tongue becomes the learner's first additional language and English becomes the home language. As much as this changes the meaning of the home language and its narrative, it will eventually lead to great educational benefits for the learner and the educational system.*

4.4.3.7. Intermediate Phase Teacher 2 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *Learners in the foundation phase will easily understand learning content when it's given in a language mainly spoken at home (home language). However, when they proceed to higher grades, using one language as a foundation for learning will negatively impact their overall performance and English comprehension.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *No, because there is only one dominant language in the foundation phase. The skills are acquired in that home language and can only be used for that home language and not for English learning. For this reason, it becomes a struggle to switch to a foreign language (English) which learners struggle with its comprehension in the intermediate phase as there are no skills that are carried from the foundation to this phase.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *At the intermediate, code-switching is done to enhance understanding, as the learners have no knowledge of the new language in this phase. Code-switching is an effective way of helping learners understand; however, it disturbs the lesson plan and lesson schedule as it takes time for the learners and educators to grasp its content.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *Little to no problems are encountered by foundation phase teachers as learners are familiar with the language they are being taught. However, in the intermediate phase, teachers encounter the most problems as they are teaching a foreign language to the learner.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Yes, because learners seem to excel well in the foundation phase. If tools and materials were insufficient, they would not be excelling.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Yes, the training and development workshops that DBE offers to educators make it easier for them to facilitate teaching and learning in the foundation phase.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *No. It only adds value to the foundation phase system and not the overall education system, as most learners achieve above average in the foundation phase. However, their achievement declines drastically in the next phase due to a lack of English development in the foundation phase.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive, and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *The foundation phase is where learners get their cognitive and intellectual development formed. This phase, however, does not add value to the learner's educational development as the learner does not transfer all the skills acquired in this phase to the intermediate phase. Only the mother tongue subject in the intermediate phase gets these skills. All other subjects are new to the learner and, therefore, he/she has no skills in these subjects. Therefore, there has been no educational and intellectual development.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *No. Mother tongue can only add value to the overall education system if it is developed and taught until the level where it can get recognition.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *It's effectively implemented in the foundation phase if it's presented in a manner that will result in the desired learning outcome.*

4.4.3.8. Intermediate Phase Teacher 3 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *When teachers use mother tongue teaching in the foundation phase, learners tend to understand the work better as this language is common to them in their daily lives.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *No. Learners who are in Gr4 cannot transfer acquired skills to English as that language is foreign to them. Transferring skills need someone who has more knowledge in that phase.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *In the intermediate phase, educators are supposed to use English as the language of teaching and learning when they are teaching other subjects other than their mother tongue. The best thing is to code-switch. However, teaching and learning content subjects must still be made in English. Mother tongue can only be used to explain some concepts.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *Educators run out of terminology when it comes to content subjects. When learners respond to questions, they won't use the correct language to respond to these questions as they are asked in a foreign language. Learners have acquired the skills of answering questions in their mother tongue and not English.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *There might not be sufficient tools and materials because when learners get to the intermediate phase, they struggle to pass and understand their home language. This is proof that materials and tools in the foundation phase were insufficient.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *I don't think so. As said above, learners are still struggling with their mother tongue language in the intermediate phase, which means there is a gap in educators' skills or a lack of materials from DBE to better equip educators to teach the foundation phase.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *Yes, it will add value. Whatever contents a learner learns at whatever level, it is a goal achieved on the system. However, it is not an achieved goal for the learner if they do not pass.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive, and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *Yes. Even if the questions are of low order, they will definitely have achieved something in their educational development.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *Yes. As I mentioned in the previous question, the education system always benefits.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *If mother-tongue instruction could end in Gr 1, and in Gr 2, English learning is introduced, and also in Gr 3, where it fully becomes the language of learning and teaching, mother-tongue will be used effectively.*

