

**Barriers and Bridges:
Child participation, second-language learning
and the cognitive development
of the young child**

By

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Declaration:

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I hereby declare that this dissertation

Barriers and Bridges:

**Child participation, second-language learning and the cognitive
development of the young child**

represents my own work and that all the sources I have used or
quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of
complete references.

Signature: *N. Saneka*

Date:

Nora Saneka

25th February 2014

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all the children
closely linked with my life over the years,
including my own two wonderful daughters,
Paschale Nontsikelelo and Rebecca Nosizwe,
Thank you for the light you have shone into my life.

It is also dedicated to
all teachers and parents who strive to
'put the best interests of children first',
including my own parents.

Finally, it is dedicated to all those
whose lives are richer and stronger
through the many languages they can understand and speak
and who enrich the lives of others,
including my husband.

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- Those who organized the second AREA (Africa Reggio Emilia Assembly) conference, which gave us a fresh vision of the capabilities of children.

Abstract

The purpose of the research was to look critically at the language development of the young second-language learner within their social context, in relation to theory and practice (praxis), using as a 'lens', "the right to participation" (UNCRC General Comment No 12, 2009). Language and communication were seen by the researcher as fundamental to the child's 'right to participate' as 'agents of their own life' (General Comment No 7, 2005) as they engage in meaning-making with others, both at home and at school. The research was conducted as a Case Study within a Pre-Primary School over a three month period, with the lead-researcher involving the teachers as co-researchers. A Participatory Action Research methodology was used, within a praxeological conceptual framework. Parents and their young children (between the ages of 2 – 6 years) were participants in the research. Ways were explored to build 'bridges' to overcome perceived 'barriers' to the children's participation. Various data collection techniques were used, including the Persona Doll approach, the Mosaic Approach, Documentation of Learning and Learning Story Books.

The results of the research were increased awareness of the value of inclusive practices that place a value on diversity and which actively support and promote the use of the mother tongue, as well as the learning of English as a second language. In the course of the research, it was seen as important for adults (parents or teachers) to support the learning of concepts in the mother tongue or in English by verbalizing for the child, while engaging in the process of meaning-making. The 'choice' to use English in preference over the mother tongue became apparent. Therefore the research methodology was seen as an important way to develop 'critical, reflective practice' amongst the teachers and to create partnerships with the parents. The aim was to strive towards 'phronesis' or *wise practice*, using as a 'lens' for critical reflection, the child's 'right to participation' (UNCRC General Comment No 12, 2009).

List of Key Terms, Acronyms and Abbreviations

Anti-bias education: empowers one to stand up for self and/or others in the face of bias, prejudice or discrimination (Derman-Sparks & Olson Edwards, 2010: 4-5).

Anti-bias education: empowers one to stand up for self and/or others in the face of bias, prejudice or discrimination (Derman-Sparks & Olson Edwards, 2010: 4-5).

BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills or conversation language proficiency

Bilingualism: Simultaneous Bilingualism or Successive Bilingualism

CALP: Cognitive/Academic language proficiency

Conscientization: refers to the process by which people become 'actors' or '*knowing subjects*' rather than passive '*recipients*' (Freire, 1972: 51).

Documentation: this is the recording of the learning experience while it is unfolding in order to help the children and teachers involved to reflect on it. (Rinaldi, 2012: 242). It also helps in the mediation of the learning experience to others (Rinaldi, 2006: 62).

'Image of the child': this is a cultural and historically formed perspective on the child's identity and capabilities (Rinaldi, 2005: 91-105).

Mediation of learning: This occurs when an adult 'mediates' meaningful understanding using language as a 'sign and tool' to the child (Vygotsky, 1962: 104).

Participation: involves ‘the right to participation’ and ‘the right of the child to be heard’ (UNCRC, General Comment No 12, 2009) and gives children the right to be respected as “*actors in their own lives*”, and not merely “*passive recipients of adult care and protection*” (Lansdown, 2004: 5).

‘Praxeology’, a neologism, is seen as an enquiry process into human thought and action, involving ‘*phronesis*’ or wise practice (an Aristotelian term).

Subtractive bilingualism: a shift in the child towards one dominant language, away from the mother-tongue often resulting in lack of academic proficiency in the mother-tongue.

The “culture of childhood”: is “of, with and for children” as children interpret and recreate and renew culture (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006: 31).

UNCRC: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1962).

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Appendix B Permission to Conduct Research from the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Basic Education

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What is the Teacher?

What is the teacher?
A guide, not a guard.

What is learning?
A journey, not a destination.

What is discovery?
Questioning the answers,
Not answering the questions.

What is the process?
Discovering ideas,
Not covering content.

What is the goal?
Open minds, not closed issues.

What is the test?
Being and becoming,
Not remembering and reviewing.

What is the school?
Whatever we choose to make it.

- Allan A. Glatthorn

1. CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction and Rationale:

He slowly dies
who abandons a project before starting it
who asks no questions about subjects
he does not know
who does not reply when asked something
he does not know.
He slowly dies
who does not share his emotions, joys and sadness

.....
Let us avoid death in small measures
remembering that to be alive
requires a much greater effort
than the simple fact of breathing.
Only ardent patience
will lead to the fulfillment
of a splendid happiness.

Pablo Neruda.

**Quoted by the ex-Director of REGGIOCHILDREN, Carla Rinaldi
in her speech: "A Metaproject" ("ReChild" No. 9)**

<http://zerosei.comune.re.it/inter/reggiochildren.htm>.

The early years are an optimal time for language development; therefore one of the aims of early childhood education is the development of the child's mother tongue. Within this framework, cultural and linguistic responsiveness and the development of an 'anti-bias' curriculum have become increasingly important in the context of our heterogeneous cities with their multilingual and multicultural populations and our global society.

Since the new democratic dispensation in South Africa, parents who speak indigenous languages have increasingly been enrolling their children into early childhood education centers/pre-primary schools which have English as the language of learning and teaching, often for full-day care. Our cities are multilingual and English is seen as an important language of communication as well as the language which can provide access to economic and social opportunities for advancement. The concern is that it is difficult for children to maintain and develop

their language abilities without the support provided by adults who speak those languages. Without resources, time and effort, language attrition can occur, leading to what is known as semi-lingualism or subtractive bilingualism (Heugh, 1995: 178). Behavioural problems can also emerge, due to alienation from their cultural identity and family values (Toukoma, 2000: 215). This results in a break-down in intergenerational communication (Wong-Fillmore, 1991: 323-346). Exploring parent/teacher partnerships in order to sustain the mother-tongue while a child is learning a second language becomes of critical importance. Parents and teachers need knowledge and support in this process.

