Learners' attitudes toward learning their first language in high school: A survey in Soshanguve.

TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LANGUAGES

LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL: A SURVEY IN SOSHANGUVE

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DEDICATION

To the almighty God, who made it possible for me to finish this study.

I dedicate this dissertation to my Loving and Caring Family, my Mom (Johanna Ralidzhivha), Aunt (Christina Tshabalala), and my mother-in-Law (Mabore Moleya), for their support.

To my husband (Samson Kgetsa Moleya), and my two sons, (Karabo Chabalala and Kgosi Moleya), for their patience through my course of study.

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DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that the dissertation, "Learners' attitudes toward learning their first Languages in high school: A survey in Soshanguve", submitted for the degree of MTech: (Language practice) at Tshwane University of Technology, Soshanguve, is my own original work, and has not been submitted to any other institution of higher education.

I further declare that all sources cited or quoted in this dissertation, are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

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ABSTRACT

English has, over the years, been the language of power, status and prestige, and this has caused people to pay less attention to Black South African languages, and more attention to it.

The main purpose of this study was to find out: the learners' attitudes toward learning their first languages in Soshanguve high schools, the implications for teaching and learning in the learners' first language(s); the causes of learners' negative attitudes (if applicable), and the implications thereof; and lastly, if there are any rewards associated with learning the Black African languages in high school. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to elicit data on the learners' attitudes. Questionnaires were distributed amongst three different high schools around Soshanguve, and teachers from the three high schools were also interviewed to get their own views on how learners' negative attitudes could be changed into positive attitudes.

The study found out that learners held both negative and positive attitudes, depending on the domain in which they were used. They showed more positive attitudes toward their (Black South African) languages when they communicated with family, friends, and neighbours, for intimate, social purposes. They preferred using their first languages in these domains because people in all the domains understand the language(s) better, and not all these people knew English. Learners showed less favourable attitudes toward the use of Black African language(s) in education, media, and social networking.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The motivation for the research came as a result of an observation made during the past years of study in high school (Soshanguve Technical High School) in Pretoria. These observations suggest that learners have certain negative attitudes toward learning their first language(s), as compared to other subjects in the curriculum, including English.

English, over the years, has become the driving force in the educational sector in South Africa. Focus has shifted from other indigenous languages (to English) as the medium of instruction. As a result, many learners tend to fail, when they do not produce the required marks in their exams, mainly because they fail their first languages.

These observations also suggest that more attention and study time is being allocated to other subjects, except languages, e.g., Mathematics, Physical Science, etc. Afternoon or winter classes are not being held to help improve first language studies.

Many parents in South Africa take their children to private schools where African languages are not part of the curriculum, and this leads to young learners adopting English as their first language. They no longer see the necessity to speak African languages - this could also 'kill' other indigenous languages. Traditional cultures are also dying, due to learners adopting Western values with the help of their parents.

Having Pretoria pidgin (*Sepitori*) as a dominate language in Soshanguve makes it even more difficult to sustain the African ethnic languages. It has become the first languages (L1) of many 'Soshanguvians', over the years. In a way, it can be a contributory factor to the learners' attitudes toward learning their first language(s).

This research employed both quantitative and qualitative approach(es), to look at the causes of the learners' negative attitudes toward learning their first language(s). Likert scale-type questionnaires, as well as interviews, were employed to collect data.

Beardsmore (1998: 89) warns that "it is as if some collective, sub-conscious awareness of the implications of language shift towards English are coming to the fore, with queries as to how to reconcile the desire of high- level proficiency in English without a significant

loss of ethnic language proficiency and cultural values. It is here that the nature of bilingual education becomes a central problem.''.

Lewis (1981: 262) asserts that, "in some instances, a language policy is in fact, largely, if not principally, concerned with inculcating attitudes either to the languages or to the speakers of those languages…that attitudes change over time". Therefore, every language policy should be changed to remain relevant to society. He also mentions that attitudes are influenced by politics and that they are manipulated by power groups. He adds that "Language attitudes may change due to internal thinking; more often, they change by exposure to social influences". This is evident in the current South African youth, whereby they are massively influenced by social media. South Africa needs to review its language policy to keep up. The policy that introduced 11 official languages should be reviewed, because most of the South African youth are more comfortable using English in many domains, since they feel that the language has status and prestige. This is more reason to review language policies more often.

Baker (1992) warns that, if one attempts to examine language attitude change, they should start looking at the historical perspective, by examining the statistics of the previous language change situations over centuries. He also suggests that one could look into the ideology and institution, power and prestige, conflicts and class, figureheads and fashions, and important factors, rather than taking the present, personal-oriented perspective, or contemporary socio-political perspective.

Gardner (1985: 147) defines motivation as 'the effort, want (desire), and effect associated with learning a second language. The 'desire' element is closely associated by Gardner with the goals learners seek to achieve through language learning.

Gardner's (1985a) study on the language variables spoken in townships around Pretoria, non- standard varieties and the phenomenon of code-switching are viewed as problematic. It is indicated that many of the problems which pupils experience in the mother tongue subjects could be associated with the influences of non-standard languages or the form of various varieties, e.g.,' Sepitori', etc .

"Children who grow up in the townships often learn this colloquial variety before acquiring a standard language, leading to various problems in the teaching of the standard language in schools." (Calteaux,1992: 1). This is evident in Soshanguve (township),

whereby many households speak Sepitori, and children are more exposed to the language than to their mother/father tongue. In many occasions, these children struggle with learning their L1s.

Schlebush (1994: 98) claims that learners' competence in their mother tongue(s) is decreasing, and believes that it is due to the past apartheid era. Government has tried to elevate Black African languages, but there seems to be no much major progress. He asserts that many teachers are not equipped or trained to teach these languages, and that little support is being given by mother tongue speakers to the indigenous languages.

Gumede (1996), in her paper on "Attitudes of high school pupils toward the use of African languages as languages of learning and teaching", focused on three different types of schools; namely, Model C, rural, and township schools. She found out that pupils in urban settings were more positive toward African languages than their peers in the rural areas. Her findings reveal that the rural pupils regard African languages as 'useless', and, hence, they should be discontinued. Learners believed that they would gain more knowledge, if they did their studies in English, instead of their source languages. The reason for their negative attitude could be because they believed that English has more status and prestige; therefore, they want to be associated with this language.

Langa (2005) found the same results as Gumede (1996): that these learners felt more comfortable when using English rather than their L1s. He recommends that the South African government take a number of steps in ensuring the recognition of all languages in South Africa, and that it should also make an effort to elevate African languages to the same level as English. Although government made efforts to elevate the Black African languages by making them official, they are still not being treated as equal. English is still dominant. Language policies are not being implemented in many spheres of government, nor in the private sector.

Madadzhe and Sepota's (2007) study was based on the status of African languages as a field of study that has been experiencing challenges in the past ten years in South Africa. The study focused on students taking African languages as a field of study, retrenchment, and threats of more retrenchments of staff in African languages, and the lack of the creation of posts in the field in various universities.

It seems like things are going to change for the better for experts in the language field, in terms of the creation of posts. PANSALB (Pan South African Language Board) proposed a bill that aims "To provide for the establishment and functions of language units by national departments, national public entities and national public enterprises". There is a new Bill of Rights that was passed in 2014 on the establishment of language units in South African government (Gov. Gazette No. 37398). It states that: "Every national department, national public entity and national public enterprise should establish a language unit within 6 months of the coming into effect of the regulations, i.e., February 2014". The deadline was extended to 2 May 2015.

They also looked at attitudes to learning, where they mentioned that negative attitudes toward African languages are mainly associated with backwardness, poverty, and inferiority. Ngugiwa Thiong'o (1986: 11) related this situation to that of Kenya in the 1950s:

> "Thus one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking 'Gikuyu' in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment - three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks - or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID, or I AM A DONKEY".

This type of behaviour could definitely create a negative attitude toward one's native language, because the schools do not encourage the use of these languages. This could result in language shift. This is also against the language in education policy of many African countries, which state that learners should be taught in their first language(s) for their first three years of study.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to first find out whether learners in high schools really have negative attitudes toward learning their first language(s), and if they did, attempt to find the causes of the negative attitudes. The study will also attempt to find out if there are any anticipated intrinsic and extrinsic rewards involving their future careers that may be related to their attitudes.

1.3 Research Problem(s), Question(s), and Hypotheses

This research attempted to answer the following **questions**:

i) What are Soshanguve high school learners' attitudes toward learning their first languages?
ii) What are the implications for teaching and learning in the learners' first language(s)?
iii) What causes learners' negative attitudes toward learning their first language(s)?
iv) What are the implications* of the learners' negative attitudes, if they do have them?

More focus invested by the Department of Education and teachers in some subjects, rather than in others, is more likely to cause learners to lose interest in learning the neglected subjects (languages). Languages in education are as important as all other subjects, e.g., Mathematics, Physical Science, etc.

The following hypotheses were formulated in an attempt to test, if:

H1: English offers many extrinsic rewards, as compared to other ethnic languages, which mostly reflect only intrinsic rewards.

H2: English is internationally prestigious, as compared to other African ethnic languages that are not internationally recognised.

H3: English promises rewards, in terms of careers.

1.4 Significance of the study

The significance of the study was to find ways in which other indigenous languages could be appreciated by learners, teachers, and the Department of Education. At the same time, recommend ways to change the learners' negative attitudes toward these languages. Languages should be treated equally to all other subjects. Without African languages, African cultures would not exist.

1.5 Exposition of the study

Chapter 2 presents and discusses work done by other researchers who explored the same topics that this research aimed to explore, i.e., Language, Education and Development, Language Policy and Planning, Language Attitude, Motivation, Ethnolinguistic Vitality, and finally, Language and Identity. It gives the theoretical foundation and framework that will give an understanding of the topic of study.

Chapter 3 looks at the research methods employed in the study. It gives an outline of the sample population and size, and a brief discussion of the respondents' profiles. The methods and procedures used in obtaining and analysing the acquired data are explained,

as well as reasons for using these specific methods. The chapter also discusses ways to meet the objectives of the study.

Chapter 4 gives a clear presentation, analysis, and discussion of the findings obtained from the questionnaires and unstructured interviews, with a view to assessing the three hypotheses adopted for this research.

Chapter 5 draws conclusions of all the aspects discussed in Chapter 2, and relates them to the findings of the study. It also gives recommendations, in relation to answering the research questions outlined.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

During the apartheid era, South Africa had two official languages, of which Afrikaans was the more dominant. It was an advantage to Afrikaans speakers, and a disadvantage to Black South Africans, because Afrikaans was not their mother tongue/first language.

It has been posited that negative attitudes are most often influenced by our thoughts and feelings toward the attitude object. Motivation (Integrative and Instrumental) is said to cause more favourable attitudes, and learning English is said to promise more rewards. Gardner and Lambert (1972: 14) posited that instrumental motivation is characterised by "a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantage through knowledge of a foreign language".

This chapter attempts to define, review, and discuss the following concepts: Attitude; Language Attitudes; Language and Identity; L2 Learning as Motivation; Language Policy and Planning; and, Ethnolinguistic Vitality. It will also present and discuss theories that are relevant to the current study.

2.2 Language, Education, and Development

2.2.1 *Language Policy*

Language policy can be regarded as rules and regulations that serve as a guideline for organisations, on which languages are to be used, and how they are to be used. The policies are normally established to accommodate people from different cultures, or societies. Policy makers go through the planning stage, and a national language policy must be submitted to parliament for approval.

Mann and Wong (1999: 17) define *language policy* as "governmental statements made on whatever statuses and functions selected languages have been assigned, usually at the national level''.

Paulston (1984: 55) adds that they are "decisions primarily made on political and economic grounds and reflect the values of those in power", and not the citizens at large.

Rubin (1984: 4) points out that "Policy making is not planning''

Hartshome (1987: 62) shares the same view as Mann & Wong (1999), and defines policy as "a course of action adopted by government'' in different departments within the country, and emphasises that the policy must be of advantage to the country, and its citizens.