4.4.3.9. Intermediate Phase Teacher 4 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *The learners seem to struggle when they reach the intermediate phase, so maybe something is not done right somewhere.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *Not really. Gr4 learners struggle with languages; they seem to see English as a foreign language. But it takes time.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *Many learners struggle in the intermediate phase, so maybe they also need to be taught in English at the same time if it's possible.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *Language is the biggest problem. The terms cannot always be translated, and so many learners have problems. Even some of the teachers struggle.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *The short answer is no. We need more materials which unfortunately at the moment are not there.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *No, no. Teachers need to be trained thoroughly in mother tongue instruction.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *Yes, it will add value, but it will be a long-term project. In the meantime, there will be problems.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive, and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *One hopes the learners will benefit in the long term if the system is properly introduced.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *The system can only benefit if the right changes are made and the resources are made available.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *Educators need to be trained, materials need to be made available, and the whole mother tongue education system needs to be properly arranged.*

4.4.3.10. Intermediate Phase Teacher 5 Response

Question 1: What is the impact of teaching foundation phase learners in their mother tongue?

Response: *Learners seem to understand better when they are taught in their mother tongue.*

Question 2: When learners are taught all foundation phase subjects in the mother tongue, do they later transfer the acquired skills to English language instruction at the intermediate phase?

Response: *No. Learners struggle with transferring language and other skills, so they have to be taught from scratch.*

Question 3: To what extent does the mother tongue impact the teaching and learning of content subjects in the intermediate phase?

Response: *Sometimes it helps, but sometimes it creates problems as the learners cannot express themselves in English.*

Question 4: What problems do teachers encounter when teaching all the subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue?

Response: *There are communication problems. There are also problems with learning materials, and teachers must be creative.*

Question 5: Do you believe there are sufficient instructional materials and tools to properly and fully use mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *As I said, there are not enough materials and teachers struggle a lot with this issue.*

Question 6: Are educators sufficiently skilled and prepared to facilitate mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase? Please explain.

Response: *Of course not. This is a new field, and many teachers simply lack the right skills.*

Question 7: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall education system? Please explain.

Response: *Let us hope it will add value. Learners need to see the importance of their languages and how their languages can improve the system.*

Question 8: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add value to the learner's overall intellectual, cognitive, and educational development? Please explain.

Response: *I hope it happens. Every approach must benefit the learners.*

Question 9: Do you believe the use of mother tongue instruction at the foundation phase will add any value to the overall development of the education system? Please explain.

Response: *Again, I hope that only good things will come out of this new approach.*

Question 10: Please suggest how mother tongue instruction can be effectively implemented at the foundation phase.

Response: *Educators must be trained properly, the correct materials must be provided, and the whole system must be adjusted or improved to accommodate mother-tongue teaching.*

4.5. Conclusion

The main deductions from the interviews and observations were:

- Educators need more training if mother-tongue instruction is to be successful.
- More instructional resources, such as devices, should be made available to learners.
- There needs to be an applicable, obligatory national policy on mother tongue instruction that can be implemented through the guidelines provided by CAPS and
- Parents need to play a more prominent role in the education of their children.

5. Summary, Findings and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the collected data in terms of identified themes and sub-themes. Background information about the educators and learners was presented in a table that illustrated gender and years of experience as schoolteachers. All the participants were given pseudonyms, which were used exclusively to differentiate and identify them.

This chapter provides an overview of the study, discusses the findings and conclusions of the study, and makes appropriate recommendations.

5.2. Review of the Research Problem

The main premise of this study was that learners in the foundation phase were underperforming or were not performing at their best level due to the language of instruction at their schools not being the same as the learners' mother tongue. The study aimed to shed light on the impact of teaching all subjects in the foundation phase in the mother tongue.

5.3. Findings of the Study

The following key findings resulted from the study:

- There needs to be a greater focus on the educators' qualifications and overall preparedness to use mother tongue instruction.
- Learners' overall academic performance requires improvement.
- Learners' English reading and writing proficiency require greater attention and
- Learners' native language reading and writing proficiency needs to be improved.

5.3.1. Educators' Level of Formal Qualifications

The literature review has shown that the qualifications of educators play a vital role in the overall teaching environment. Teachers who complete postgraduate studies are more likely to know more about the theoretical aspects of the educational process. Such teachers are most likely to succeed in the establishment of mother tongue education, given that they have majored in the mother tongue as one of their subjects.