Traditionally, early childhood education involves the child in play-based activities with hands-on construction of understanding, in a participatory and democratic environment. This tradition, which began during the time of Johann Amos Comenius, has been developed over a period of 500 years (Gordon & Browne, 2008:10) and reveals the importance of *“sympathetic and creative two-way communication”* (Trevanthen, 2011: 175). This secondary environment, involving non-formal learning through play and social interaction with other children and adult educators, is perhaps the ideal one in which to learn a second language. However, *“the importance of maintaining and developing the child’s home language must never be forgotten”* (Robb, 1995: 16). The young child learns languages easily, but without the necessary associated stimulation, social support and the motivation to use it, the language gained can as easily be forgotten and proficiency is consequently lost.

1.2 Problem Analysis:

Within the school environment, the learning process is influenced by the quality of the relationship between the adult and the child and prevailing partnerships between the parents and the school, as well as children’s relationships with one another (Malaguzzi, 1993:10). The importance of such relationships is upheld by Harvard University’s Centre for the Developing Child: *“Young children develop in an environment of relationships”* (2009, Working Paper 1). Through their relationships with others, children develop an understanding of what is, or is not, important in that social group. They are indeed sensitive to these social and

cultural 'cues'. "*Imitation*" of the adult life-world is one of their most important means of expression as they re-create and narrate their understandings in their fantasy play (de Witt, 2009: 62 and Hedges & Cullen, 2011:10).

From birth, children try to make sense and meaning of their world and act with agency and deliberation in order to engage others (Lindfors, 1999 cited by Hedges & Cullen, 2011:10). It therefore becomes important to respect the "*motives of the child*" in the learning process, in order to gain understanding, from the child's perspective, as to what attracts their attention and engagement, and why (Vygotsky, 1962; 1964; Trevarthen, 1982, 1988; Bruner, 1996; Rogoff, 2003; Siraj-Blatchford, 2002 cited by Trevarthen, 2011: 175). At birth, the child is "*intentionally directed at the world*" (de Witt, 2009: 3). Therefore, from birth, with an enquiring mind and body, the child seeks *companionable learning* (Roberts, 2011: 195-205). The child looks for "*ways of ensuring proximity to and involvement with more experienced members of society*" (Rogoff, 1990: 17). He/she seeks this friendship and shared understanding through communicative relationships with those who can extend his/her capabilities.

A child's participation in this learning process therefore occurs within the context of reciprocal relationships, which build a strong sense of 'belonging' and 'identification', where the "*collaborative creation of meaning*" is negotiated and "*cultural learning*" takes place (Trevarthen and Aitken, 2003; Trevarthen, 2001 cited by Trevarthen, 2011: 176). These relationships provide the essential space and time where problem solving is developed, thoughts and ideas are communicated and conceptual understanding can grow. Because the nature of this "*interactional learning*" (Malaguzzi, 1993:12) is social, it can enhance personal relationships, communication skills and many learning opportunities. The child needs "*multiple opportunities to hypothesize, experiment, evaluate, reflect and share their understandings with others*" (New, 1998: 276). Through these opportunities, the child can feel that their own ideas or "*working theories*" (Hedges & Cullen, 2011: 921-940) and initiatives are valued. By exploring this pedagogical relationship, and the means whereby we use language and communication, it is possible to focus on the way we relate to the child, and how our social values influence the kinds of opportunities for learning and development offered.

Effective pedagogical relationships are said to be based on shared problem-solving and *“sustained shared thinking”* (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden & Bell, 2002: 10) and *“intent participation learning”* (Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez, & Angelillo 2003: 176 cited in Hedges & Cullen, 2011: 11 and Trevarthen, 2011: 176). Furthermore, community participation is established by means of observation and collaboration with community activities, including *“tacit and distal”* participation, as well as more explicit, guided participation (Rogoff, 2000: 16). *“Shared meaning”* is also created both through non-verbal communication and participation in shared, playful activities that create possibilities for inter-subjective understanding (Rogoff, 1990: 17). Critical to this child development is the way language and communication with others is employed while collaborating in shared and complementary tasks and roles - where the adult can ‘seize the teachable moment’. Children are active seekers of information and stimulation, and are known to *“seek, structure and even demand”* assistance in solving problems of all kinds (Rogoff, 2000: 16). Rogoff (1990: 9) emphasizes the active and social nature of thinking and practical action in order to solve problems.

The use of the mother tongue as well as English can help to enhance the child’s participation in this communicative process, their intellectual understanding of concepts and their development of critical thinking skills (the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions). The manner in which an adult responds to the use of the mother tongue or the second language and importance assigned to the child’s participation in the learning process are all crucial elements in overcoming barriers to learning.

The quality of the relationship between adults and children is important. High value should be placed on the *“search for sense and meaning”* as they develop understanding and respect for one another’s initiatives and efforts, thoughts and ideas (Rinaldi, 2005: 56). This respectful relationship takes the child’s viewpoint or perspective seriously - the *“motives”* of the child or the *“motivating sphere of consciousness”* as Vygotsky expressed it (1987: 282, cited by Rogoff, 1990: 9). It ascribes value to the child’s own means of expression – verbal or non-verbal – and responds using *“child-directed language”* while mediating learning in the socio-

cultural context, so that the child can appropriate it as “*own knowledge*” (de Witt, 2009: 3).

Certain factors may be identified during the course of this research which could inhibit or hinder the child’s participation and his/her continued holistic development. The experience of learning in the medium of a second or additional language, can act as a barrier to understanding, self-expression, communication and the development of self-esteem. This can result in various social and emotional problems. It is important to note that learning a language “*requires a much greater effort than the simple fact of breathing*” (Pablo Neruda, quoted in the preface – see Bruner, 1990:70): “*language is acquired through use*”.

There is also a danger that gaining mastery of English can give children who are learning it as a second or additional language “*a clear message ... about the inadequacy of their own primary language. At the same time, it sends a clear message about the superiority of a language like English to speakers of English*” (Heugh, 1995: 179).

From the South African perspective, an area of particular concern is that the English language learner may ‘choose’ to speak the second language in preference to the mother-tongue, even at home while interacting with family members “*They may refuse to use their home language anymore as it is difficult to use both, and English may have greater status in the children’s eyes*”(Gordon & Browne, 2008: 490). Children may only continue to use both languages if they see them as having usefulness or value. This can have negative social and cognitive consequences. The child’s attitude towards the mother-tongue or the second language thus becomes a crucial factor in their development.

Language and communication are fundamental factors in children’s ability to participate in society. ‘Participation’ and ‘the right of children to participate’ in their own becoming relates to the exclusion/inclusion of the child at various levels of society, and the way this affects them in different dimensions of their lives. In particular, it affects how they understand themselves in relation to the world around them. Participatory, reciprocal relationships with ‘more knowledgeable others’

(peers or adults) that can 'scaffold' learning into what Vygotsky terms the 'zone of proximal development' or ZPD (Rowlands, 2003: 160) are fundamental necessities in cognitive development. The brain develops through communication with others in 'serve-and-return' exchanges (Harvard brain research from www.developingchild.harvard.edu).