Le Page (1964: 80) observes that the process of establishing a language policy starts at the top to the bottom. He adds that "decisions about a national language policy are normally made by politicians, not by linguists; and for political reasons which may seem valid at one moment, but may have lost much of their force ten years later.'' This means that language policies are mostly forced down on citizens, and experts in the field are not usually included in the process of establishing a national language policy. It would also make sense to review such policies regularly.

However, as Bowen warns (in Ramos, Aguilar & Sibiyan, 1967: v):

> "No public authority, even a dictator, can order an abrupt change and expect to see it effected, unless the means and tendency for that change are already present in the practices and habits of the speaker...and they suggested that a language engineering must be applied within a framework of realistic limits, to serve a useful and logical need.''

This cannot be good, because people who are governed by these policies are not encouraged to participate in the process; therefore, language engineering could be a solution.

Noss (1971: 25) posits three types of language policies:

"i) Official Language Policy states which language(s) should be used and how they should be used in government.
ii) Education Language Policy states which language(s) should be used and how they should be used as the medium of instruction and as a subject of study, both in Private and Public schools.
iii) General Language Policy states which language(s) to be used in business, mass communication, and with foreigners".

Lewis (1981: 262) observed that "any language policy, especially in the education system, has to consider the users of the policies, and that, in the long run, no policy will succeed

which does not do one of the three things: Conform to the expressed attitude of those involved; Persuade those who express negative attitudes about rightness of the policy; Or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement." The three stages are crucial, because the users of the language policies need to be considered in the implementation process. Knowing the audience and understanding their needs is important for the process, so that the country could better serve their citizens.

Appiah (2005: 102) debates the role of the state in language policy formulation, whereby he argues that: "Public education should aim to give the political language [the language that is the instrument of citizenship] to all citizens".

An argument may arise, in the case of South Africans, where there are 11 official languages, and the languages are being supported by the government. One may wonder if it is necessary to have so many languages as official languages, but, to South Africans, it is regarded as being free and fair. Everyone gets the opportunity to express themselves fully in their mother tongues, unlike in the past apartheid era where Black African people where oppressed, and forced to learn everything in Afrikaans.

The following are the principles of language policy-making:

Kelman, 1971 (in Rubin & Jernudd, eds) proposed five principles that the policy-making process should follow; namely:

> "**Information** (research on other policies from different policies); **Formulation** (The definition of solution, hypotheses and directions toward solving the problems); **Experimentation** (Pilot-testing possible solutions, in terms of feasibility, practicability, and acceptability) **Determination** (Official decision-making in policy, based on solid evidence and careful deliberation); **Implementation** (Application of the policy)".

In selecting languages during the planning process, either the language policy of the country or language in education policy, Kelman (1971) recommended two things that need to be considered:

> "i) How to establish and facilitate patterns of both internally and internationally, that would enable its socio-economic institutions to function most effectively and equitably in meeting the needs and interests of the population'; and

ii) have equal access to the system and opportunities to participate in it.''
(Kelman, 1971: 40, in Rubin & Jernudd)

Kelman (1971: 44, ibid.) suggests a remedy: ""One possible solution in a situation marked by competition between a number of indigenous languages, each cherished by its own group is to choose as the national language one that places all groups at a more or less equal disadvantage.''

The South African government chose a maximum of 11 Languages to be used as official languages. This was done in the hope of accommodating everyone, and to change the past situation of apartheid for people to be free to express themselves in their own language(s).

2.2.2 *South Africa's new Language Policy 1994*

A new language policy was adopted after the apartheid era, because the new government felt that it was oppressive to other citizens, and that the Black African languages were not treated equally to English and Afrikaans. Therefore, a new language policy that accommodates most of the South African languages was established in 1994, when a new Black President was elected. The new policy's intent and content are summarised thus:

- "It promotes multilingualism and language right or ecology of language paradigm. South Africa has given equal official recognition to eleven languages, including English and Afrikaans. According to the interim Constitution;
- South Africa has chosen eleven languages to ensure and guarantee the freedom and human dignity of all South Africans under a new dispensation
- To recognise the country's linguistic diversity as well as the fact that the majority of South Africans, probably 98% use of these languages as their home or first language
- And to ensure that the process of democratization is extended to language-related issues as well.''

(*South Africa's New Language Policy: The Facts*, 1994: 4)

2.2.3 *The South African Language in Education Policy*

Language in education policy is a list of rules and regulations that govern the education system of the country. The adoption of the South Africa's new language in education policy was due to the past apartheid era, whereby students, regardless of their race and culture, were forced to learn formally in Afrikaans, and this was not ideal for many Black

African people. The government called for a review of the policy to accommodate every South African citizen. The South African Constitution (Section 29) states that:

> "Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account equity; practicability; and the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices."
> (*South Africa's New Language Policy: The Facts* (1994: 4)

Ferguson (1996: 274-275) remarks that:

> "…in many ways the effectiveness of language policies in education is determined more by the attitudes of the people on language use than it is by the simple demographic facts of language distribution and use. Discovering language attitudes is more difficult than finding the basic data and also may raise political issues which threaten the successful carrying out of a survey, but it is of fundamental importance."

The main purpose of the policy is to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged by being forced to learn in a language not spoken or understood by the majority. This policy is concerned with the development of learners in school, and it ensures that school makes the right language choices for their learners.

Although the language in education policy is designed to cater for every South African citizen in all spheres of government, the truth is that English is still the most preferred language in government: all interviews are conducted in English, even when one is interviewed for translation, interpreting, and language positions that require one to know several Black African languages. As such, the policy assumes that the learning of more than one language should be a general practice and principle in our society, i.e., being multilingual should be an important characteristic of being South African.

2.3 Language Planning

According to Tollefson (1991: 22-42),

> "*Language planning* involves public decisions about a language, its use, status and development - decisions that have a huge impact on society, economy, education and politics for both society, and the individual. Language planning cannot be separated from such concerns, nor, indeed, would it be appropriate to try to do so. Language-planning efforts are, in short, inevitably ideological in nature, and this fact must be taken into account in trying to understand them."

Cooper (1989: 182) suggests that language planning serves many goals, and posits that "Language is the fundamental institution of society, not only because it is the first human institution experienced by the individual, but also because all other institutions are built upon its regulatory patterns...To plan language is to plan society".

Language planning is also defined by Weinstein (1980: 56) as "a government authorised, long-term, sustained, and conscious effort to alter a language's function in society for the purpose of solving communication problems".

Eastman (1983: ix) defined language planning as "a developing field that sees language as a social resource", adding that "language planning is done through the cooperative efforts of political, educational, economic and linguistic authorities".

It would be fair for all South Africans to have a say in the language planning of the country. This could be done by means of voting - the same way as political parties are selected. Suggestions could be presented, and the public could choose the policies that they believe are fair to them.

Language planning consists of two related, but distinct, types of activities; namely, *status planning* and *corpus planning*. Rubin and Jernudd, (1971: xvi) define both terms thus:

> "**Status planning** - is the position of one language in relation to other languages as viewed by the national government. In the South African context, examples of status planning would include the selection of 'official' languages and the use of various languages in official and semi-official settings.
>
> **Corpus planning** - refers to coining of new terms, to changes in spelling and morphology, or to the adoption of a new script. It also focuses primarily on the lexical development and expansion of Afrikaans and the African languages of South Africa. Specific examples of corpus planning would include the creation of new terminology, and the production of dictionaries, textbooks, etc."

Appel and Mysken (1981, in Makhuba, 2005: 277) list four stages of the language planning process: i) initial fact-finding; ii) planning; iii) implementation of the laws; and, iv) evaluating the language policy. The process should also consider the following aspects: i) Social-demographics; ii) Linguistics; iii) Social psychological; iv) Political; and, v) Religious. This suggests that all members of society are being considered when the language policy is implemented.

During the apartheid era, learners were forced to use Afrikaans as their medium of instruction. This was a huge disadvantage to Black African children, and an advantage to the White Afrikaners. The language planning system of the apartheid era did not take into consideration the feelings, opinions, and rights of Black African people. Their policies were implemented to oppress the Black African people, with the aim to increase the number of Afrikaans speakers.

As reflected in the following statement by J.G. Strydom, one-time Prime Minister of South Africa, "every Afrikaner who is worthy of the name cherishes the ideal that South Africa will ultimately only have one language and that language must be Afrikaans (in Malherbe, 1977: 72). This statement clearly reflects the oppression exerted by the apartheid government on Black African people. People from other races were not included in the language policy and planning process. Their languages where not considered to be important.

Malherbe (1977: 546) believes that the aim of the Bantu Education Act was "to teach a black child that he was a foreigner when he was in a White South Africa, or at best stateless that equality with Europeans was not for him: that there was no place for him in the European Community.''

The new language planning process of South Africa considers all citizens when decisions concerning languages are made. Eleven South African languages were promoted to equal official status. In Africa, a Black African child generally experiences mother tongue education for their four years of primary education, and then a European language is introduced in their fifth grade as a subject and medium of instruction. There is now a dramatic change in the South African education system. Today, several universities have more than one language as medium of instruction, and it gives people an opportunity to learn in their mother tongue(s).

Research has shown that having a European language as medium of instruction in education can disadvantage African people. The following statistics were recorded for different African countries:

In the Republic of Congo, Rubango (1986) observed that only 1 in 30 Congolese can speak French fluently; and only 1: 30 Congolese can write French correctly.

In Anglophone Africa, it has been reported that only a minimum of 5% to 20% can speak English (Samuels, 1995).

In Zambia, Siachitema (1992) and Tripathi (1990) reported that, since independence, there is a massive decline in the number of Zambians competent in the use of English.

In South Africa**,** the 1991 census statistics revealed that 49% of Black African youth between the ages 15-24 years could not speak, read, or write in English (Van Zyl Slabbert, *et al*. 1994).

A more recent report indicates that more than 12 million South Africans are illiterate, and another 12 million school children cannot read any language (illiterate: 2000).

For all we know, these statistics could be due to the influence of the use of the European languages, instead of the use of Black African languages. But all we can do is hope that the situation will be resolved as new planning systems come into place.

2.4 Attitude

Mann and Pirbhai-illich (1999: 194) agree with Allport (1954: 45) that an *attitude* can be understood as "a mental and neutral state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related''. They believe that an attitude has three principal components; namely, cognitive (knowledge); affective (feelings), and behavioural (disposition to act).

Rosenberg and Hovland (1960: 3) state that "attitudes are predispositions to respond to some class of stimuli with certain classes of responses", and designate the three major types of response as: cognitive, affective; and, behavioural.

Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1962: 139) believe that "attitudes are enduring systems of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and pro or con action tendencies with respect to social objects".

Dittmar (1976: 181) explores other causes of attitude, i.e., attitudes toward language varieties (and their speakers): "they have a bearing on a number of different questions: the choice of language in multilingual communities, the distribution of verbal repertoires, dialectal differences, and problems of mutual understanding between individuals".

Edwards (1985: 139) defines attitude as "a disposition to react favourably to a class of objects.'' He adds that "this disposition often includes three components: thoughts (the cognitive element), feelings (affective), and predisposition to act (behavioural), i.e., one knows or believes something, has some emotional reactions to it and, therefore, assumes to act on this basis".

Ajzen (1988: 4) extended the definition by adding that "attitude is a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event".

Carron and Michael (2009) explore a different aspect on the cause of attitude, in which they think that, since many of the English-speaking learners in this country are taught by Afrikaans-speaking teachers, this might result in learners having neutral or negative attitudes; whatever their teachers have to say can affect their academic performance and their attitudes towards the subjects.

Attitudes could be either negative or positive. Positive attitudes are mostly generated by good thoughts and feelings that are most beneficial to an individual, and negative attitudes could be aroused by thoughts and feelings that are most likely to offend an individual.