5.3.2. Effects of Behaviour on the Academic Performance of Learners

Overall, behaviour plays a vital role in the development and progress of the learning environment. In the study, it was found that most of the learners enjoyed group activities and playing with their peers. Most of these learners mentioned that they had difficulty in reading and writing in English. However, learners who said that they spent most of their time reading and writing indicated that they did not have any difficulties reading and writing in their mother tongue. This shows how important literacy is and how learner behaviour in and outside the classroom environment impacts their overall performance.

5.3.3. Learners' English Reading and Writing Skills

Learners' mother tongue reading and writing proficiency play a major part when they are exposed to English language instruction. The dynamics of having to be taught in a completely foreign language at these initial stages of development were scrutinised, and it was noted that most learners did not find it difficult to adapt to English as their language of instruction.

5.3.4. Learners' Mother Tongue Reading and Writing Skills

Due to the number of hours spent at school, most learners had started knowing English better than their own mother tongues in terms of reading and writing. The learners were only exposed to the home languages during the home

language period, whereas communication in English occurred throughout the school year. This whole shift created learning issues once the learners moved to the higher grades because there were some complex concepts that were difficult to explain in English compared to their mother tongue. That is why most Afrikaans and English home language learners excelled compared to other learners due to the instructional language being the same as the language spoken at home or outside the school environment.

5.3.5. Teachers' Competency in Mother Tongue Education

The participant teachers all had five (5) or more years of experience as educators. They all had the minimum number of years of experience required to participate in this study. They mentioned that they were fully capable of giving lessons in English. However, they would prefer to give the lessons in their mother tongue because the concepts would be easier to simplify in a language that resonated better with both teachers and learners.

5.4. Summary of Findings

Mother-tongue education is gaining global popularity for its perceived benefits and advantages. For the betterment of education and the teaching process, both learners and teachers need to communicate in a language that resonates with both role-players, regardless of the subject. With the right training and facilities, mother-tongue education could soon replace English as the language of instruction, given that there is enough scientific data to prove that the benefits of mother-tongue education outweigh those of English as the language of instruction.

The foundation phase is the best learning phase for conducting such a study because this is where most learners start to express themselves verbally and in writing. Therefore, teaching the learners in a language that is not spoken at home provides the best research environment.

Most learners in the foundation phase from the selected schools were able to read and write in English, but some found it difficult to fluently read and write in their native language. However, they all agreed that if they were to be taught all their subjects in their mother tongue, they would understand the topics much better than if the content were taught in another language.

5.5. Recommendations for Further Research

While the advantages and benefits of mother tongue-based education are gradually being noted globally, further scientific research is required to reinforce this reality. MTBE is a complex and many-sided educational approach, so the theory and the practice need more in-depth factual and empirical examination.

Many South African communities are multilingual, so the language spoken at home may not always be the predominant language in that community. As such, the effects of multi-linguicism on mother-tongue instruction need to be studied at some length.

South Africa has a language in education policy. However, there is clearly a disjuncture between policy and actual practice, so further research needs to be urgently conducted on the challenges of fully and effectively implementing mother tongue-based instruction, not only at the lower levels of our education system but throughout the entire system.

Given the scarcity of resources required for the effective implementation of MTBE, more studies on these challenges are required. Even the entire curriculum still needs to be translated into African languages. So, it is urgently imperative that further feasibility research be done on all of these challenges.

Finally, educator training needs to be restructured to include MTBE courses. Research would clearly need to be undertaken on the viability of this development.

5.6. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter aimed to examine the impact of using mother tongue instruction in the foundation phase and concluded with a discussion of the findings of the study and appropriate recommendations for further research. Since the main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of mother tongue instruction on foundation phase education, it was found that most learners were able to fully read and write in their mother tongue. All the educator participants were fully competent in mother-tongue instruction. It became evident during the research process that most learners, due to being taught most of their subjects in English, were not able to understand the properties and other linguistic characteristics of their mother tongue. The transition to mother tongue education should not be too difficult, as most educators appear to be fluent in their regional mother tongues. This will, of course, also be contingent on the availability of appropriate learning and teaching resources, improved educator skills, and unambiguous language policy implementation.