The aim of "the Right to Participate" is to empower children as meaning-makers and co-constructors of knowledge. It should be emphasized that 'participation' does not imply participation in its narrowly understood social or cultural meaning. It includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas and share experiences (UNCRC, 1989, Article 13) and the right to form one's own opinion on matters (UNCRC, 1989, Article 14). This right evolves in conjunction with the evolving capacity of the child (UNCRC General Comment No 7, 2005: 42) and is therefore dependent on *respectful and inclusive* adult support and guidance (Lansdown, 2004: 5) as well as discernment of "*the best interests of the child*", (UNCRC General Comment No 7, 2005: 40); however these may be interpreted or contested.

Learning to 'parrot' words or learning words by rote does not help a child to understand meaning. "*Words have to get into the muscle to be 'worked' into the brain*" (from a Pre-Primary Parent Poster - anonymous). Colwyn Trevarthen identifies a *self-directed programme of development* which, he argues, links the development of the body and the brain (the activity and consciousness of the child) through communication and language (Trevarthen, 2011: 176). Therefore "*conversational interaction*" seems to be as important to the development of the child's understanding as Piagetian physical exploration for the development of schema (Tizard and Hughes, cited by Heritage & Nelson, 1986: 27). Multi-modal ways of thinking and doing are also critical to the holistic development of the child (the 100 languages of childhood of the Reggio Approach). These use the child's strengths, are activity-based and help the process of reflection (*'internal listening'*; Rinaldi, 2005: 17 cited by Clark, 2011: 323). They are also not dependent on words alone in the negotiation of '*meaning-making*' by participants (Clark, 2011: 323, the 'Mosaic approach').

1.3 The Research Question:

A preliminary literature survey highlighted the importance of critically examining our practice in order to deepen our understanding of early childhood pedagogy in relation to English second-language learners. It became apparent that it is important for educators in South Africa to reflect critically on the participation of young English second-language learners and the possible barriers they may experience, and how the continued development of the mother-tongue can be supported and encouraged in early childhood. The aim of ‘the right to participate’ is to empower children – affording them the right to express their needs, feelings and opinions and to have them taken seriously (UNCRC, 1990, Article 12). It was therefore seen as essential to overcome the barriers imposed by second-language learning in order for children to become “*actors in their own lives*”, not merely “*passive recipients of adult care and protection*” (Lansdown, 2004: 5).

The following research questions were therefore formulated:

- What educational consequences could result from using ‘the child’s right to participation’ as a ‘lens’ for critical reflection on the language development of the young second-language learner?
- Does this assist adults in taking the child’s perspective or viewpoint seriously?
- Can partnerships be formed with parents to support and sustain the mother-tongue while the child is learning English as a second language?

The following specific research goals were identified:

- A review of previous studies on the participation of the young child in relation to Children’s Rights (the UNCRC, 1989), the young child’s language development, second-language learning and the mother-tongue, the ‘anti-bias’ approach and inclusive methods of teaching and learning.
- An exploration and development of the notion of a children’s rights approach in order to examine the participation of the young English second-language learner as an agent in their own life (Lansdown, 2004: 5) or as a “*protagonist*”,

to use terminology from the Reggio Emilia approach (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 421, Rinaldi, 2006: 10) through an action/reflection learning cycle with teachers (reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, Schön, 1987: 31) leading to reflection-to-action (Formosinho & Oliveira Formosinho, 2012: 600).

- Understanding parent partnerships in the development of their child's mother-tongue.
- The collection of empirical data from teachers, children and their parents on the maintenance of the mother tongue while learning a second language.

1.4 The Paradigmatic Perspective:

This research study examined the question of how 'the right to participation' following a 'children's rights approach' could become a framework or a 'lens' to examine practice and a means of reflection on the role played by adults within the pedagogical relationship in order to build more respectful relationships with children. The 'right to participate' is thus understood as a way to critically examine our *values* and *beliefs* – ascertaining the questions of the 'how' and 'why' of education within the socio-cultural context and the human relationships involved. As Carla Rinaldi observes: "*It is the value of research, but also the search for values*" (Rinaldi, 2006: 101). Aims (reflecting our values) and methods (pedagogical practice) can be conceived of as closely interlinked. These aims and methods are socio-cultural in nature and therefore our norms and values are shaped and developed within a social and historical context. From a personal viewpoint these reveal specific issues we consider important for children to learn and how we want them to learn them.

Social constructivists understand the construction of meaning, communicated through language, as being dependent on cultural beliefs and practices (Barone, Mallette & Xu, 2005: 4). Within this specific context the child is seen as learning language as a member of a family, linked to a particular social and cultural milieu. Therefore the child's family and culture, and that of the teacher's at school, are vitally important influences on how a child learns language. The individual school milieu and the 'culture of childhood' that develops there are also significant.

Language and literacy development, culture, socialization, motivation to learn and the cognitive development of the young child could be seen as linked or *“interwoven in the developmental domains of the child. These domains influence the pace and the way the child develops and therefore influence the child’s participation in the learning process”* (de Witt, 2009: 6).

This research study also regarded the pedagogical teaching and learning relationship as offering the inherent possibility of working towards a more just and humane society. In order to accomplish this goal, the teacher reflected critically on his or her own practice in relation to theory and on the outward social conditions that may contribute to certain attitudes, beliefs and values. The aim was to arrive at a transformational ‘praxis’ through ‘conscientization’ (Freire, 1972: 51) and a new awareness of and commitment to our role and responsibility to ‘work for a better world for children’, as an alternative discourse of professionalism (Osgood, 2010: 139).

1.5 Research Design and Method:

1.5.1. Research approach and orientation:

This research study is a qualitative investigation that employs a praxeological conceptual framework and a participatory action research methodology. This follows the constructivist understanding of reality as *“a multilayer, interactive, shared social experience that is interpreted by individuals”* (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 315). The research design was therefore emergent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 383). It involves an in-depth description of how the participants became involved in the study, how collaboration to investigate the issues was established and maintained, and how key findings were generated and collected (Daly, 2007: 255).

This research approach was followed in order to understand and interpret the data from the participants’ perspective (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 383). A children’s rights approach also aims to be transformative and emancipatory as it

challenges the examination of practice in relation to the kind of society we wish to build as well as the principles of professionalism we wish to uphold in our educational practice. The school becomes '*a site of obligation*' or a '*locus of ethical practice*', where each day we can dream of 'a better world for children' (Rinaldi, 2006: 14).

1.5.2. Ethical measures:

1.5.2.1 Confidentiality:

Research protocols were proposed and discussed with all the research collaborators (the teachers) so that they could reflect on the importance of confidentiality. Protocols should protect the identity of the participants. Therefore all information that could identify individuals was removed from the data (coding was used for all names). Pseudonyms are used in this dissertation. Certain background information was also removed in order to protect the identity of school provided this did not distort the data. The consequences of disclosure were discussed with the research collaborators. Data was stored in a secure place for a temporary period only, to be disposed of safely by the researcher when no longer required.