De Klerk and Bosch (1995: 18) believe that attitudes are influenced by stereotypes, which they define as "a socially shared undifferentiated manner". Hauptfleisch (1997: 113) says that "stereotypes are important in the social climate within which language preferences act. Hence, the average English speaker's attitude toward Afrikaans can be influenced by their attitude toward the user of Afrikaans, rather than toward the language itself". The situation could be influenced by the speaker's accent or even past experiences (the apartheid era).

2.4.1 *Attitude Change*

Katz (1960, in Baker, 1992: 99-101) provides four functions for an individual's attitudes. The four functions have important implications for *attitude change*:

"1. The utilitarian or instrumental function- where negative attitudes are said to change into positive attitudes when there is some reward, and to avoid punishment.

2. The ego defensive function- this involves people who hold attitudes which lead to insecurity, embarrassment, and anxiety, and are likely to change their attitudes to achieve greater security and less anxiety.

3. The value-expressive function. Katz (1960) suggested that attitudes are expressed and activated when they are in line with personal values and the self-concept.

4. Knowledge function-Attitudes are said to have a cognitive or knowledge component. They facilitate understanding of people and events. Katz (1960) believes that attitudes are more susceptible to change when the knowledge function is known and understood".

2.4.2 *Attitude and Language Learning*

Stereotype is described as a category that singles out an individual as sharing assumed characteristics on the basis of their group membership (Ronowicz & Yallop, 1999: 9).Stereotypes breed attitudes, and vice-versa, and if these stereotypes about a given second language are shared by a larger group, e.g., one's peers, these attitudes may be quite strong. As a result of this, they may develop negative attitudes. The negative attitudes might develop toward the host culture by withdrawing, refusing to learn the language, and by mixing only with people of their own cultural background. In multilingual contexts, negative attitudes, especially among speakers of minority languages, may develop, if policymakers create an impression that their languages are not important. For example, the Soweto 1976 uprisings in South Africa were a protest against the imposition of Afrikaans as a language of education because the language was associated with the apartheid domination (Smieja & Tasch, 1997: 232).

Culture is also a contributory factor in the formation of stereotypes. Salzman (1998: 227) gives an example of the situation among the Araucanians of South Central Chile and neighbouring parts of Argentina. He mentions that men are expected to talk a lot, and those who do and speak well, are highly respected. But Araucanian women are brought up to be

quiet in public, and to keep silent in the company of their husbands. He points out that the situation is worse among Mongolian nomads: daughters-in-law have such a low status that they are severely restricted in the use of language. They are forbidden to use not only the names of their husband's male relatives, but any word or syllable that sounds like these names. The examples provided by Salzman (1998) are not far-fetched in the South Africa situation, especially in rural areas, where women, several decades ago, were not allowed to participate in public (court of law, lobola negotiations, church priest), and they were not allowed to attend school, let alone work.

2.4.3 *Attitude Engineering*

Landry and Allard (1996: 447) propose a principle of *attitude engineering* to help determine people's attitudes:

> "By **attitude engineering** we mean the systematic use of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic knowledge, principles and techniques to determine attitudes of government and the speakers of various languages in a language contact situation and the use of the findings as an input for the design and implementation of a programme to effect polarisation of attitudes in the direction of a desired policy outcome".

They further explain the rationale for the social attitude engineering:

> "i) The ability of a language to resist domination, pressure and adopt mechanisms to appropriate and consolidate the use of existing domains and penetrate new domains and acquire valorising functions etc., as proposed above, depends on the attitudes of its users.
>
> ii) A positive attitude resulting from the application of the PAE and dynamism in favour of the maintenance of the language will guarantee intergenerational transmission of the language to children, and ensure that the linguistic community maximises the possible absolute numbers of speakers and the proportion of speakers of the language within the population".

2.5 Language Attitudes

Language attitudes can be defined as negative or positive feelings toward a particular language (and/or its speakers). Negative attitudes toward a language can be caused by the reflection of the behaviour of a particular cultural group. Another major contributing factor

toward negative language attitudes is caused by stereotype, and is also evident in a particular cultural group.

Baker (1989a) observes that "where a language is fighting for survival, encouraging positive attitudes becomes crucial". Lewis (1981: 262) asserts that "in some instances a language policy is, in fact, largely, if not principally concerned with inculcating attitudes either to the languages or to the speakers of those languages".

Language attitudes may change, if there are promised rewards, or a need for social development. Bugarski (1990, in Webb, 1992: 433) shares the same view, and warns that language attitudes "are essentially social attitudes or, more precisely, linguistic reflections of deep-seated and often only semi-conscious socio-psychological perceptions of a territorial, ethnic or social group by speakers representing other groups".

Webb (1992: 433) perceives language attitudes as "having an important role in the life of a community". He further emphasises that attitudes can affect the economic, educational, and social life of a language group, and that attitudes can also affect the success of learning.

Dyers (1996: 24) state that a language attitude "is one of the central theories surrounding language acquisition, such as the cognitive, audio-lingual, communication and humanistic theories."

Holmes (1992:16) expressed three levels of attitude toward a social or ethnical group; namely, (i) attitudes toward a specific social group; (ii) their language; and, (iii) individuals within the social group.

2.5.1 *Surveys on Language Attitudes*

Smit (1996b: 100-107) carried out a language attitudes survey among high school learners in the Eastern Cape. However, her subjects were Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa speakers. In addition, she was investigating attitudes to both the speaker and the accent/language variety.

A study was conducted by Lorenzo & De Klerk (2005) at the Fort Hare University, and the purpose of the study was to look at *Attitudes of Xhosa-speaking students at the Fort Hare University towards the use of Xhosa as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT).* The results of the study indicated an improved confidence in the respondents' English

proficiency for more than one purpose, to practise the language (both in class and outside), and personal efforts to learn it, rather than to the direct influence of the university. This suggests that students show more favourable attitudes toward English, as compared to Xhosa.

The research conducted by Dyers (1998) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) was similar to those at Fort Hare, where there was an increase in self-assessed English proficiency over the years.

A different case was presented by De Klerk's (1996) at Rhodes University, where students gradually lost their confidence in English, as they faced the linguistic demands of the academic environment. This is the case in many South African Universities, whereby they are trying to introduce one Black African Language as another language for learning. This could be the change South Africa and other African countries need to preserve Black African languages. This could help to change the negative attitudes to positive ones.

2.6 L2 Learning Motivation

Motivation is of particular interest to educational psychologists, because of the crucial role it plays in student learning. However, the specific kind of motivation that is studied in the specialised setting of education differs qualitatively from the more general forms of motivation studied by psychologists in other fields.

Gardner (1979: 389) observes that "Motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect". Gardner (1979, in Skehan, 1993) suggests that expectations, regarding bilingualism, combined with attitudes toward the target language and its culture, form the basis of an individual's attitude toward language learning. Gardner (1959, in Crookes & Schmidt, 1991: 471-472) believes that "motivation is identified primarily with the learner's orientation toward the goal of learning a second language".

i) Integrative Motivation

Integrative motivation is identified with positive attitudes toward the target language group, and the rewards associated with that group, or, at the very least, an interest in meeting and interacting with members of the target language group. Finegan (1999: 568) asserts that "Integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and pronunciations".

Gardner and Lambert (1959: 271, in Baker, 1992: 33) say that students with an integrative motivational orientation are more successful in acquiring a second language than those who are instrumentally-oriented.

Crooks and Schimidt (1991: 470) identified this as the learner's orientation, with regard to the goal of learning a second language. Learners hold positive attitudes toward the target language group, and they want to associated with that particular language community.

Gardner (1988: 106) adds that "those who are integratively motivated will probably be more successful in additional language learning than those who are not so motivated.

ii) *Instrumental Motivation*

Instrumental motivation refers to more functional reasons for learning a language, e.g., to get a better job or a promotion, or to pass a required examination.

Instrumental motivation reflects pragmatic, utilitarian motives. It is characterised by a "desire to gain social recognition or economic advantage through knowledge of a foreign language" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972: 14).

Many people, especially in Black African countries, think that it is impossible to make a career out of their languages. Our government is also not doing enough to fully implement the present language policy. Everything is conducted in English, and there is no sense of equality in the use of these languages. Young people appear to abandon their languages, and adopt English as their first language, because of its international status, and a promise for a better job/career. It would not be unreasonable to learn English for instrumental purposes, but changing one's beliefs, customs, and values is rather drastic.

The following table distinguishes between components of Integrative and Instrumental Motivation toward L2 learning. (Baker 1992: 34)

Table 2.1: Integrative and Instrument Motivation

Integrative Motivation	**Instrumental Motivation**
Friendship	Promotion
Sociability	Status and Prestige
Gregariousness	Better job

2.6 Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Giles, *et al*. (1977: 306) introduced the notion of *Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV)*. It was defined as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations". They proposed that:

> "…those groups' strengths and weaknesses on dimensions of institutional support and control, as well social status and demographic strength, may be assessed "objectively" to provide a rough overall classification of ethnolinguistic groups as having low, medium, or high vitality. It was argued that the more vitality an ethnolinguistic group had, the more likely it would be able to survive as a distinctive linguistic collectivity in intergroup settings. Conversely, groups that have little or no group vitality were expected to assimilate linguistically, or cease to exist as distinctive groups".

The concept of (EV) was proposed by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977: 307) as "a property which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive collection within an intergroup setting''. Their EV model consists of three components; i) Status; ii) Demography; and iii) Institutional Support.

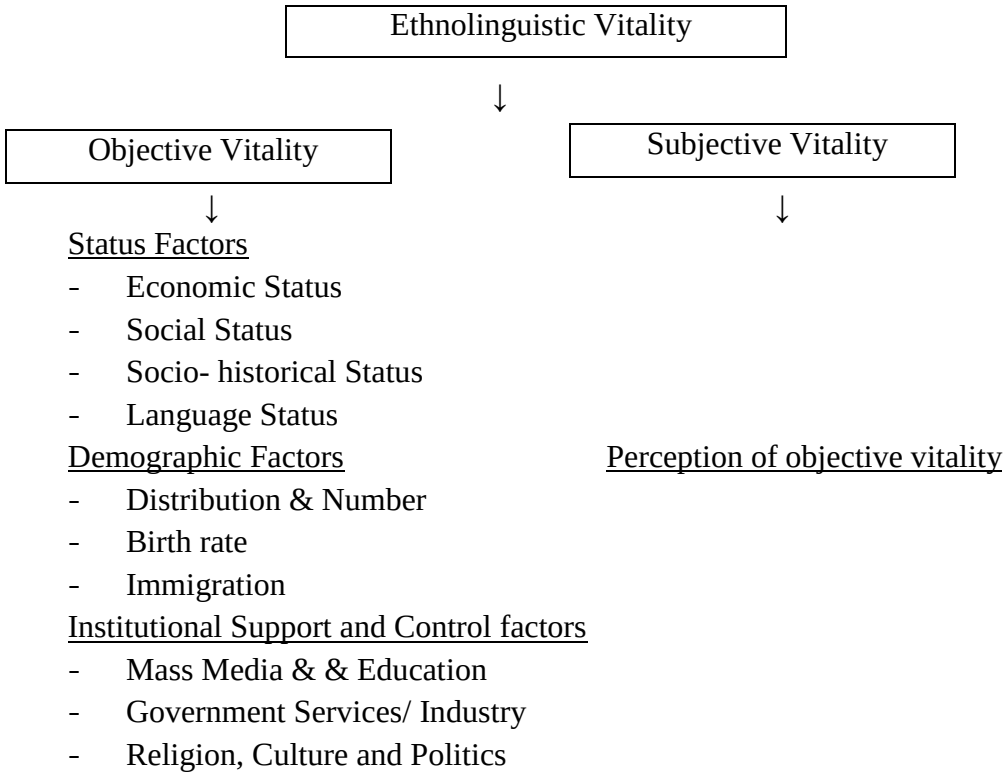

Figure 2.1: Giles, Bourhis and Taylor's (1977) and Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal's (1981) Model of Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Researchers started to distinguish between *objective* and *subjective* (ethnolinguistic) vitality. The first expresses the actual vitality of an ethnic group, the second presents itself as a perception of the objective vitality of any other group that was in contact with the group studied (Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal, 1981).