6. Acronyms

BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

CALP – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CAPS – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

DBE – Department of Basic Education

DoE – Department of Education

FAL – First Additional Language

FOA – Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

HOD – Head of Department

LAD – Language acquisition devices

LoLT – Language of learning and teaching

NCS – National Curriculum Statement
 OBE – Outcomes Based Education
 PanSALB – Pan South African Language Board
 RNCS – Revised National Curriculum Statement
 SCT – Socio-cultural Theory
 SIP – School improvement plan
 SLA – Second language acquisition
 UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
 WSE – Whole School Evaluation
 ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

7. Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Thandi Ledwaba, who pushed me to pursue this third degree. Furthermore, it is dedicated to me and all working mothers who wish to further their studies since it is never too late to secure a qualification. Education and knowledge have no age or time limit. You can start anytime when you are ready.

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Annexures

Annexure A: Request To Conduct the Study

1049 Kgosana str
Bela-Bela
0480
Modderspruit Primary School
Plot No. 1 Modderspruit Farm
Bela-Bela
0480
Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Request To Conduct an Academic Research in Modderspruit Primary School

The teaching of the foundation phase learners is very beneficial to the overall development of learners. The transition would be slow at the beginning of the implementation process, but gradually, it would speed up. It has been shown that foundation phase learners grasp content quicker when the means of communication is their mother tongue. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of mother-tongue communication in the foundation phase.

The researcher would like to conduct this research at Modderspruit Primary School. The researcher will ask interview questions and conduct a questionnaire for the randomly selected teachers and learners in this specific school. The results will be used as data tools in the research study with the given permission from the selected participants.

Should the school give us permission to continue with this research, the researcher will formally acknowledge the school in the acknowledgement section of the research. Please indicate approval by signing and stamping below.

SSTBB

Principal

Kind Regards
Ledwaba Z.C.
Student: Central University of Technology
MEd Postgraduate
Student number: 220049949



Annexure B: Request To Conduct an Academic Research

Khabele Primary School

1049 Kgosana str
Bela-Bela
0480
Khabele Primary School
1507 Sithole str
Bela-Bela
0480
Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Request to Conduct an Academic Research in Khabele Primary School

The teaching of the foundation phase learners is very beneficial to the overall development of learners. The transition would be slow at the beginning of the implementation process, but gradually, it would speed up. It has been shown that foundation phase learners grasp content quicker when the means of communication is their mother tongue. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of mother-tongue communication in the foundation phase.

The researcher would like to conduct this research in Khabele Primary School. The researcher will be asking interview questions and conducting a questionnaire to the randomly selected teachers and learners in this specific school. The results will be used as data tools in the research study with given permission from the selected participants.

Should the school give us permission to continue with this research, the researcher will formally acknowledge the school in the acknowledgement section of the research. Please indicate approval by signing and stamping below.

SSTBB

Principal

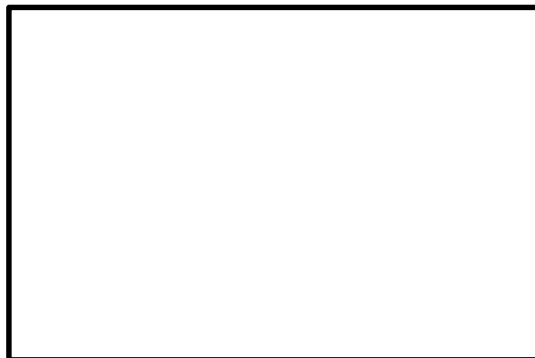
Kind Regards

Ledwaba Z.C.

Student: Central University of Technology

MEd Postgraduate

Student number: 220049949

**Annexure C: Consent Forms****Child Assent Form Ages 7-10**

The Impact of Teaching All Subjects in Mother Tongue in the Foundation Phase for Selected Schools in Warmbarths (Bela-Bela) Circuit

Assent Form

My name is Zanele Ledwaba. I work at Modderspruit Primary School. I am inviting you to participate in a research study about the impact of teaching in the mother tongue in the foundation phase.

Your parents know about this study and give you permission to be involved. If you agree, I will ask you to answer a few questions regarding my study. These will be close and short-ended questions. It will only take a maximum of 10 minutes. The researcher will be recording the answers the participants will give.