1.5.2.2 Informed Consent:

The aim and purpose of the research study was carefully explained to all parties. The researcher ensured that those participating gave informed consent freely and without due prejudice in any regard. Expectations and guidelines as to what the research might involve in terms of time and commitment (participant burden) was discussed and negotiated with the participants. The lead-researcher had to be sensitive to power-relations within the school and her own power and authority in order to discern ways of encouraging co-operation and collaboration in a non-threatening manner. Ethical guidelines on maintaining confidentiality in relation to the children, teachers and parents, were discussed before informed consent was sought from the participants.

Participants were informed that they were free to withdraw any of their data at any time. Interpretations of this data were reviewed with this in mind both during the

research process and when the final research was presented to the parents and the teachers. This was done in a careful, honest and transparent way so that areas of concern or further research areas could be uncovered.

Responsibility for the above rested with the lead-researcher as author of the dissertation, principal of the school and as a practitioner-researcher.

1.5.2.3 Trustworthiness:

Trustworthiness was established through a review of the data/evidence with the collaborators/participants (McTaggart, 2002 cited by Gall, Gall & Borg, 2005: 501) (the action-reflection cycle) and the recording or transcribing of authentic language (the 'voice' of the participants/collaborators). A draft copy of the research report was taken back to the participants to validate findings, identify gaps in the data or discuss the need for reinterpretation (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006: 24). Any results need to be "*situated and contextualized*" (Daly, 2007: 256- 257). Reflexivity was used (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999: 444) to acknowledge the role of the researcher in the research process. It was envisaged that at the end of the research study, the participants would be able to articulate how they had changed personally or in their practice or how the educational environment had changed. This has practical implications for the usefulness and effectiveness of the study (Daly, 2007: 257). To ensure the validity of the research, auditing was conducted by a peer reviewer.

1.5.3 Method:

A participatory action research methodology was selected as a means of enquiry and transformation of practice. Construction of understanding was created through experienced-based enquiry rather than by acceptance of a pre-existent theoretical 'truth' (Bullard & Hitz, 1997: 20-21). The research process enabled an examination of and critical reflection on the rationality, meaning and intention of educational practices in order to deepen our understanding of these practices in relation to our values, within the specific social context of the young second-language learner.

Intra-subjectivity (reflection on self) and inter-subjectivity (reflection on practice) as well as reflection on the broader societal context, was encouraged in order to deepen the understanding of individual identity and group identity and anti-bias education through examining pedagogy in relation to the child's 'right to participation' and 'building a better world for children' (Derman-Sparks & Olson Edwards, 2010: 4 -5). Reflective enquiry by teachers has the potential to create paradigmatic shifts and transformation of practice as it encourages a spirit of enquiry through observation, reflection '*in-action*' and '*on-action*' (Schon, 1987: 26), leading to a challenge, '*to-action*' (Formosinho & Oliveira Formosinho, 2012: 600).

The study therefore followed an emergent design "*in which each incremental research decision depends on prior information*" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 317).

1.5.4 Sampling:

Purposive sampling was employed to select a Pre-Primary School and information-rich persons within that school environment and from the children's home environment. Other persons known to experience the concept or attempting to implement the concept/theory (English second-language learning in early childhood education and the participation of the young child) were also sourced as information-rich persons (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 320).

1.5.5 Data Collection:

The primary means of data collection was observation of the children and the interactions between them, their parents and the teachers. Attention was paid to their means of expression (verbal or non-verbal) as well as their use of their home language or English as a second language. The children's means of expression and their capability to express themselves and the level of assistance or 'scaffolding' was observed and recorded. These were reflected on during regular 'review meetings' with the teachers. Meetings, non-structured interviews, informal conversations and focus group discussions with open-ended questions with parents were also conducted.

Unobtrusive data (artifacts) were collected, including children's enrolment forms, minutes of school meetings, curriculum planning, photos of the educational environment, educational materials and teaching-aids, representational 'maps', letters to parents and the child's message-book that links home and school (Hatch, 1995: 127). Notes, sketches, photos and written transcripts of observations as 'learning stories' or 'documentation of learning' through photographs and video-recordings were also used. The child's portfolio of art-work were another valuable source of data, as were teachers' reflective journals or diaries.

1.5.6 Data Processing:

The data was analyzed and interpreted inductively in order to place it in certain categories or criteria according to levels of significance within the research process. This enabled the researcher to make sense of the data, new understandings achieved and new data collected; this on-going cycle of data collection and analysis is linked to the action-reflection method (Hatch, 1995: 127). Data needs to be synthesized and summarized in order to present the findings accurately, concisely and dependably (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011: 467).

Inductive analysis facilitates the emergence of patterns and categories which can be coded, categorized and interpreted (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 373).

The research problem lent itself to the following four categories of enquiry:

- the development of reflective, critical practice among the teachers;
- the quality of the participation of the child as "*an agent of their own life*" (Lansdown, 2004: 5);
- the level of support for the mother-tongue by the parents or teachers and how that impacts on the child's participation;
- the learning and teaching of English as a second-language and the effect that may have on the child's participation.

1.5.7 Preliminary literature review:

The preliminary literature review assisted the researcher to gain an overview of the area being researched and the broader socio-economic context. This review was ongoing throughout the research period in order to enable an in-depth understanding of the general theme under investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 96). This proved useful in developing an understanding of socio-cultural theory and the children's rights approach to the development of language in the young child, in particular second-language learning and teaching in relation to 'the right to participation'.

A wide variety of books, periodicals and articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, reports, policy documents, newspaper articles and theses were consulted throughout the research process in order to develop an understanding and critique of this approach.

1.6 Elucidation of Concepts:

1.6.1 Language:

Language is defined by Levey & Polirstok (2011: 4) as a system of rules involving rules of grammar and syntax (word order), morphology (word formation), phonology (word sounds) and arbitrary symbols that can become verbal or non-verbal expressions of meaning through dialogue with others (involving the pragmatics and semantics of language). Social communication also involves non-verbal cues such as eye-gaze, turn-taking, facial expressions, gestures and signing, drawing, and pantomime, amongst others (Levey & Polirstok, 2011: 4).

Language is seen as creating meaningful opportunities between people for shared understanding of thought and emotion, beliefs and desires, ideas and concepts. Talking and listening to each other (conversation) helps us to understand and interpret our experiences. Vygotsky regarded language as a tool for the social mediation of learning. He saw it as being of primary importance in the acquisition of

cognitive abilities, development of the imagination and intentional mental operations, self-regulation and the development of “*private speech*” (Bodrova, 2008: 362).

1.6.2 The development of language:

Language develops through social interaction and research indicates that the first five years are critical in this regard. By the age of 5 – 6 years, children are seen as having developed proficiency in the mother tongue (Woolfolk, 2007: 53). Children need to be both cognitively and linguistically stimulated through exposure to varied vocabulary and opportunities to be involved in conversations as well as “*extended discourse*” (Dickenson & Tabors, cited by Gordon & Browne, 2008: 487).

1.6.3 Bilingualism:

The development of proficiency in more than one language is known as bilingualism.