Mann (2000: 469-470) has a different view from Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977). He introduced the term, *Sociolinguistic Vitality* (SV), because he believes that the term, *Ethnolinguistic Vitality*, does not accommodate languages, such as pidgins, creoles and ESP (English for Specific Purposes). Especially in the context of the Nigerian situation, whereby Anglo-Nigerian pidgin is the language that is mostly spoken in urban settings, and very few people know English, in relation to the real population. He also believes that the concept of EV appears to be inadequate, apart from the fact it failed to measure the depth of the vitality in question.

This is supported by Fishman (1972: 21), who believes that "a major contributing factor affecting group members' attitudes or beliefs toward their languages is the lack of ' Visible Vitality', i.e., interaction networks that actually employ them natively for one or more vital functions''. Fishman (1972) believes that the more speakers a language has, and the higher the status, the greater the vitality of the group's language, as well as its chance of survival. There is no doubt that English, unlike Black African languages, will always hold high vitality. People want to be associated with the language, because it has status, and is functional for education, commerce, tourism, etc. Fishman (1991) suggests that the best way to maintain the language of the community is through the transmission of the language by parents to their children. But, many parents these days want their children to learn English, because there are rewards associated with the language. They send their children to private schools, where English is used as their first language. They believe that the more the child learns English, the more opportunities it would have in future.

Bourhis and Sachdev (1984) believe that the way in which ethnolinguistic members behave, either by striving to maintain or give up their languages, do not only depend on the standing point of society, but also on the degree to which individuals saw their language group as useful.

Minore and Hill (1990) argued that, unlike most governmental policies, concerning the institutional representation of the Aboriginal people, the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program initiated in 1983 was fairly successful. It had provided federal government funds for the production and broadcast of culturally relevant materials in Aboriginal languages. The same should be done in South Africa, so that learners could be exposed to their languages from a very early stage of learning. The South African language in education policy should be emphasised in primary schools. The first three years of study should be dedicated to teaching learners their first language(s).

Moreover, Minore and Hill (1990) suggest that, by responding to local initiatives, there is good potential for the empowerment of the Aboriginal peoples. As a consequence of European colonisation, like in South Africa, the institutional and status vitality of Aboriginal languages and cultures may be considered to be low, but increasing today.

2.7 Language and Identity

It is almost impossible to separate language from identity. Language makes us who we are. Through language, we are able to define ourselves, our values, beliefs, and cultures. The first thing a new baby learns is language, which will identify it as belonging to a particular ethnic group. A name will be given to the child, to give it some kind of identity. The most interesting thing is that, in South Africa, when a child is born, it needs to be registered at the Department of Home Affairs, and to be identified as a South African. Without an identity, one cannot be recognised as a person.

Mc Nair (1980: 34) says that: "For a minority group in a nation, its own language is the most powerful badge of identity, a symbol of solidarity." Hirsch (1987: 83) adds that "a nation's language can be considered a part of its identity, or conversely, its identity can be regarded as the totality of its language".

However, many people today try to adopt or change their identities, values, customs, and languages. This is due to Western cultures and languages, and Africans want to be identified with them. Having English as an international language, or the medium of instruction, could cause people to change their identities, because they want to be identified with the language of prestige, and the language of the elite. Other people might not want to be identified with their cultures and/or languages because of (negative) stereotypes. They feel that their languages are not valuable, and do not have any status, and this could lead to language shift, eventually.

Benghida (2006: 44) argues that "Language encloses specific values and beliefs of a group and acts as a significant instrument for shaping and describing reality by influencing people's perceptions and interpretations of that reality. After all, language helps determine our view, of ourselves, our surroundings, relationship and ideologies. Simply it helps determine who we are".

2.7.1 *Surveys on Language and Identity*

Cairns and Duriez's (1976: 441 – 442) study on school children found that there was a direct relationship between the extent of children's attitudes toward the content of a discourse, and their perceived identity of the speaker.

Hassan (1977: 252, in Hvitfeldt and Poedjosoedarma, 1995).presented and discussed the findings of a survey of oral-aural multilingual and national identity in Singapore. He found out that "bilingualism is conducive to the fostering of a Singaporean national identity as a group distinctiveness becomes increasingly eroded by various processes of structural and communicative integrative''.

Spolsky's (1981: 91) study of indigenous language revival, in which he investigated children who came to primary school with no knowledge of the Maori language, found out that now each year, between two and three thousand children, many of them fluent bilinguals, start school after having already been exposed to the daily use of the Maori language for three or more years. This is the case because they were exposed to the language from birth. We need language to identify and express ourselves.

Hvitfeldt & Poedjosoedarma's (1995: 85) study on intergenerational language use and identity in Singapore revealed that "compulsory bilingual education and the accompanying shifts from 'ethnic' languages to English from Chinese 'dialects' to Mandarin correlate with shifts in language use and identity across generations within Singaporean families''. A summary of the detailed findings shows that:

"1. The (68) grandparents surveyed, who spoke Chinese 'dialects' had a dialect group identity.
2. The (145) parents, who now spoke Mandarin, thought of themselves simply as Chinese; and,
3. The (75) students, who then spoke English, saw themselves, first, as Singaporeans, i.e., an identity shift that appears to mirror language shift".

The Human Science Resource Council (1999, in Masenya, 2005: 27) conducted research on South African identities, and most of the respondents emphasised that "being South African is an important part of who I am". This differentiates between three levels of identity: individual, group, and national. This suggests that a person is identified at the three levels of identity, e.g., (individual - Setswana speaker); (group - Bakgatla); and, (national - South African).

2.8 Summary

Attitude includes the mind, emotions, and action - which means that a person can hear or see something then develop thoughts and emotions about it, which would then lead to a reaction. Attitudes could be either negative or positive, depending on the context.

Language attitudes could be directed to the individual language speaker, social group, and language group. These language attitudes could be caused by stereotypes (e.g., Zulus are stubborn) - this could arouse negative attitudes toward all IsiZulu speakers, or a person who once displayed arrogance. It is also believed that, if there is evidence of an attitude toward a particular language, this could affect the economic, educational, and social life of the language. No-one would be interested to learn the language in question.

Language policy is viewed as a guideline on how languages are to be used in government, education, and in general. Language policies are normally implemented by politicians and professionals in the field, to solve communication problems. It is said that the attitudes of the communities need to be considered when policies are made, so that they could be relevant for each community.

Planning a language is planning society. It is divided into two sections: Status (the use of official languages); and, Corpus (the expansion of the lexicon). If the language is well planned, it could improve the life of the language, and strengthen bonds within speech groups.

Negative attitudes toward languages are said to be caused by many different factors. But time also plays a very important role. As time progresses, people, especially teenagers, find themselves more attracted to English as their medium of instruction.

Although English is an international language, people should not stop acknowledging their first language(s) as this is the main connection to their cultures. It is understandable to

speak English to accommodate people of all cultures, but adopting it as a first language, is totally losing one's language and cultural identity.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches/mixed methods to try to gain insights into the learners' attitudes toward learning their first language(s) in high school. The study also aimed to answer the following research questions:

i) What are the Soshanguve high school learners' attitudes toward learning their first language(s)?
ii) What are the implications for teaching and learning in learners' first language(s)?
iii) What causes learners' negative attitudes toward learning their first language(s)?
iv) What are the implications of the learners' negative attitudes, if they do have them?

The following three hypotheses were tested in the survey:

H1: English offers many extrinsic rewards, as compared to other ethnic languages, which mostly reflect only intrinsic rewards.

H2: English is internationally prestigious, as compared to other African ethnic languages that are not internationally recognised.

H3: English promises rewards, in terms of careers.

3.2 Research Approaches

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed for data collection, which makes it essentially a mixed-methods approach. A four- section questionnaire (with a Likert-scale section), and interviews were used for data collection. Questionnaires were employed to elicit quantitative data, while interviews were used to collect qualitative data.

A Mixed method is defined as "a procedure for collecting, analysing, and 'mixing' both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study to understand a research problem more completely" (Creswell, 2005: 181). The term, 'mixing', implies that the data or findings are related at one or several points within the study. The study sought to explore both statistical data, and some in-depth information, on the learners' attitudes toward learning their first language(s) in high school.

3.2.1 *Quantitative Research*

Aliaga and Gunderson (2000, cited in Muijs, 2011: 1) view quantitative research as "explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods in particular statistics)''.

Polit and Hungler (1999: 712) and Polit, *et al*. (2001: 167) define quantitative research as "the investigation of phenomena that lead to precise measurement and qualification, often involving a rigorous and controlled design". They point out that "it involves the systematic collection of numerical information, often under conditions of considerable control, and the analysis of that information, using statistical procedures" (1994: 24).

Brink (1996: 5) shares the same view, describing quantitative research as "one of the scientific ways of obtaining information".

Consequently, questionnaires were administered to learners from three different high schools in Soshanguve, with the aim to find out if their attitudes toward learning their first languages in high school. The study also hoped to unravel the differential in rewards associated with learning either English or Black African Languages.

3.2.2 *Qualitative Research*

A qualitative research approach involves non-numerical examinations of phenomena. It focuses on the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. It may look at only one or two cases, and it often uses interviews or observations to collect the data. The following are the attributes of a qualitative approach: categories emerge, as a result of the investigation; use of a small number of subjects; usually collects data with unstructured interviews, observation logs/journals (Marlow, 1993: 66).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 8-9) state that "qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher, and what is studied, and situational constraints that shape the enquiry". The advantages and distinguishing features of qualitative research are presented by Bryman (2001: 20) as:

> "i) a research design which does not entail a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and practice;
> ii) which incorporates the practices and norms of the natural scientific model, and of positivism, in particular; and
> iii) embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality)".

According to Marlow (1993: 24), "Expository research adds richness and depth to the investigation elements that may not be often possible with some other strategies. This research determines a study's feasibility, and raises questions to be investigated by more extensive studies". Neuman (2002: 2) adds that this type of research is used to "explore new issues and topics".

This approach was deemed appropriate for this study, because it sought to get in-depth information about the attitudes of Soshanguve high school learners toward learning their first languages.

3.3 Research Methods, Instruments and Procedures

3.3.1 *Methodology*

These are methods used for data generation and collection. Methodology answers questions, such as how data shall be gathered, how it shall be analysed, and how missing data will be dealt with. Essentially, it is concerned with measurement, quantification, and instrument building, and with making sure that our instruments are appropriate, valid, and reliable (Oppenheim, 2001: 6).

3.3.2 *The Questionnaire*

A four-section questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. Section A was on the respondents' profiles/background information; Section B included the language repertoire section where learners had to indicate the languages they used in different domains of life. Section C had Likert scale statements; and the last Section (D), included open-ended questions. The aim of the questionnaire was to look at learners' attitudes toward learning their first languages in high school, and to find out if there are any implications and rewards associated with learning either English or Black African language(s). The questionnaires were administered according to groups (Grades 10, 11, and 12) on separate days.

Fink (1995: 14) says that a "questionnaire must provide usable data". De Vaus (1993:54) states that one must "check to see if there are any ambiguities or if the respondents have any difficulty in responding". Baker (1994: 182- 183) also notes that "a pilot study is often used to pre-test or try out a research instrument".

Therefore, a pilot study was conducted at another high school in Soshanguve, to test the efficiency of the questionnaire, and the results indicated a few discrepancies, i.e, the

questionnaire took too long to complete - approximately over an hour - which was too much for the respondents; the questionnaire included almost the same questions with similar responses. Changes to the questionnaire were made to make it simpler, but all the important variables were retained. Changes were only made to Section B (language domain usages), while the rest of the questionnaire remained the same.