You do not have to be in this study. No one will be mad at you if you decide not to do this study. Even if you start the study, you can stop later if you want. You may ask questions about the study at any time.

If you decide to be in the study, I will not tell anyone else how you respond or function as part of the study. Even if your parents or teachers ask, I will not tell them about what you say or do in the study.

Signing here means that you have read this form or have had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study.

Name of the Participant (Write your name in the line):

Signature of the Participant (Put your signature in the line):

Date: 17/11/2021

General Info/Consent COVID-19 Compliant

THE IMPACT OF TEACHING ALL SUBJECTS IN MOTHER TONGUE IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE FOR SELECTED SCHOOLS IN WARMBARTHS (BELA-BELA) CIRCUIT

Informed Consent COVID-19 Compliant

Dear Teacher, School principal,

My name is Zanele Ledwaba, and I am a student in MEd at Central University of Technology. You are invited to participate in a research study on the impact of teaching in the mother tongue in the foundation phase. You were selected as a possible participant because you are part of the research participants as teachers of the foundation phase and head of the school. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. You must be eighteen or older to participate in the study.

Key Information about This Research Study

The following is a brief summary of this study to help you decide whether to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is listed later in this form.

The purpose of this study is to determine and appreciate the challenges our system and communities face when the learners are taught in their mother tongue in the foundation phase and how we envisage to overcome them. You will be asked to answer a few questions regarding the study. These will be closed short, ended questions. It will only take a maximum of 10 minutes. The researcher will be recording the answers the participants will give.

We expect that you will be in this research study for months until it is approved and reaches its conclusion. The study has no primary risk. The main benefit is the dominant language in a specific community will be recognised. This will make the society feel honoured. Also, it will decrease the idea of racism that is still wandering about.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine and appreciate the challenges our system and communities face when the learners are taught in their mother tongue in the foundation phase and how we envisage to overcome them. The implementation of teaching learners in their mother tongue would pose a serious challenge to the learners, the teachers, the parents, and the Department of Education.

Number of Participants

If you agree to participate, you will be one of thirty participants participating in this research.

Procedures for the Study

If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following: answer a few questions regarding my study. These will be closed short, ended questions. It will only take a maximum of 10 minutes. The researcher will be recording the answers the participants will give. This interview will be conducted in the classroom.

Risks and Inconveniences

There are risks and inconveniences to participating in this study. These include:

Participants may be uncomfortable answering the survey or interview questions, and psychological distress or physical pain experienced during the study. The time participants spend participating in the study might be considered an inconvenience. There might be a risk of possible loss of confidentiality. For all face-to-face research during the COVID-19 health pandemic, the two last risks/ inconveniences are:

- You may feel anxious and/or fearful of being exposed to COVID-19 in the study.
- You may be at risk of contracting COVID-19.

Safeguards

To minimise these risks and inconveniences, the following measures will be taken:

Participants can skip any questions that they feel uncomfortable answering while taking the survey or during the interview. Participants may skip any part of the intervention. The surveys, interviews, or observations may be scheduled at a time that is convenient to the participant and at a place that is private.

- For all face-to-face research during the COVID-19 health pandemic, I am taking the following precautions to minimise the possibility that you will be exposed to the virus: The researcher will carry a hand sanitiser and thermometer for screening purposes.
- Despite these precautions, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 is still present.

Confidentiality

Your responses will be confidential.

The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but your name will not be used. Results will only be shared in aggregate form. Participants' responses will be saved in password-protected documents. Only the researcher and supervisors will have access to them. The data will be retained for no longer than 3 years until the study is completed. After the completion of the study, the data will be erased.

Voluntary Participation

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty. Your decision whether to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with your school.

Benefits of Taking Part in the Study

There are no direct benefits to participating in this study. However, your participation will help this study, as it is of utmost importance to society, as they are the learners and teachers on whom the research is based. Implementation of this study would benefit society, as it is their learners who will gain more knowledge of their mother tongue. The dominant language in a specific community will be recognised. This will make the society feel honoured. Also, it will decrease the idea of racism that is still wandering about.

Alternatives to Taking Part in the Study

If you decide not to participate in this study, you can continue with your daily activities while the research is being conducted with the participants who have accepted.