This can be:

1. Simultaneous Bilingualism, where two languages are learned from infancy, from the languages learned at home, or
2. Successive bilingualism which occurs after the age of two or three. Successive bilingualism has its own ‘stages of development’ (Gordon and Browne, 2008: 489 – 490). Brantley (2007: 46, citing Hurley & Tinajero, 2001; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Terrell, 1977) identifies the following stages:

1. Pre-production (the ‘silent period’),
2. Early production (single words and early word combinations),
3. Speech emergence (simple sentences with grammatical errors),
4. Intermediate fluency (social fluency),
5. Advanced fluency.

According to Tinajero & Hurley (2001: 3), this may involve “spurts and lags” (cited by Brantley, 2007: 46).

1.6.4 Mediation:

Mediation occurs when an adult 'mediates' meaningful understanding using language as a 'sign and tool' to the child – beginning at the *interpersonal level* – so that the child can internalize and appropriate it for use at the *intrapersonal level*, “so what the child can do in co-operation today, he can do alone tomorrow” (Vygotsky, 1962: 104).

1.6.5 Culture:

Culture is described by Klein & Chen (2001: 4) as the 'blueprint' which underlines all our actions and behaviors, values and beliefs. It is both influenced by the social, political, ethnic, religious and national identity we hold and can adapt and change according to changes in the social and physical environment we find ourselves in (Klein & Chen, 2001: 4 - 8). It can therefore be seen as emergent, fluid and changing.

Language can be seen as a manifestation of these cultural influences. Cultural expression emerges out of a historical, social, economic and political context to reflect how a group of people understand their world and their identity in that world and communicate this to themselves and other people.

Within a society there is both a dominant, or mainstream culture as well as subcultures that have their own cultural identity and shared characteristics through commonalities of age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability and disability, primary language, geographic location, level of income and education, and so on (Klein & Chen, 2001: 12 -13).

Cultural perspectives are reflected in the *discourse* or explanations and interpretations of reality that people hold (for example, as represented in their art or in how their behavior reveals their sense of time). Culture is demonstrated in the shared sense of meaning, verbal and non-verbal, in a cultural group (Klein & Chen, 2001: 7 – 9).

1.6.6 The “culture of childhood”:

Research into the ‘culture of childhood’ is said to provide a window into the perceptions, understandings and interactions of children, from their point of view – *‘the child’s eye view’s of the world’* (Goodman, 1970: 4). The “culture of childhood” is seen as the culture belonging *to* children, developed *with* children and created *for* children (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006: 31). Children participate in their society’s culture and create their own ‘peer culture’ through *“interpretive reproduction”* as they learn it, share it and transmit it to new generations of children (Corsaro, 2000, 89). The development of language within the ‘culture of childhood’ seems to be essential to this process. The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2006: 31) refers to the culture of childhood as follows: *“Children recreate and renew culture through interaction with one another, with adults and with the culture they encounter in other people and situations”*. Cultural beliefs, values and practices can be communicated, learned and shared, adapted and changed or enriched (Klein & Chen, 2001: 4 - 9). The ‘culture of childhood’ is open to innovation through global influences and local practices, which may conflict with traditional values at times. As a ‘cultural arena’ in early childhood settings, culture *“arises out of a tension between the tradition and a renewal”* (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006: 19).

1.6.7 Culture and Language:

Languages change, as culture changes – neither are written in stone. Nieto (1992: 153, cited by Robb, 1995: 16) describes language as *“a primary means by which people express their cultural values and the lens through which they view the world”*. Adult-child interaction patterns, including adult responsiveness to non-verbal cues from the child, can differ from culture to culture and can have a significant influence on *how* children develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills (Klein & Chen, 2001: 136). The ‘culture of childhood’ may also reflect the linguistic culture of the social group children belong to. The particular manner whereby a child learns to listen and speak and how that child uses language to learn, is therefore embedded in cultural practices, beliefs and values. Taking into account individual variations, it has nevertheless been found that children from

diverse cultures typically start producing their first words at more or less the same age (Macrory, 2006: 36).

1.6.8 Code switching:

When vocabulary from one language is interspersed in another language, this is termed “code-switching”. This is usually seen as a normal part of bilingual language development and is regarded as a common communication strategy for bilingual children and adults (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 490).

1.6.9 Conversation language proficiency:

This is also known by the acronym BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and refers to basic conversation fluency within everyday social contexts. Research by Cummins and Collier suggests that BICS in a 2nd language, for successive bilingualism can take 1-3 years (the acquisition of the mother tongue is usually seen as a prerequisite). When a person is referred to as being fluent in a language, such a phrase usually means their conversation ability (BICS) in that language (Cummins 1991 cited by Gonzalez, Yawkey & Minaya-Rowe, 2006: 203).

1.6.10 Cognitive/academic language proficiency:

Cognitive/academic language proficiency or CALP involves “*complex cognitive processing skills that are essential for the understanding of academic concepts in a learning situation*” (Green: 1997:149). CALP is said to take 5 - 7 years or more, depending on the level required for formal learning (Cummins, 1991, cited by Gonzalez, Yawkey & Minaya-Rowe, 2006: 203).

1.6.11 Subtractive bilingualism:

Subtractive bilingualism was described by Wallace E. Lambert (1979, cited by Toukoma, 2000: 214) as a shift in the child towards one dominant language, away from the mother-tongue, before the mother tongue has had a chance to develop. It has been found to result in difficulty in understanding concepts, emotional and

social behavioural problems and a lack of academic proficiency in the mother-tongue. Academic results in the second language are also negatively impacted (Toukoma, 2000: 214; Wong Fillmore, 1991: 323 – 346). A child who speaks a language other than the language of learning and teaching “*can have his cognitive development abruptly disconnected when his primary language is taken out of the learning environment*” (Heugh, 1995: 178).

Another term to describe ‘subtractive bilingualism’ is ‘*semilingualism*’. This is described as ‘*insufficient compound linguistic competence*’ and is revealed in inability to use complex, descriptive language in a creative and expressive way (Toukoma, 2000: 214). Difficulty in expressing emotions can also arise due to an incomplete understanding of the emotional connotations of words. This may occur if the transition to the second language at the expense of the mother tongue is too early – and if there is incomplete and insufficient understanding of emotional expression in the second language (Toukoma, 2000: 216). Subtractive bilingualism or semilingualism may result in ‘*lingual homelessness*’. A person in this situation is said to suffer cultural alienation and problems of identity development, as well as learning barriers (Toukoma, 2000: 217).

1.6.12 Linguicism:

Skutnabb-Kangas (1988:13) is credited with developing the term “linguicism” (Phillipson, 1997: 239). According to Heugh (1995: 179), linguicism explains the type of prejudice which manifests itself against speakers of the non-dominant language within a society. Linguicism is seen as legitimized and reproduced through the ideologies, structures and practices of a society and is based on unequal access to economic resources and social and political power (Skutnabb-Kangas 2008: 9). Linguicism could therefore result in racial or ethnic discrimination and arise from such discrimination. Linguicism can also reveal itself in the generally accepted social perception of the *purpose* of languages as used within society and whether or not they are seen as a vehicle for personal and social progress (Phillipson, 1997: 239). According to Phillipson (1997: 239), linguicism can also exist within a language group against those who speak with a dialect or those with different pronunciation (intralingual linguicism).