In the Language Domain Usage & Preferences section, some of the respondents gave incorrect answers, e.g., for indicating the language(s) they normally use and/or prefer in the Media, i.e., three questions from the Media section were answered incorrectly. Most of the respondents wrote the names of the radio stations they listen to, as well as the TV programmes they watched, and the names of magazines and newspapers they read which were not the intended answers for these questions; in other words, they answered 'which', instead of 'what'. The efficiency rate of the questionnaire was 3/33x100= 9.09. This meant that the questionnaire was sufficiently reliable to answer the study's proposed hypotheses.

The advantage of group-administered questionnaires is that many respondents can complete the questionnaire in a short period of time, and the researcher can check questionnaires for accuracy. This method is relatively cheap, and time-efficient, in the sense that all respondents, if at the same location, can be grouped into the same room to complete the questionnaire. The response rate is optimised, and the researcher can immediately assist with issues in the questionnaires which are not clear to the respondents.

The disadvantage of group-administered questionnaires is that, when different assistants administer the questionnaires, this could lead to different interpretations of the expected responses. The primary researcher has limited control over what happens in the field. The conditions in which the questionnaire is administered cannot always be controlled by the primary researcher. Costs could also be rather high, when using standardised tests.

Open-ended questions were asked so that more information and clarity on the questionnaire items could be given. The advantage of open-ended questions is that respondents could give honest answers, and in detail. The respondent's thinking is revealed, and complex questions could be adequately answered. Thematic analysis of the responses could yield extremely important information. The disadvantage of open-ended questions is that the amount of detail may differ among respondents. The coding of the answers may be difficult, and respondents may need time to think and write their responses.

3.3.3 *Interviews*

An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewee asks the respondent questions so as to collect data and learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviour of the participants. An interview is a method of data collection in which one person (the interviewer) asks questions to the other (a respondent). Interviews are usually conducted either face-to-face, by telephone, e-mail etc. (Polit & Hungler 1991: 647).

In qualitative research, we differentiate between open-ended (sometimes referred to as unstructured), semi- structured, and structured interviews. This study employed unstructured interviews to get in-depth information from the teachers about the learners' attitudes toward learning their first language(s) in high school. In addition, they were asked to suggest ways in which learners' negative attitudes could be changed into positive ones: "The unstructured interview is an open situation allowing the interviewer greater flexibility and freedom'' (White, 2005: 146).

3.4 Sampling Procedures, Data Collection & Analysis

3.4.1 *Sampling*

Sampling is the selection of a small group (sample) from a larger number (population). The smaller number represents the larger number. It is usually difficult to study the whole population, because it consumes a lot of time and money: "The success of a sample lays in its accuracy in reflecting the state of affairs in the population." (Forcece & Richer, 1973: 121-122).

3.4.2 *Stratified Random Sampling*

Stratified random sampling was used in this study. Learners were sampled from high schools in Soshanguve; only three schools were randomly selected. The learners were selected according to age, gender, and grades. Teachers were selected according to their first languages. Stratified random sampling is "one in which the population is divided into subgroups or 'strata' and a random sample is then selected from each subgroup" (Fink 1995: 11).

3.4.3 *Population and Sample Size*

A *population* is the entire group of subjects to be studied. It is the group of people to which the findings should apply. Since it is rarely possible to study all the people in a population, a sample will have to be drawn, using various methods. The population is a theoretical

concept, as it is defined on the basis of certain variables, based on, for example, geographical region, gender, or age group (Alasuutari ,1998: 49).

The population of this study included Sepedi and IsiZulu L1 high school learners in Soshanguve. The population was selected randomly with the aim to assess the learners' attitudes toward learning their first languages in high school. The two languages (Sepedi and IsiZulu) were selected because they are amongst the six languages spoken in Soshanguve. An initial number anticipated for the study was 95, which included learners and teachers. Ninety learners were given questionnaires to complete, and they were all returned, but only 84 were usable, since the other six were incomplete. The remaining anticipated five respondents were teachers to be interviewed, but only two were able to participate. So, the total number of respondents came to 86. The total number of respondents included 48 females and 38 males, 32 of whom were Sepedi speakers, 27 were isiZulu speakers, and the remaining 22 spoke other languages (Ndebele, siSwati, Southern Sotho, Setswana, and xiTsonga) as L1s. The respondents were from different grades (Grade 10 = 30; Grade 11= 29; Grade 12 = 25).

3.5 Respondents' Profiles

The total number of respondents was 86, which included 84 (97.7%) learners from three different schools in Soshanguve, and 2 teachers (2.3%) teachers, one each from two of the high schools.

The respondents were from three different grades (10-12): Grade 10 (30; 35.7%); Grade 11 (29; 34.5%), and, Grade 12 (25; 29.8%). Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 indicated that they had a B.Tech degree in Education.

The respondents included 48 females (55.8%) and 38 males (44.2%). The females' ages ranged from 18-21 years. Twenty-one (24.4%) were 18 years old; 12 (14%) were 19 years; 4 (4.7%) were 20 years; and, the last 3 (3.5%) were 21 years old. The age range of the males was from 15-17 years. Twenty-three of them (26.5%) were 17 years old; 19 (22.1%) were 16 years old; and 2 (2.3%) were 15year olds.

The respondents indicated that they had different home languages, besides Sepedi and isiZulu: 32 Sepedi speakers (38.4%); 27 SeTswana speakers (31.4%); isiNdebele, 11 (12.8%); isiXhosa 8 (9.3%); siSwati 3 (3.5%); and, Sesotho and Xitsonga, 2, respectively (2.3%). All respondents were Black of race. (See Table 3.1)

Table 3.1 Respondents' Profiles (N=86)

Section A (Language Proficiency)

Section A of the questionnaire required learners to rate their language proficiency, using the

Variables	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Sex	Female	**48**	**55.8**
	Male	38	44.2
Age	17 years	**23**	**26.7**
	18 years	21	24.4
	16 years	19	22.1
	19 years	12	14
	20 years	4	4.7
	21 years	3	3.5
	15 years	2	2.3
Home Language(s)	Sepedi	**32**	**37.2**
	IsiZulu	27	31.4
	IsiNdebele	10	11.6
	IsiXhosa	8	9.3
	SiSwati	3	3.5
	Sesotho	2	2.3
	Setswana	2	2.3
	Xitsonga	2	2.3
Grade (Learners)	Grade 10	**30**	**35.7**
	Grade 11	29	34.5
	Grade 12	25	29.8
Occupation	Learners	84	97.7
	Teachers	2	2.3
Level of study (Teachers)	BTech.	2	2.3

following scales: 'ex' for 'excellent'; 'vg' for 'very good'; 'g' for 'good'; 'av' for 'average'; and, 'p' for 'poor'. (NB: The **Blue bar** indicates the learners' competency in listening, the **Maroon bar** shows the learners' competency in speaking, the **Green bar** shows their competency in Reading and the **Purple one** indicates their writing skills.

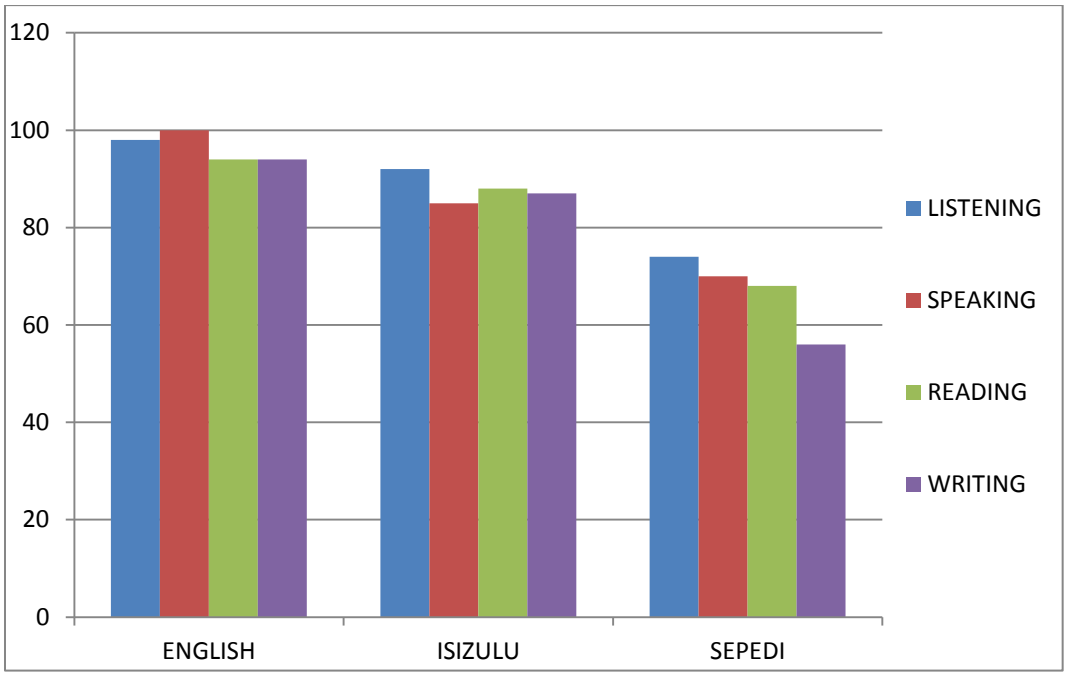

Figure 3.1: Respondents' Self-reported L1 Language Proficiency (N=86)

No test was conducted to assess the respondents' language competency levels; instead, they were asked to rate their competency in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills, using Sepedi, IsiZulu and English (see Figure 3.1).

The findings in Table 3.2 indicate that most of the respondents were born and nurtured in Sepedi/IsiZulu-speaking families, and considered themselves competent in these languages. Most of the respondents indicated that they started using their first language(s) (Sepedi/IsiZulu) and English for the first time in Grade 1. They indicated that the English language was introduced to them by their teachers. This could suggest that the reinforcement of learning a first language comes from households, and it is reinforced by parents/guardians, and that English is mostly instilled by teachers.

Table 3.2 Respondents' Profile (n=86)

Statement and Questions	Frequency	Percentages
a) I was born and / or nurtured in a Sepedi/isiZulu- speaking family.	**63**	**75**
b) I am able to express myself fully in Sepedi/IsiZulu.	**56**	**66.7**
c) I was born into and/ or nurtured in a Sepedi/IsiZulu speaking community.	**47**	**56**
d) I started learning and using Sepedi/IsiZulu for the first time in school.	**45**	**53.6**
e) At what age did you start learning Sepedi/IsiZulu?		
Grade 1	**51**	**60.7**
Grade 3	11	13.1
Grade R	8	9.5
Grade 4	4	4.8
Grade 7	3	3.6
Grade 2	2	2.4
Grade 5	2	2.4
Grade 8	1	1.2
Grade 10	1	1.2
f) At what grade did you start learning English?		
Grade 1	**57**	**67.9**
Grade R	9	10.7
Grade 2	8	9.5
Grade 3	5	6
Grade 4	4	4.8
Grade 7	1	1.2
g) Who introduced you to English?		
Teachers (school)	**37**	**44.0**
Family/Teachers	12	14.3
Media/Teachers	8	9.5
The Media	8	9.5
Family	5	6
Friends/Media/Teachers	4	4.8
All	2	2.4
Family/Friends/Media/Teachers	2	2.4
Friends	1	1.2
Others (Specify)	1	1.2
Family/Friends/Teachers	1	1.2
Family/Friends/Media	1	1.2
Friends/Media	1	1.2

Section B (Language Domain Usage & Preferences)

In this section, respondents were required to indicate the language(s) they used and preferred in different domains of life. They were also asked to give reasons for their language preferences. (NB: only a summary of the three most used and preferred language(s) is given; see Addendum A for fuller details.)

Home: the majority of the respondents indicated they used IsiZulu 26 (31%), and 29 (35%) preferred isiZulu, because they knew the language very well, and used it to communicate with their family members.