Payment or Incentive

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

Study-Related Injuries

This study has no minimal risk at all.

Contact Information

If you have questions about the study, please call me at 0823659624 or e-mail me at ledwabazaza@gmail.com. Alternatively, you can contact my Main Supervisor – Dr. E.T. Ngobeni at 082 3473322. You will be given a copy of this form for your records. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the two mentioned above.

Participant's Consent

By signing below, you are giving consent to participate in the study. Please check the option that applies to you before signing.

☐ I give permission for my interviews to be audio (or video) taped.

☐ I do not give permission for my interviews to be audio (or video) taped.

For face-to-face research add the following line as well:

☐ I have been informed about the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in this study. I understand that regardless of any precautions taken, a possible risk of exposure to the virus still exists.

Name of the Participant:

Signature of the Participant:

Date: 17/11/2021

General Information Form: Teachers

THE IMPACT OF TEACHING ALL SUBJECTS IN MOTHER TONGUE IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE FOR SELECTED SCHOOLS IN WARMBARTHS (BELA-BELA) CIRCUIT.

Information Sheet

Dear Participant,

My name is Zanele Ledwaba, and I am an MEd student at Central University of Technology. You are invited to participate in a research study on the impact of teaching in the mother tongue in the foundation phase.

Why am I being invited to take part in this study?

You are invited to take part in this study because you are part of the research participants as teachers of the foundation phase.

What will I do if I agree to participate?

If you agree to participate in the study, you have to answer a few questions regarding my study. These will be closed short, ended questions. It will only take a maximum of 10 minutes. The researcher will be recording the answers the participants will give. This interview will be conducted in the classroom.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to participate at any time, even after the study has started. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty, and you will be able to keep any incentives you have earned up to the point at which you withdraw.

What are the benefits to me for being in this study?

Although there may be no direct benefit to you, your participation will help this study as it is of utmost importance to society as they are the learners and teachers on which the research is based. Implementation of this study would benefit society as it is their learners who will gain more knowledge in their mother tongue. The dominant language in a specific community will be recognised. This will make the society feel honoured. Also, it will decrease the idea of racism that is still wandering about.

What happens to the information collected for the study?

Your responses will be confidential.

The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but your name will not be used. Results will only be shared in aggregate form. Participants' responses will be saved in password-protected documents. Only the researcher and supervisors will have access to them. The data will be retained for no longer than 3 years until the study is completed. After the completion of the study, the data will be erased.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me? Is there any risk to me by being in this study? If so, how will these risks be minimised?

There are minimal risks and inconveniences to participating in this study. These include: You may be uncomfortable answering the survey or interview questions. The time you spend participating in the study might be considered an inconvenience.

Who Should I Contact for Questions?

If you have questions about the study, please call me at 0823659624 or e-mail me at ledwabazaza@gmail.com. Alternatively, you can contact my Main Supervisor – Dr. E.T. Ngobeni, at 082 3473322. You will be given a copy of this form for your records. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the two mentioned above.

Please Keep This Information Sheet for Your Records

Annexure D: Research Ethic Approval (Ethical Clearance)

	FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES	

2021

1. Applicants' Information

1.1.	Title (Dr /Mr /Mrs /Ms)	Mrs	Initials	Z. C.
1.2	Surname	Ledwaba		
1.3	Name(s)	Zanele Constance		
1.4	Postal address	1049 Kgosana str Bela-Bela 0480		
1.5	Contact details	(Cell)	0823659624	
		(Work)	N/A	
		(Home)		
1.6	Supervisor(s)/Project leader	Main	0823659624	
		Co-1	Dr E. T. Ngobeni	
		Co-2	Prof. P Sepeng	
1.7	Qualification registered for:		Tick	
	Master's Degree		√	
	Doctoral Degree (PhD)			
	Other research project (please specify below)			
1.8	FRIC Approval Number (LS262a) [Students only]		FRIC 03/21/02	