1.6.13 Literacy:

The socio-cognitive view of literacy is that it is learned socially, emerging out of social experiences. Children learn what literacy practices are valued and how literacy can be useful at home, in the community and at school. They learn how literacy is used for communication and recreation, and how adults make use of their literacy skills. In this way children develop their own feelings and beliefs about its usefulness in their lives (Hiebert, 1991: 13).

1.6. 14 Parents:

'Parents' refers to those who have a significant responsibility in the child's life. They have the primary responsibility (legal or social) towards the child. This may be the mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandmother or grandfather, guardian or the parent's adult friend who is a permanent member of the family and takes the role of "parent" in the child's life.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996: 2 defines a "parent" as:

(a) the parent or guardian of a learner;

(b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner;

(c) the person who undertakes to fulfill the obligations of a person referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school.

1.6.15 Primary Care-givers:

This refers to those who have the parental responsibility or right to care for the child and who exercise that right (Biersteker & Rudolf, 2005: 2).

1.6.16 Mother Tongue/First Language:

According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1984: 18), the mother tongue can be seen from various perspectives. It can be seen as the **original language** or the language one learned first, that one listened to in the womb and 'at the mother's breast' ('ulimi webele'). It can also be interpreted as being **the language of identification** by which one identifies oneself (internal identification) or by which one is identified as a

native speaker thereof (external identification). This can be the language of one's ethnic origins or, for a deaf child, sign language (as the language of one's sub-culture) – rather than the language of the mother. There may not be full competence in the language of identification. The mother tongue can also be seen as **the language of competence** or the language one knows the best (first language or L1) and defined according to the **functionality of the language**, as the language one uses the most (although one may not necessarily identify that language as one's mother tongue). The mother tongue usually has deep emotional significance (Neville Alexander, 2008 - verbal communication). It reveals 'hidden knowledge' or "*die verborge kennis van die lewe*" (le Roux, 2012). It has been described metaphorically as the "*chain that binds us to our own history*" and as "*a treasure of knowledge for human survival*" (Vuolab, 2000: 13). It has also been described as "*the lens through which we view the world*" (Nieto, 1992: 153, cited by Robb, 1995: 16).

1.6.17 The dominant language:

This is seen as the language spoken by the dominant social class. In a social hegemony, the norms and standards of the ruling class are perceived to benefit everyone and have universal value (Wikipedia, on 'social hegemony'). Uncritical adoption of hegemonic practices can maintain the status quo because it tends to "silence the voices" of those who do not speak the dominant language and who come from historically disadvantaged population groups (Diaz Soto, 1997:50).

1.6.18 Multicultural education:

Multicultural education shows respect for the contribution of all ethnic and racial groups by being inclusive of diversity (Gordon and Browne, 2008: 610). Critical pedagogy becomes important as a means of critically reflecting on multicultural education in practice, as a means of addressing beliefs, attitudes and prejudice against marginalized groups and in promoting culturally relevant teaching (Hyland, 2010: 83).

1.6.19 Anti-bias education:

This incorporates a children's rights approach, setting clear goals for each child's participation by affirming their individual and group identity; the formation of caring relationships with others that acknowledge and respect differences; an awareness of injustice and development of empathy for others – which can empower a child to stand up for themselves and/or others in the face of bias, prejudice or discrimination (Derman-Sparks & Olson Edwards, 2010: 4-5).

1.6.20 'Image of Identity':

The concept, 'image of identity' is interpreted by the researcher as a person's intra-personal and inter-personal awareness within his or her social, cultural, economic and political context and the way this is externalized through representation or photographs which 'tell a story' (a way to 'narrate and create'). People hold an 'identity' in relation to their sense and perception of themselves and also to how others view and relate to them (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 528). An image of identity is both one's internal sense of individual and group identity and the representation of that identity, and is in this way culturally and socially *interpreted*, but not determined. "*Image is an interpretation, a historical and cultural definition*" (Rinaldi, 2005: 91-105). The words *Image of Identity* have been used as the title of a Children's Rights Centre photo-documentary exhibition 'Voices & Visions, Children's Rights in South Africa' and were conceptualized by Alex Fattal and Cati Vawda, 2004 (verbal communication).

1.6.21 Participation:

"Participation" denotes respect for the child's own agency - their own opinions, ideas and initiatives - according to the 'evolving capacities of the child' (Article 12.1 UNCRC). Through consultation with children and by providing opportunities for participatory processes, adults respect children's capacities to define their own concerns and priorities and also develop their own strategies to respond to them. Gerison Lansdown asserts that creating real partnerships involves respectful relationships with children; this can be the basis for exchange between children and adults in all relevant contexts of children's lives (Lansdown, 2004: 6-7).

1.6.22 The ‘becoming’ of the young child:

The word ‘become’ means “*transition to another state*” (Du Toit & Kruger, 1991: 6, cited by de Witt, 2009: 42). ‘Becoming’ implies the process whereby the adult socializes and educates the young child in their growth and development towards adult expectations of the child as a ‘not-yet-adult’. The adult needs to accompany and guide the formation of the child into a more mature state of being, while respecting each child’s individuality and identity as it unfolds. It means ensuring that each child can reach their full potential as they develop into the person they want to be. This process therefore requires the child’s “*will to self-actualization and his concerted participation in self-actualization and educative help*” (du Toit & Jacobs, 1989: 26 cited by de Witt, 2009: 43).

1.6.23 Socialization:

This is seen as occurring within cultures and involves learning the behavior appropriate to the particular social context (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 545). Of importance in this process is the way attitudes, skills and values are formed from role-models to whom the child is emotionally attached (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 139). A “way of life” is established in a family, school or other social setting as the “correct” way of thinking, doing and relating to others.

1.6.24 Pedagogy:

Pedagogy describes the educative relationship between a teacher and a learner as an interactive process of interpretation and representation, action and response as *meanings are negotiated between teachers and children* (Grieshaber, 2008: 506). It can also be seen as an ‘art’. It concerns understanding the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of teaching as well as the act of teaching itself. In a social constructivist interpretation, our aims and methodology, our understanding of childhood and our way of teaching (our philosophical approach), would reflect our social and cultural norms and values.

1.6.25 Documentation:

Documentation of learning is a way of recording the learning process while it occurs in order to reflect on it and “make learning visible”, as well as further extend the learning opportunities. Teachers are attentive to the children’s interests, ideas and involvement and facilitate this knowledge seeking or research process (Thornton & Brunton, 2010: 92). Documentation is also a tool for assessment or evaluation of the child’s learning processes and self-assessment/self-evaluation of both the child and the teacher (Rinaldi, 2012: 242). It also facilitates the mediation of the learning experience to others (Rinaldi, 2006: 62) as photographs, art-work and written narrative script as ‘documentation of learning’ is displayed for them to see.