Neighbours: most of the respondents - 55 (65.4%) - indicated they used IsiZulu, Sepedi, and Setswana to communicate with their neighbours, and 42 (50%) said they preferred using Sepedi and IsiZulu, while 18 (21.4%) stated a preference for English. This shows that learners preferred using their first language(s) with the neighbourhood, because some members of the community were not competent in English, and, partly, to show respect. Those who preferred English indicated that they preferred it because it could reduce the level of illiteracy within the community, and to accommodate everyone, since English is a universal language.

Friends: about 30 (60%) of the learners indicated that they used IsiZulu and Sepedi to communicate with their friends, and 21 (25%) preferred to use it. Those who used English were 15 (18%), but those who preferred using English were 40 (48%).

School (Classmates/Teachers & Principal): about 45 (54%) of the learners indicated that they used IsiZulu and Sepedi to communicate with their classmates, and about 52 (62%) preferred using these languages. The results also indicated that 6 (7.1%) used English, but 32 (38%) would prefer to use it.

About 44 (52.4%) of the learners indicated that they used English to communicate with their teachers, and 55 (65.5%) would prefer to use it with their teachers. Only 14 (16.6%) indicated that they used Sepedi, and 11 (13.1%) would still prefer to use it with their mentors.

About 49 (58.3%) of the learners indicated that they used English to communicate with their principals, and 64 (76.2%) would prefer it. Only 19 (22.6%) said they used Sepedi, and 12 (14.3%) would prefer this language.

The reasons why learners preferred English is that the language is encouraged in school; for educational and communication purposes.

Media (Radio/TV & Print): in this domain, English scored the highest results in both Radio, TV, and Print. The responses indicate that 51 (60.7%) of the learners used English when using the media, and 54 (64.3%) would prefer this language. Some 29 (35%) learners indicated they used IsiZulu and Sepedi for following the media, and 19 (22.6) preferred these languages. The learners said that they preferred English the most because this language is easy to understand, and is known by many people. Those who preferred IsiZulu and Sepedi were concerned for the elders; they had these preferences because they were understood by the community.

Social Networking: the learners showed more favourable attitudes toward English. Between 30 (36%) and 67 (80%) of them indicated that they used English to chat, and between 40 (48%) and 64 (76.2%) said they preferred this language. Only 8 (9.5%) of the learners indicated that they used two languages IsiZulu and English, or Sepedi and English, to chat, and 6 (7.1%) would retain these bilingual preferences. Many learners preferred using English for communicative purposes - they said that the language is used everywhere, and that they were comfortable using it.

The findings of the learners' domain usages and preferences suggest that the respondents preferred using Black African languages (IsiZulu and Sepedi) mostly at home, and with their neighbours. However, they preferred using English when communicating with their friends, because they felt they knew the language better. The results show that English is mostly preferred for social and academic purposes. The respondents indicated that they preferred using English when communicating with their classmates, teachers, and principals. In all media domains (Radio, TV, and print), and Social Networking, the respondents indicated that they also preferred using English. They believed that the language is easy to understand, and Social Networking improves their grammar and vocabulary.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Polit and Hungler (1999: 701) state that ethics is a system of moral values. Research procedures must adhere to professional, legal, and social obligations to the respondents in question. According to Burns and Grove (2001: 201), confidentiality is the researcher's management of private information shared by the participants which must not be shared with others without the authorisation of the participants.

Anonymity is assured, when even the researcher cannot link a participant with the data of that person (Burns & Grove, 2001: 201).

All necessary procedures were followed, in terms of conducting research at the three high schools. Parents were given consent forms to fill, to allow their children to participate, since most of them were still minors, and they were still under the supervision of their parents.

Permission to conduct research in the three different high schools was granted to the researcher by the Department of Education, the local district, as well as by the principals of the schools.

The research was conducted after school hours, and within the given framework, Classes, and exams were not disrupted.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the findings of the survey. Questionnaires were employed to collect quantitative data, and interviews were conducted to get qualitative data. The two approaches were used to get both numerical and in-depth information on learner's attitudes toward learning their first language(s) in high school. Exploratory research was used to analyse the results, and a brief discussion of the results is presented. Data analysis is defined as "the systematic organisation and synthesis of the research data and the testing of research hypothesis using those data" (Polit & Hungler, 1991: 643).

Taylor and Bogdan (1984: 5) posit that "researchers engaged in qualitative research develop concepts, insights, and understanding from patterns in the data, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories".

4.2 Questionnaire Data

4.2.1 *Section C (Likert Scale)*

The following legend was used to assess the responses to the statement**: 5=Strongly agree; 4=Agree; 3=Not sure; 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly disagree.**

Statement 1: I communicate better using English.

The result of the statement shows a mean score of 4.3, which suggests that the respondents 'agreed' with it. They believe that they can communicate better using English. This shows that the learners have positive attitudes toward English.

Statement 2: I communicate better using my first language.

This result also indicates that the respondents believed they communicated better using their first language(s), with a mean of 4.5, which represents 'Agree', mid-way to 'Strongly agree'. The number is a bit higher than that of the first statement, which suggests that the respondents believed they communicated even better using their first language(s).

Statement 3: I would like to enrol for a language course at university, if offered the chance.

The respondents scored a mean of 3.7 in this statement - which indicates that the respondents were between 'Not sure' and 'Agree', though closer to agreeing that they would enrol for a language course at university, if offered the chance.

Table 4.1: Likert Scale Statements (N=84)

No.	STATEMENTS	MEANS
1	I communicate better using English.	4.3
2	I communicate better using my first language.	4.5
3	I would like to enrol for a language course at university, if offered the chance.	3.7
4	I would prefer English as the only language in high school.	3.2
5	I would prefer to have Sepedi /isiZulu as the only language in high school.	2.8
6	English has more status and prestige than Sepedi/isiZulu.	4.5

Statement 4: I would prefer English as the only language in high school.

The mean score of the statement above is 3.2, which is basically 'Not sure'. This may suggest that the learners are uncertain about having English as the only language in their schools.

Statement 5: I would prefer to have Sepedi /isiZulu as the only language in high school.

The results show a mean score of 2.8 here, which is close to 'Not sure' as well. This could suggest that learners are also uncertain about having their first languages as the only language in high school. Because learners scored almost the same results in Statements 4 and 5, this could suggest that these learners prefer both languages to be used in high school.

Statement 6: English has more status and prestige than Sepedi/isiZulu.

A mean score of 4.5 was recorded, which is mid-way between 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree'. This also reveals a more favourable attitude toward English, and a less favourable attitude toward their first language(s).

4.2.2 Section D: Open-ended questions (Attitudes toward Sepedi/IsiZulu and English)

In this section, learners had to respond to open-ended questions, which required **YES** or **NO** answers, and they were also asked to provide reasons for their responses. The aim of this section was to find out about the learners' attitudes toward learning their first language(s).

Question 1: Is it important to know and learn your first language(s) at school, and why?

A maximum of 81 (96.4%) of the learners said 'YES', they believed that it is important to learn their first language(s) in high school, mainly because it may facilitate their learning (45.2%). Some believed that it showed who they were; they wanted to learn more about their roots and culture (identity). This reflects a favourable attitude toward these languages. Three learners (3.6%) thought that it was not important to learn their first language(s) at school, because they were brought up with them at home, and saw no need to then learn them at school. This reflects a negative attitude.

Table 4.2: Importance of using first languages at school (N=84)

Response	No.	%	Reasons given
'YES'	**81**	**96.4**	- To learn more and to improve (38) - To know my roots and culture (17) - To communicate with the elders and the less educated (16) - It is important (6) - It is my home language (5) - My family speaks the language (3) - It defines me (3) - Develop and master the language (2) - It is fun to learn at school than at home (1) - It builds my confidence (1) - The youth do not know their languages (1)
'NO'	03	3.6	- I started learning the language at home (1) - Most of the things are written in English (1) - We learn everything in English (1)

Question 2: Which language(s) would you prefer to study all your subjects in, and why?

A significant number of 65 (73.4%) of the learners indicated that they would like to study all their subjects in English - it is easy to communicate using the language; it is a universal language; and, that there could be a problem of equivalence when it comes to scientific words in the first languages. Most of the learners also indicated that they understood English the most, and it would accommodate everyone, since they come from different cultures with different languages (*lingua franca*).

Among the remaining 19 (23%), 9 (11%) indicated they preferred studying all their subjects in their first languages (Sepedi/IsiZulu), while the other 8 (10%) preferred using both English and their first language(s).

Table 4.3: Languages to be used to study all subjects (N=84)

Language(s)	No.	%	Reasons
English	**65**	**73.4**	- I know the language and I can only communicate fully using this language (39) - Everyone knows it (27) - It is easy to understand (7) - It is easy to get information (3) - It is a universal language (3) - It is fun and used worldwide (3) - Most of the subjects are taught in English (1) - Other scientific English words cannot be translated in other languages (1)
Zulu		.1	- I understand the languages (6)
English & IsiZulu		.0	- I understand them better (2) - To accommodate everyone (1) - To code-switch (1) - To know the two languages (1)
Sepedi		.6	- It is easy to understand (2) - It is the language of communication (1)
English & Sepedi		.6	- I feel comfortable with the languages (2) - To avoid confusion (1)
All languages		.4	- To communicate better (1) - To accommodate everyone (1)

Question 3: Do you ever feel ashamed of using Sepedi/IsiZulu in public?

Seventy-five (89.3%) respondents said '**NO**', they did not feel ashamed of using their first language(s) in public, because they felt that the languages represented who they were, and that they were proud to be South Africans. They felt that their languages were part of their identities.

Nine (10.7%) of the respondents said '**YES**'; they felt ashamed of using their first language(s) in public, because people would think they were 'stupid'. They felt that English is a common language, and many people understood it, as compared to their first language(s).

Table 4.4: Using Sepedi/IsiZulu in public (N=84)

Response	No.	%	Reasons
'NO'	**75**	**89.3**	- It is my language (32) - I am proud to be South African (16) - I understand the language better (9) - It defines my roots and culture (5) - I was raised speaking the language (4) - It is part of the 11 official languages (3) - I am happy to speak my language in public (2) - I am learning other South African languages (1) - It is normal to speak other languages (1) - I just do not know how to speak the language (1) - Everyone has the right to speak their language (1)
'YES'	09	10.7	- Many people understand English (3) - People do not understand me (2) - I forget where I come from(1) - It is a joke to other people (1) - It does not sound as good as English (1) - People think I am Dumb (stupid) (1)

Question 4: Which language(s) would you like to see being used in Parliament, and why?

51 (60.7%) of the respondents indicated that they would like English to remain as the language spoken in Parliament, because everyone understands it, to accommodate all citizens, as it is a universal language, and because there are educated people in Parliament

who should be competent in the language. Only 12 (14.3%) of the learners said that they would like the Parliament to use all 11 official languages, because they believed everyone would, thereby, be accommodated, and that people would be encouraged to follow their roots, and to demonstrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country. The remaining 21 (25%) mentioned that they wanted Parliament to use more than one language. The reasons they gave were that they understood the languages better, and to accommodate everyone, including the elders.