2. Details of the Study

2.1	Approved Title of the Study
The impact of teaching all subjects in mother tongue in the foundation phase for selected schools in Warmbaths circuit.	
Schools in Warmbaths Circuit (Bela-Bela).	
2.2	Main Research Question / Research Questions
Were there any loopholes in the proposed curriculum?	
Did the curriculum development work?	
Was the curriculum development up to standard?	
2.3	Research Participants (e.g., Grade 12 Mathematics teachers)
Please list participants with planned quantity.	
A	Teachers

B	Learners 5
2.4	Research Site(s) (e.g., Borong Secondary School)
	Please list
A	Modderspruit Primary School
B	Malebone Primary School
C	Khabele Primary School
2.5	Data Collection Instruments (e.g., Qualitative/ Quantitative / Mixed questionnaire(s)/ interview schedule(s) / observation schedule(s) / other)
	Please list
A	Interview Schedules
B	Closed questionnaires
C	Qualitative and Quantitative

2.6	Data Collection Procedure
All data collected was narrative and descriptive. A direct data collection was used by the researcher. Participants will be randomly selected out of the three selected research sites.	

3. Documents to Be Attached with Application

The following documents must be attached as a prerequisite for approval to undertake research in the Department		Tick
3.1	LS 262a approved by the FRIC (Humanities) [Students only]	√
3.2	Proof of registration [Students only]	√
3.3	Draft copy of assent/consent forms	√
3.3	Copies of draft data collection instruments as identified under 2.5 (please list)	
A	Closed questionnaire	√
B		
C		

4. Ethical Issues and Risk Assessment

In order to assess whether your proposed research is ethically compliant, ethics risks are categorised into four categories:

Please Indicate the Level of Risk

- Research involving minor risk: The likelihood of projected harm or inconvenience in the research is not greater than that experienced in daily life.
- Research involving low risk: Research in which the only anticipatable risk is one of potential awkwardness or discomfort to the participants.
- Research involving medium risk: Research in which there is a possible risk of harm or discomfort but where appropriate steps can be taken to lessen or moderate overall risk.
- Research involving high risk: Research in which there is a real and foreseeable risk of harm and discomfort, which may lead to a serious adverse event if not managed in a responsible manner.


4.1.	Will human research participants be used in your study? <i>Please mark with an X or √ in the Yes/No/N/A box</i>	Yes X	No	N/A
4.2.	If yes, does the research study involve any of the following?			
	a) Children or youth under the age of 16 (Attach parental consent letter)	√		
	b) Individuals living with disabilities (physical, mental and/or sensory) (Attach consent letter of legal guardian)		√	
	c) Individuals that might find it difficult to make independent and informed decisions for socio, economic, cultural, political and/or	√		

medical reasons				
d) Communities that might be considered vulnerable, thus finding it difficult to make independent and informed decisions for socio, economic, cultural, political and/or medical reasons		√		
e) Individuals who might be vulnerable for age-related reasons e.g., the elderly				√
f) Individuals whose spoken language differs from the language used for the research			√	
g) Women considered to be vulnerable (pregnancy, victimisation, marginalised, etc.)			√	
h) Other (Please explain): N/A				
4.3.	Will data collection involve any of the following?	Yes	No	N/A
a) Access to confidential data without prior permission of participants			√	
b) Participants expected to commit an act which might reduce self-respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment, or regret			√	
c) Expose participants to worrying or upsetting questions or to processes which may have disagreeable or harmful side effects			√	
d) The use of stimuli, errands or procedures which may be experienced as stressful, harmful, or hostile			√	
e) Any use of materials risky to human beings			√	
4.4. If you answered "Yes", to any of the previously mentioned questions, explain (attach as an appendix), and justify. Explain, too, what steps you will take to minimise the potential stress/harm. (Please indicate if it is not applicable to your study)				
N/A				
4.5. Confidentiality of participants' identity				
4.5.1	Will the identity and privacy of participants be protected through pseudonyms or other forms of identification and will there be the use of an informed consent form, which specifies (in a language that participants will understand)? <i>Place an 'X' or '✓' in the Yes/No box</i>	YES √	NO	N/A
4.5.2	Please note that participants should be informed about the following (where applicable)			
a)	The purpose/s of the research and how it is conducted	√		
b)	The researcher, project leader and supervisor's identity, their institutional association, and their contact details			√
c)	Voluntary participation of participants	√		
d)	Making sure that participants' responses will be treated in a confidential manner	√		
e)	Be transparent about any possible limits on confidentiality which may apply	√		
f)	Ensuring participants that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves	√		
g)	How the findings of the study will have any benefits as a result of their participation in the research	√		
4.5.2. Please attach the proposed consent and assent documents prepared to address all the above, if not a full explanation is needed explaining how participants will be respected and protected.				