1.6.26 Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD:

The literal translation from the Russian is ‘zone of closest or nearest development’ (*‘zona blizhaishego razvitiya’*, Rogoff & Wertsch, 1984: 1). The ZPD is understood as the difference between an activity done independently without assistance and the level of potential development observed in the partial mastery of tasks, which then reveals the need for support and assistance from a ‘more capable other’, a peer or an adult, to extend this potential for development into the ZPD (Rowlands, 2003: 160). It involves adult-child *‘joint participation’* in activities that can extend the child’s capabilities into the ‘ZPD’ (Rogoff & Wertsch, 1984: 5). Dynamic assessment assesses and analyses how this hidden cognitive capacity in the child unfolds over time, in a dynamic way in relation to the role of the teacher in extending the child’s capabilities into the ZPD (Brantley, 2007: 10-12).

1.6.27 Scaffolding:

While scaffolding, the teacher uses language as a means of *‘expanding, recasting or modeling when children need guidance in their responses’* (Levey & Polirstok, 2011: 22). The adult can provide more support, or less support – depending on the level of ability of the child, the nature of the task and the desired outcome, as scaffolding develops the potential for more complex knowledge and ideas to emerge (Van Kuyk, J.J. 2011). According to Wikipedia, the term ‘scaffolding’ was

first used by Jerome Bruner and was further developed by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976).

1.6.28 Discourse:

The term 'discourse' is utilized to describe a way of thinking (ideas, concepts and beliefs) which is constituted as a 'world-view' or generally accepted body of knowledge. This conceptual framework reflects the norms and values of a certain social group within their particular context. People find meaning from their discourse and use it to create a 'reality'. Discourse thus describes the words and thoughts used to justify choices and decisions within a social, cultural and institutional framework of reference and can determine what is permitted or allowed, within that discourse (McNaughton, 2000: 50).

1.6.29 Conscientization:

This term is used by Paulo Freire (1972: 51) to refer to the process by which people become aware of their socio-cultural reality and the root causes of problems in their lives. Through this process they develop a capacity for critical analysis and become 'actors' or '*knowing subjects*' rather than passive '*recipients*'.

1.6.30 The 'Whole Child'

The child is unique and develops as a whole – physically, socially, emotionally, cognitively, sexually, morally and spiritually and with creative abilities and aesthetic sensibilities. Individual temperament and personality as well as prior experience affect the child's development. The 'whole child' is formed by each of these developmental domains and how each interrelates with the others. The development of one aspect in the child cannot be studied without all the other aspects being taken into consideration (de Witt, 2009: 6). According to Gordon & Browne (2008: 99), cultural awareness can cross different areas of growth and development in the child's life (cognitive, physical-motor, language, creative and social-emotional). These all affect the child's well-being.

1.7 Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation comprises of the following six chapters:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

This chapter presents the research problem, and introduces the research study, the background to the study and the motivation for the research. The problem statement and sub-questions as well as the emergent research questions are stated. The paradigmatic perspective is outlined and a definition of concepts is presented. An overview of the research design and method is provided, including ethical measures, trustworthiness and how the sampling, data collection and data processing were carried out. The chapter outlines the method adopted for the literature review and highlights the structure of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: AN OVERVIEW OF VARIOUS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS USED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INTERNATIONALLY

This chapter provides an in-depth literature review, including a critique of current theory, research and practice within the field of early childhood education. Various documents, articles and books related to the research question will be reflected on and critically analyzed in order to investigate varying international perspectives and approaches and to contextualize this research within a global community of practice.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW: VYGOTSKY'S THEORY, LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

This chapter presents a critical analysis of Vygotsky's theory and examines a wide variety of current theory and research on language acquisition and second-language learning and teaching in early childhood, particularly in relation to the research question. An overview is provided of various theoretical frameworks used in early childhood education internationally. The chapter also reviews various

documents, books and articles in order to outline areas of concern which arise from language policy and practice in the South African context.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter discusses the research design for the empirical research process. It highlights the research methodology, the ethical measures taken; measures to ensure trustworthiness, how the data was collected, participatory action research as means and instrument and the processing and analysis of the data. A summary is also furnished.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter commences with an introduction to the research findings, followed by a discussion of the findings using direct quotations. A summary is provided; including field notes. The initial research problem in Chapter one is referred to. This chapter is presented in narrative format.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUMMARY

This chapter presents the study's conclusions and recommendations, as well as its limitations. Further research possibilities are explored. The chapter ends with a summary.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: AN OVERVIEW OF VARIOUS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS USED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INTERNATIONALLY

“We seek meanings in the world around us, because these meanings in the external world help us discover the meanings of ourselves at every stage of our growth. To train the imagination is also to train the emotions” (Mphahlele, 1993).

2.1 Introduction

In terms of the child’s ‘right to participation’ and possible barriers confronting the young second-language learner, this dissertation considers some of the challenges presented to early childhood education identified by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child(UNCRC) (UNCRC, 1989) and situates them within the socio-cultural and critical constructivist theoretical frameworks, within global practice in early childhood education.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Introduction

A number of theories have influenced and continue to influence early childhood education. Some of these are outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Early Years Learning Foundation Statement for Australia, 2009: 11):

- *“developmental theories that focus on describing and understanding the processes of change in children’s learning and development over time”*
- *“socio-cultural theories that emphasize the central role that families and cultural groups play in children’s learning and the importance of respectful relationships that provide insight into social and cultural contexts of learning and development”*
- *“socio-behaviorist theories that focus on the role of experiences in shaping children’s behavior”*

- “critical theories that invite early childhood educators to challenge assumptions about curriculum, and consider how their decisions may affect children differently”
- “post-structuralist theories that offer insights into issues of power, equity and social justice in early childhood settings.”

This research study adopts a socio-constructivist approach, influenced by Vygotsky’s theory, to examine thought and language in terms of second-language children’s participation in their social context and the role of the mother tongue, or first language. It assumes a critical theoretical approach, using ‘children’s rights’ as a ‘lens’ to interrogate issues relating to barriers to the child’s participation ‘as an agent of their own life’ (Lansdown, 2004: 6-7). In doing so, the study adopts a praxeological approach to research methodology (Pascal & Bertram, 2012: 484). Critical constructivism rejects the notion of ‘absolute truth’ held by positivism and works towards ‘critical consciousness’ (conscientization) and emancipatory goals (Diaz Soto, 1997: 48-49).

2.2.2 Socio-constructivist theory and critical constructivism

Thomas Kuhn (cited by Edwards, 2005: 3) states that paradigms are “a *prerequisite to perception itself*” in his work describing conceptual change within scientific communities (*The structure of scientific revolutions* 1962/1966). A paradigm is used as a frame of reference by a community of practice to define their understanding of “*work, problems and achievements*” (cited by Edwards, 2005: 3). A community of practice is formed through the means whereby members reach agreement on “*what counts as valid knowledge in a specific field of investigation*” (Wenger, 1999, as cited by Edwards, 2005: 4).