Table 4.5: Languages to be used in Parliament (N=84)

Languages	No.	%	Reasons given
English	**51**	**60.7**	- To accommodate everyone (14) - Everyone understand it (9) - It is a Universal language (11) - To communicate with white people (5) - I understand it better (4) - We all learned the language at school (2) - There are educated people who knows the language (3) - It is our second language (2) - It is more advanced than other languages (1)
All official languages	12	14.3	- Encourage people to follow their roots (1) - To accommodate everyone (6) - To accommodate the elders (4) - To demonstrate the diversity of the country (1)
IsiZulu	7	8.3	- To be understood by the elders (2) - I understand it better (1) - It is easy to understand (1) - It is used by many South Africans (1) - For people to learn the language (1) - For everyone to know that I am Zulu (1)
Sepedi	3	3.6	- To accommodate the elder (1) - For people to be free (1) - Most of the people understand it (1)
English &Sepedi	3	3.6	- To ask questions (3)
IsiNdebele	2	2.4	- To accommodate the elders (1) - I have never heard politicians speaking the language (1)
English & Setswana	1	1.2	- To accommodate everyone (1)
Sepedi & IsiZulu	1	1.2	- Many people understand the languages (1)
English/ IsiZulu/ Sepedi/ xiTsonga &Afrikaans	1	1.2	- To accommodate many people (1)

Sepedi/ IsiZulu/ XiTsonga English & Setswana	1	1.2	- To accommodate everyone (1)
XiTsonga/ IsiZulu & Setswana	1	1.2	- It will force all people to learn the languages (1)
IsiZulu/ xiTsonga/ Sepedi & Setswana	1	1.2	- To accommodate everyone (1)

Question 5: **Do you need extra classes for your first language at school? Give reasons for your response?**

About 45 (53.6%) respondents said '**YES**', they needed extra lessons to learn their first language(s), mainly for self-development. They mentioned that they wanted to improve on their language competence, and the most important issue was that, if they failed their first language(s), they would automatically fail the grade. Thirty-nine (46.4%) of the learners said '**NO**', they did not need extra classes in their first language(s), because they had been brought up with them at home, these languages are not used at university, and they were taught in English. Others respondents felt it was a waste of time, since they were attentive in class, there was no need for extra classes.

Table 4.6: Need for extra first language lessons (N=84)

Response	No.	%	Reasons
'YES'	**45**	**53.6**	- To learn and improve (23) - To know and get used to it know (19) - It is not given much attention (1) - It is more challenging (1) - When you fail your first language you fail (1)
'NO'	39	46.4	- I am good at it (18) - I know it better (9) - It is easy to understand (6) - I see it as irrelevant; I do not like to learn in my mother tongue (2) - They teach me the language at home and community (2) - I do not like to study in my mother tongue (1) - We do not use the language in University (1) - They teach us in English (1)

4.3 Teacher Interviews (N=2)

Unstructured interviews were conducted with two teachers from the three high schools. They were both employed as Heads of Department (Languages), in possession of a B.Tech. degree in Education. The age ranges for both teachers were between 40-49, and 50-59 years. Teacher 1 had more than 26 years of teaching experience, and Teacher 2, 11-15 years. (See the interview schedule in ANNEXURE B.)

(Copies of the transcripts of the interviews are attached as addenda. The following codes were used for the two respondents: **T1= Teacher 1**; **T2= Teacher 2.**)

Both T1 and T2 agreed that the time allocated to teach languages is the same as the time allocated to other subjects. When they were asked what they thought could be done to change learners' negative attitudes toward their home languages, T1 suggested that enough textbooks must be provided for learners to use, and that the library must keep first language books (e.g., for Sepedi). T2 emphasised that parents have to play an important role in teaching their children their mother tongue(s), and that teachers should provide many opportunities for conversations in the classroom, so that they become skilled language users.

On the question of the chance(s) of survival of Black African languages, T1 believed that there was a chance for survival for these languages, only if enough materials for learning were provided, and if universities could introduce them as degree programmes. T2 did not agree with T2. She believed that the Black African languages do not have a chance of survival, because learners expressed themselves more fluently in English than in any African language. They were also asked how Black African languages could be promoted by the South African Government. T1 suggested that Government produce Secondary School Improvement Programmes (SSIPs) materials, like in other subjects, and encourage educators to offer them extra learning/interventions. T2 suggested that African languages should be introduced early in childhood, i.e., the development phase, especially in schools (e.g., in Grade 1).

4.4 Synthesis

The findings of the study reveal that learners showed favourable attitudes toward their first languages, but mainly to communicate with family, neighbours, and the elders.

English is the most preferred language to communicate with friends. It is preferred mainly to reduce illiteracy in the community. Fishman (1991) recommends that the simplest way to maintain the language of the community is through the parents' reinforcement to their children. This could suggest that, if the community failed to preserve the Black African languages, the situation could result in language shift.

First languages are not preferred in teaching and learning. A few people thought that it was a waste of time to learn these languages, and some thought they were useless. English is considered the only language suitable for teaching and learning, and it is also popular in the media domain (radio, TV, print, and social networking). Many of the learners preferred and used English, because they thought it was easy to communicate in the language. They called it a *universal language*, and that it was used in university. Others were concerned with the lack of terminology, if first languages were to be used in university, especially for scientific words.

Other learners said that they preferred English as the only language spoken in Parliament, because most of the members were educated members of the elite. English is associated with literacy; whereas, Black African languages are associated with illiteracy. One learner said that he was embarrassed to speak his language because people thought he was 'dumb' (stupid).

Thus, it could be concluded that the learners had negative attitudes toward learning their first language(s) in high school, and had more positive attitudes toward learning English. We could also say that English does promise rewards, because many of the learners said that they preferred English as it is a global language, it is used in university, and all the youth speak the language.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the findings on attitudes of high school learners toward learning their first languages in high school, and the anticipated rewards associated with learning English as compared to Black African languages. The chapter will also propose ways by which learners' negative attitudes could be changed to positive attitudes.

5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

It is clear from the findings that learners still value and respect their home languages and cultures. Most of the respondents indicated that they were proud of their first languages (Black African languages), but they mostly preferred to use them when communicating with their families, neighbours, and friends, because the people around them would understand them better in these languages. This suggests that they were from townships where English is not the first language, and many members of the community were not competent in the language. In most communities, English is regarded as the language of learning, and is rarely used in many households, especially with older people. Fishman (1991) suggests that the most important element in preserving language is through parental transmission to their children.

Although the language competency of the learners was not tested, the learners indicated that they were better in communicating, using English than when communicating in their first language(s). This could be because English is the medium of instruction in school, and that most of the learners started learning English in Grade 1. The other reason could be that the principals and teachers always encouraged learners to speak in English. Learners held negative attitudes, because there was no instrumental motivation associated with Black African languages. Many indicated that there was no need to formally learn their first languages, because they do not promise any rewards; some felt that the languages were useless, and a few, a waste of time. They also mentioned that these languages were not used in university. Webb (1992: 433) emphasises that "attitudes can affect the economic, educational, and social life of a language group and that attitudes can also affect the success of learning."

The findings gave a clear indication that learners showed more favourable attitudes toward English, because it is associated with status and prestige. They felt that Black African languages did not promise any rewards. Learners recommended that English be the only language used in Parliament, mainly because there were educated people there. One respondent mentioned that he wanted English to be the only official language, because when he spoke his first language, people laughed at him, and even called him 'stupid'. This confirms Barkhuizen's (2002: 510) observation, looking at the relationship between language policy and practice:

> "In South Africa, notwithstanding the social and ideological structures...English is in many ways closely connected with these goals. It has often been stated that English is the language of progress, development and economic success. The African languages, despite large numbers of speakers, simply cannot compete with the status of English, and the aim of establishing a truly multilingual society in South Africa, in the sense envisaged by politicians and language planners, is far from being achieved".

The findings showed teachers to be the ones who introduced learners to the English language; therefore, they were the ones who could change the learners' negative attitudes to positive ones. They recommended that government arrange extra classes for first language classes, and ensure more resources for learners, and even reserve first language books in the library.

The findings revealed that the media were the other major contributing factor to the attitudes of learners in high school. The youth are the majority users of the media (Facebook, Twitter, What's app., etc.). Malila's (2013: 5) study of youth identity, the media, and the public sphere, found out that most respondents used radio news most for getting information (70.8%), with SA TV3 news (67.3%) as the second highest source of information. Google, and other search engines, were the third most-stated source of media news (62.8%). They are always surfing the internet, chatting in English, listening to Western music - and all that could have a huge impact on one's attitudes.

Although most of the learners indicated that they started learning their first languages in Grade 1, there were those who indicated that they started learning their first language(s) after their first three years of school (Grade 4 and onward). This could partially impact the

learners' competency in learning their first language. This is supported by the Department of Education's National Curriculum Statement (2012: 7) which states that "all learners have studied an African language for a minimum of three years by the end of the General Education and Training (GET) band".

This could also be the contributing factor to the learners' negative attitudes, because it might be difficult for learners to start learning a language without a proper foundation, and thus, learners could be resentful, and develop negative attitudes toward the language.

The findings showed that the learners were not informed about the language courses offered in universities - which may contribute to their negative attitudes. If learners knew that there were courses, like Language Practice, Linguistics, Translation, etc., perhaps, they would show some interest in learning their first languages, looking at the anticipated rewards/future careers. Even when they were asked if they would take a course in Languages, if offered, or if they could study all their subjects in their first languages, they did not show any interest, as they were worried that there would be a lack in terminology of technical words, for example, in Science and Technology. They, perhaps, could have a different view, if they knew that there were professionals (lexicographers) who are specialists in inventing words, and could create equivalent words for such scientific terms/words.

If a language teacher, who has more than 10 years of teaching experience, thinks that there is no chance of survival for the Black African Languages, then this could suggest that learners' behaviour in the classroom suggests that they have negative attitudes toward their first languages. These negative attitudes often lead to learners failing their first language(s), and this means they have to repeat the same grade, the following year.

The other major contributing factor toward the negative attitudes of the learners could be the huge influence of 'Sepitori' – an urban language form popularly spoken by many families in Soshanguve. Members of this community spend most of their time speaking this mixed language; therefore, children born into these families grow up speaking it, which makes it difficult for learners to perform well in their first languages, because they do not speak their first languages at home. They are not exposed to the standard form at home.

According to the findings, the teachers believed that the South African education system is not giving learners enough to support these Black African languages. They complained that there is a lack of resources, and that there is no time for dialogue during lessons, where learners' speaking skills are developed.

To ensure the success and survival of Black African languages, an immediate intervention is needed from government and language specialists. Learners need to be informed about careers in languages, and possible employment in various organisations around the country. Learners need to be aware that it is possible to be successful and educated in Black South African languages; one can also secure a future career in languages.

One needs to take note of the times that we live in; everything is technologically-driven. Therefore, teachers should try to make teaching more fun, and use alternative teaching methods to change learners' negative attitudes. Perhaps, they should teach business aspects, using Black African languages, or implement new technology software that would make learning languages more fun. Language laboratories should also be built in schools to help the learners with pronunciation skills. The language proficiency of language teachers should be assessed before they get appointed; that way, good quality teaching will be guaranteed.

Like a few universities in South Africa, at least one Black South African language should be introduced as a medium of instruction in all universities, to boost the status of these languages. It is recommended that the South African language policy and language in education policy be made known to all learners, teachers, and parents. Its spirit and content should be put into practice every day, and fellow South Africans must feel free to express themselves in the language(s) of their choice, even during job interviews.

This study also suggests that Sepitori - a mixed language, spoken by many "Soshanguvians", should be standardised, and be used as one of the L1s in schools in Pretoria, simply because most of the people in this town are more competent in the language than they are in their first language(s), and that many households use the language in their everyday lives.