4. Declaration by the Applicant

I undertake to use the information that I acquire through my research, in a balanced and a responsible manner. I, furthermore, take note of, and agree to adhere to the following conditions:

- a) I will schedule my research activities in consultation with the relevant Department of Education, school principal and research participants (where relevant).
 - b) I agree that involvement of participants in my research is voluntary, and that participants have a right to decline to participate.
 - c) I will obtain signed consent forms from participants prior to any engagement with them.
 - d) I will inform participants about the use of recording devices such as tape-recorders and cameras, and participants will be free to reject them if they wish.
 - e) I will honour the right of participants to privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, and respect for human dignity at all times. Participants will not be identifiable in any way from the results of my research, unless written consent is obtained otherwise.
 - f) All interviews (recordings) will be transcribed verbatim and analysed as per conventional data analysis techniques (example(s) of interview transcript to be included in final dissertation)
 - g) I will adhere to the principles of rigorous data collection, analysis, and interpretation consistent with the design of the study.
 - h) I will keep a data trail for possible auditing purposes as well as the safe keeping of raw data for a period of three years after publication of the results.
 - i) I will send the draft research findings to research participants before finalisation, in order to validate the accuracy of the information in the report.
 - j) I will not use the resources of the university when I am conducting my research (such as stationery, photocopies, faxes, and telephones) and
 - k) I will include a disclaimer in any report, publication or presentation arising from my research, that the findings and recommendations of the study do not represent the views of the Central University of Technology.**
 - l) Where applicable, a copy of the thesis/dissertation will be submitted to the Free State Department of Basic Education as stipulated in their research approval letter.
- I declare that all statements made in this application are true and accurate. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.

STUDENT/RESEARCHER SIGNATURE		DATE	09/06/2021
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5. Declaration by Supervisor(s)/Project Leaders

I/We declare that I/we shall oversee the students' adherence to all statements as set out above.			
Role	Initials and	Signature	Date
Main supervisor	Dr. E.T. Ngobeni		
Co-supervisor 1	Prof. Sepeng		
Co-supervisor 2			

For Official Use

Approval of Faculty of Humanities Ethical Committee

Decision			Tick
1.	Application approved		
2.	Ethical clearance number	HREIC 04/03/21	
3.	Application approved subject to certain conditions. <i>Specify conditions below</i>		
	n/a		
4.	Application not approved. <i>Provide reasons for non-approval below</i>		

Ethics Committee	Initials and Surname	Signature	Date
Chairperson			

Cc Dean: Faculty of Humanities

Annexure E: Letter to Department of Education

Letter of Permission

1049 Kgosana str

Mazakhela

Bela-Bela

0480

Department of Education

NTK Building Government Offices

89 Thabo Mbeki Dr.

Modimolle

0510

Dear Madam,

Re: Request to Conduct Academic Research in the Waterberg District

Teaching foundation phase learners is very beneficial to their overall development. The transition will be slow at the beginning of the implementation process, but gradually, it will speed up. It has been shown that foundation phase learners grasp content quicker when the means of communication is their mother tongue. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of mother-tongue communication in the foundation phase.

The researcher would like to conduct this research in three schools in the Waterberg district: Modderspruit Primary School, Malebone Primary School and Khabele Primary School. The researcher will ask interview questions and conduct a questionnaire for the randomly selected teachers and learners in those three specific schools. The results will be used as data tools in the research study with permission from the selected participants.

Should the district director give us permission to continue with this research, the researcher will formally acknowledge the district in the acknowledgement section of the research. Please respond to this letter with an approval letter that will serve as proof to my supervisors that permission was granted.

Student: Central University of Technology

MEd Postgraduate

Student Number: 220049949

Ledwaba Z.C.

Kind Regards

Annexure F: Editing Letter