ADDENDUM A: Learners' Language Domain Usages and Preferences

Domain Usage	Language Used	Language Preferred	Reason(s) for Preference
Home	IsiZulu (26)	IsiZulu (29)	i) **35** - "I know the language; I understand the language; I speak the language and I can express myself fully in the language" ii) **16** – "It is my home language; we grew up speaking the language; My father speaks the language and My parents follow tradition". iii) **7** – "To improve the language and To learn more".
	Sepedi (22)	Sepedi (23)	
	English (0)	English (9)	
Neighbours	Sepedi-(28)	IsiZulu-(22)	i) – "Everyone can speak the language; I am used to it; I do no struggle to pronounce difficult words; I enjoy speaking the language; I feel comfortable with my mother tongue; I do not understand the language and It is easy to learn." ii) **9**- "To learn more; To improve; To reduce illiterate people in the community and Things are done in English this days." iii) **5**-"To accommodate everyone".
	Setswana-(14)	Sepedi-(20)	
	IsiZulu-(13)	English-(18)	
Friends	IsiZulu -(16)	English-(40)	i) **50**- "I am good in Speaking the language; I am used to it; I do not understand other words; I like the language; We use the language to communicate; It is a better way to communicate; It is a common language; It is easy to communicate; It is their language; They know the language; They do not understand my language; They teach me the language and We are fluent in English". ii)**27**- "I have good listening skills in IsiZulu; To avoid discrimination; To help learn a different language; To learn more; It is a universal language; English is mostly spoken this days; It is compulsory at school; They learn it fast; To prepare for university; To assess ourselves and It is an official language'' iii) **7** -"To accommodate everyone"
	English-(15)	IsiZulu-(15)	
	Sepedi-(14)	Sepedi-(6)	
(School) Classmates	Sepedi-(27)	English-(32)	i) **55** –" I am used to it; I enjoy the languages; I use the language in class; We are taught in this language; Most of them speak the language; I use the language every day We are in the same class; We can hear each other; We know it the most and We speak different languages"
	IsiZulu-(18)	Sepedi-(20)	
	English-(6)	IsiZulu-(18)	

			ii)**27**- "It is a common language; For them to know who I am; For good Communication skills; It is a good source of expression; It is easy to pronounce the words; It is easy to communicate; It is my home language; It makes us equal; To conserve my language; To express myself/Feelings and To participate in class" iii)**10**- "To get used to the language; To improve; To know our language better; To learn more and We are taught in this language"
Teachers	English-(44) Sepedi-(14) English & Sepedi-(5)	English-(55) Sepedi-(11) IsiZulu-(4)	i) **34**- "For other children to learn fast; For good communication; It depends on the period; Timetable; It is a common language; It is compulsory; It is diverse; It is my first additional language; It is my home language; It shows respect; To ask questions in class; To improve the language; To gain confidence in speaking and To make them hear me". **ii) 32**- "He speaks the language; I am used to it; I do not understand all languages; I enjoy the language; I have to use the language at school; I know the language better; I understand my teachers better; It is easy to communicate with others; It is good; It is more professional Most of them prefer English". iii) **10**- "The languages are being taught in class; They want us to speak the language; She teaches me the language; The teachers are different; They speak the language" iv) **7**- "To accommodate everyone".
Head/ Principal	English-(49) Sepedi-(19) English & Sepedi-(6)	English-(64) Sepedi-(12) IsiZulu-(3)	**i) 53**- "He only speaks the language; I understand it better; It is easy to communicate with others; We use it every day; She teaches me English; She wants us to speak the language; The position he has; To look presentable; We were taught to always speak the language; To express myself in a good way; It is a common language; To make the school better; We take it as our second language; It is compulsory and He is a very good English speaker" **ii) 20**- "The level at which we differ; He is the most respectful person; He is the head of the school/He shows respect; It is

			my home language; It is used in varsity; I am used to it; To lead by example; To be a professional; To learn and To improve" iii) **10**- "To accommodate everyone"
Media (Radio)	English-(30)	English-(40)	i) **43**- "Everyone can understand the language; I understand it better; I do not understand other words; I know the languages; I like the languages; I love English; It is the only language South Africans can communicate with; They are mostly used in the community; They speak the languages and It is easy to learn". ii) **22**- " For good communication; To learn more; To get more information; To get more listeners; To hear carefully; It is my second language; To improve; It is a general language; To interpret it; To keep my talent; To uplift our languages; To know all 11 official languages and Zulu speakers are few"; It is my home language; iii) **14** -"To accommodate the elders and everyone".
	Sepedi-(13)	Sepedi-(10)	
	IsiZulu-(9)	IsiZulu-(9)	
TV	English-(56)	English-(57)	i) **42** - It is easy to understand; Everyone can hear it; To understand better; I know it better; To know all the languages and They use the language most of the time". ii) **18**- "It is the only language South Africans can communicate with; For good communication skills; They are watched by many people; Most of the TV stations use the language; It is a general language; To be updated; I liked them; Many people in the home towns speak isiZulu; To uplift our heritage; To inform everyone; It is a common language; It is difficult to understand the languages and It is used nationwide". iii) **14**- "To learn more; To improve my listening skills and mother tongue; To learn how to spell certain words and Improve other languages". iv) **10**- "To accommodate the elders and Everyone".
	IsiZulu-(5)	IsiZulu-(5)	
	English & Sepedi-(4)	Sepedi-(4)	
Print (newspapers, books, magazines)	English-(67)	English-(64)	i) **47**- "To help me read the language; Good communication skills; I enjoy reading English; We understand the language better; It is easy to read". ii) **17**- "To learn more and To improve". iii)**11**- "It is a general language; It guides
	English & IsiZulu-(4)	IsiZulu-(5)	

			me; It is mostly used in South Africa; It adds flavour and variety to the contents; Teachers use the language; All newspapers are in English; To be a good writer; It is our second language; It is interesting and I like communicating with these languages".
	IsiZulu-(2)	Sepedi-(4)	iv) **7**-"To accommodate everyone".
Social Networking (face book, Twitter,)	English-64)	English-(66)	i) **37**- "Everyone use the language; I am good at it; I enjoy chatting in English; I understand it better; I can read better in the language and We chat a lot using the language".
	English & Sepedi-(6)	English & Sepedi-(3)	
	English & IsiZulu-(2)	IsiZulu & Sepedi-(3)	ii)**29**- " It is our official language; It is quick to write; It is the only language South Africans can communicate with; Practice makes perfect; To accommodate everyone; To learn more; To improve spelling ; To abbreviate and To use the language globally".

ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE (Learners)

Dear Respondent,
I am an MTech. (Language Practice) student in the Department of Applied Languages at a University of Technology. In partial fulfilment of my degree requirements, I am currently researching learners' attitudes toward learning their first languages in high school, with Soshanguve as my location. I wish to ask for your assistance by responding to this questionnaire. Your responses could provide important insights into the study of languages. Rest-assured that your anonymity is guaranteed, and any information you provide will be treated with confidentiality. Should you have any queries on this project, do not hesitate to contact me at thabisochabalala1@yahoo.com. Cell: 0766869880. Thank you.

Instructions: Please, take your time to read through each item, and respond to all the questions below as truthfully and fully as possible. Wherever applicable, identify the options that best relate to your opinion(s)/profile by checking the corresponding bracket. NOTE: there are no right or wrong answers. (Further instructions may be given, when applicable.)

SECTION A: Personal Information & Background

i) Sex: Female ☐ Male ☐

ii) Age:.....

iii) Home Language(s).....

iv) Grade:.....

v) Language Repertoire: Please, specify the language(s) you are capable of using for communication, and assess, under the relevant language skills, your level of mastery in each of them, using the abbreviations:

ex (for 'excellent'); vg (for 'very good'); g (for 'good'); av (for 'average'); p (for 'poor')

Language	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

vi) Contact with SePedi/IsiZulu:

Instruction: Please, select the most suitable answers below, as they represent your own situation.

☐

a) I was born into and/or nurtured in a SePedi-/IsiZulu-speaking family

b) I was born into and/or nurtured in a SePedi-/IsiZulu-speaking community ☐

c) I started learning and using SePedi-/IsiZulu for the first time in school ☐

d) I am able to express myself fully in SePedi/IsiZulu ☐

vii) Studies in SePedi/IsiZulu and English:

Instruction: Please, select the most suitable answers below, as they represent your own situation.

a) In what grade did you start learning Sepedi/Zulu?.....

b) In what grade did you start learning English?.....

c) Who introduced you to English?

Family ☐

Friends ☐

The Media ☐

The Community ☐

Teachers (school) ☐

Others ☐ (Please, specify):.....

SECTION B: Language Domain Usages & Preferences

Indicate the language(s) you would normally use and/or prefer to use in the following verbal activities/domains of use:

Verbal Activity/ Domain of Use	Language(s) used	Language(s) preferred	Reason(s) for preference
Home			
Neighbours			
Friends			
School:			
Classmates: (SePedi/IsiZulu)			

Teachers: Head/Principal:			
Media:			
Radio: TV: Print (Newspapers):			
Books			
Magazines			
Market			
Hospital/Clinic			
Praying			
Apologizing			
Arguing			
Complimenting			
Expressing Fear			
Expressing Surprise			
Expressing Anger			
Expressing Intimacy			
Social Networking (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)			
Swearing			
Dreaming			
Counting			

Technical Reports			

SECTION C: Attitudes to SePedi/IsiZulu and English I

Instruction: Please, check (√) the box that corresponds to your response below.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.I communicate better using English.					
2.I communicate better using my first language.					
3.I would like to enrol for a Language course at University, if offered a place.					
4.I would prefer to have English as the only language in high school.					
5.I would prefer to have SePedi or IsiZulu as the only language in high school.					
6.English has more status and prestige than SePedi or IsiZulu.					

Section D: Attitudes to SePedi/IsiZulu and English II

1. Is it important to know and learn your first language(s) at school and why?
   Yes ☐ No ☐ (Give reasons for your response.)

   .....

   .....

2. Which language(s) would you prefer to study all your subjects in, and why?

   .....

   .....

3. Do you ever feel ashamed of using SePedi/IsiZulu in public?
   Yes ☐ No ☐ (Give reasons for your response.)

   .....

   .....

4. Which language(s) would you like to see being used in Parliament, and why?

   .....

   .....

5. Do you need extra classes for your first language at school?
   Yes ☐ No ☐ (Give reasons for your response.)

.....

.....

(Thank you for your time.)

ANNEXURE B: Interview Schedule (Teachers)

1. Is the time allocated to teach languages the same as that for other subjects? Yes/ No

   (If not, give your opinion on this.)

2. What can be done to change learners' (negative) attitudes about their mother tongues?

3. In your opinion, what are the current chances of survival of Black South African languages?

4. Does failing first languages lead to high failure rates in Matric in South Africa? Yes/ No

5. In your opinion, how can Black South African languages be promoted by Government?

ANNEXURE C: Permission Letter to School to Undertake Research

1311 Block Dd
Soshanguve 0152

7 December 2011

The Headmaster
Soshanguve Technical High School
Private Bag x
0152.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Request for permission to conduct research amongst first language learners in high schools in Soshanguve

I am an MTech. (Language Practice) student in the Department of Applied Languages at a University of Technology, and wish to apply for permission to conduct research in your school.

The title of my research project is: ''Learners' attitudes toward learning their first languages in high school: A survey in Soshanguve".

Thirty (30) learners and some language teachers will be requested to fill out a questionnaire; some of them will also be interviewed.

An interview schedule will be presented, once permission is granted by your office.

Please, find attached copies of the questionnaire and interview questions that will be posed to the learners and teachers.

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours Faithfully

Thabiso Chabalala

ANNEXURE D: Parental Consent Form

Title of study:

"Learners' attitudes toward learning their first languages in high school: A survey in Soshanguve."

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Thabiso CHABALALA. I, hereby, wish to ask for permission from you for your child to participate in a survey that will be carried at school as a partial fulfilment of the requirements of my MTech. degree in Language Practice at a University of Technology.

The purpose of the study is to find out about students' attitudes toward learning their first languages. The study will not harm your child in any way, but their responses may be a great contribution to the study, and the promotion of indigenous languages. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in the study will be guaranteed.

Kindly sign and date this consent form, if you agree to your child's participation in the study.

Name & Signature **Date**

..... **.....**

ANNEXURE E: Faculty Research Ethics Clearance Letter

Tshwane University of Technology
We empower people

Faculty of Humanities

Office of the Dean

FREC CODE: FREC/APL/STD/2012/18

TO: DRIC CHAIRPERSON – APPLIED LANGUAGES

FROM: DR MS MUKHOLA
EXEC DEAN: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DATE: JUNE 21, 2012

RE: ETHICS REVIEW: Chabalala, T.

Decision: Provisionally Approved

TITLE: LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL: A SURVEY IN SOSHANGUVE.

In reviewing the proposal, the following comments/notes, emanating from the meeting, are tabled for your consideration.

- As the project involves TUT students and/or staff, it should be submitted to the central REC.
- Revised documents should be submitted.
- **Final approval will be granted once we have received the central REC decision**

Sincerely,

DR. MS MUKHOLA
EXECUTIVE DEAN: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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