Constructivist theory, which created a ‘paradigm shift’ from a transmission method of education, conceives of children as ‘creating’ knowledge as well as ‘receiving’ it (MacNaughton, 2003: 45).

Vygotsky’s theory has resulted in a number of theoretical frameworks, including cultural psychology, socio-constructivism, activity theory, cultural-historical activity

theory and cultural historical theory (Hedges & Cullen, 2011: 1-2), as well as critical constructivism (MacNaughton, 2000: 97-101). Critical constructivism “asserts that human thought, feeling and human actions are all interrelated” and “avoids reductionism by recognizing the complexity of situations” (Diaz Soto, 1997: 47). Glenda MacNaughton, described as a ‘critical constructivist’, regards language as playing a central role in the process of learning and critical to the process of identity formation (MacNaughton, 2003:103). She examines gender and diversity in relation to power; power is seen as a crucial aspect to consider when examining language and communication in relation to second language learning and teaching (see Chapter 3). Language seems to play a central role in the formation of our individual identity and in understanding how we relate to others, including how it can shape our attitudes and beliefs. According to MacNaughton (2003: 103) this is because it:

- “Constructs how we think, feel, act, desire and speak.
- “Constitutes what we believe is normal, right and desirable.
- “Involves awareness and choices.”

MacNaughton (2003: 103) uses discourse theory to examine the relationship between language and power in her research in the field of early childhood education. She notes that people form subjectivity in discourse as a means of:

- “Learning to categorise people, including ourselves”.
 - “Participating in discourses and practices that give meanings to the categories we learn”.
 - “Positioning oneself in a relationship to the categories and meanings given to them.”
- People are also seen as forming subjectivity in discourse through:
- “Recognising the position taken, and emotionally investing in the position taken”(Davies, 1989 b, cited by MacNaughton, 2000, 97-101).

Post-modernism is influenced by Foucault’s theories, which challenge us to examine what we think is the ‘truth’ and why we say it is ‘true’. Foucault maintains that knowledge cannot be separated from power because power determines what is

construed as 'valid' or 'invalid' and which knowledge is relevant or legitimate, or not. Language as discourse "*shapes and directs our way of looking at the world*", our perception of the world that directs the way we act in it, excluding other ways of understanding and interpreting the reality thereof (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 31). Discourse is a means of legitimizing, sanctioning, and distinguishing 'true' from 'false' and an instrument of power "*Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true*" (Foucault, 1980a: 131 cited by Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 30).

Foucault provides a picture of how power works; how the individual, as an agent, is constituted by power relations; and how our subjective beliefs and practices are unconsciously shaped by these factors. Awareness can be gained by 'stepping back' to critically reflect on our way of 'being-in-the-world' and how we relate to others. This means 'problematizing' (unmasking) our practice by examining our discourse and becoming critically aware of events and practices with a view to changing those power relations (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 34).

Trevarthan (1992: 131) also points out that relationships are influenced by the broader societal context - "*messages in the social system*" that "*are given cohesion and are constantly changed by deep interpersonal processes that differentiate and join the motives and emotions of protagonists – in the personal relationship, the family, the community, the organization, the town, the county, the nation, and the culture*".

Children can be seen as capable of constructing their own meanings and can be empowered to follow their own initiatives – but can also be influenced and even constrained by their social context and the social values they have assimilated, including "power discourses" (MacNaughton, 2003: 103). This reveals the importance of using critical constructivist theory to critically reflect on children's participation in relation to our values - as socially, culturally and historically formed -

and to judge these in relation to 'children's rights' and 'a better world for children' (Derman-Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010: 33).

2.3 The UNCRC (1989) as the 'lens' for critical, reflective practice

2.3.1 Introduction

An examination of theory in relation to our paradigms and using the UNCRC (UNCRC,1989) as a 'lens' for critical, reflective practice, can help to inform the action/reflection cycle and offer differing explanations of phenomena, as well as give meaning and intent to the research process (Edwards, 2005: 4).

South Africa ratified the UNCRC in 1995 and endorsed children's rights in the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution (1996). Parliament promulgated the Consolidated Children's Act based on the Constitution (2006) and passed regulations (2010) for the implementation of these rights (although limited by financial and human resources constraints).

Participation, and the 'right to participate' (UNCRC Article 12) and freedom of expression become contentious when one considers that construction of meaning is dependent on cultural beliefs and practices (Barone, Mallette & Xu, 2005: 4). Beliefs and practices may not uphold the rights of the child.

Our interaction with the child, the manner whereby we communicate with them and which language(s) we use, can have a profound effect in either inhibiting or encouraging the child's participation in the learning and teaching process and the stimulation of their cognitive development. There has tended to be a **deficit image** of the child or "*a negative characterization of the child*" as "*lacking*" when compared with an adult, as Vygotsky expressed it (Vygotsky, 1960 *in* Wertsch, ed., 1979/81: 149). This could become clear if children's rights, including the 'right to participate' are used as a 'lens' to examine our own beliefs and practice in relation to our image of the child. To change how we see the child is to change how we relate to the child. "*Image is an interpretation, a historical and cultural definition*" (Rinaldi, 2005: 91-105).

How we see the child impacts on how we *listen* to the child and the “right of the child to be heard” (General Comment No 12, 2009); this will necessarily affect our relationship. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child notes that the Convention requires that children, including the youngest, be **respected as persons in their own right**. (General Comment No 7, 2006:3).

2.3.2 The child as an ‘agent of their own life’

Children are given an image by society. Dahlberg, Moss & Pence (2007: 43-51) characterize the historical development of this ‘image’ of the child as:

- “Knowledge, identity and culture reproducer” – starting as a ‘blank slate’ (John Locke);
- “Innocent, in the golden years of their life” (Rousseau’s belief that the child has inherent natural virtues and inner goodness and that it is society that corrupts the child; therefore the child is vulnerable, at risk and in need of protection);
- “The child as labour market supply factor” with early childhood development and education perceived as an investment that can meet future needs and solve problems, such as the future workforce, and future citizens (such as the 1996 study by Young, commissioned by the World Bank, “Early Childhood Development: Investing in the Future”);
- “Co-constructors of knowledge, identity and culture” and “*rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and, most of all, connected to adults and other children*” (Malaguzzi, 1993a: 10).

The concept of agency implies power or influence over one’s will, one’s life and one’s identity. In the post-modern world, identity does not have to be predetermined and fixed through the process of socialization and reproduction of rigid traditions within a culture. Specific contexts, which influence the formation of identities, are viewed as fluid and changing and identity can be regarded as “*multiple*”, “*overlapping*”, “*dynamic*”, and “*fluid*” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 57).

Agency becomes essential to freedom of choice and action, including the ability to challenge stereotypes, bias and discrimination. It is related to the child's sense of well-being, self-esteem and achievement, and a positive capacity for understanding others and relating to them. This capacity is important, opening up ways for knowledge to be 'co-constructed' through intersubjective 'meaning-making'. The idea of the child as 'agent' relates to the internal *motives* of the child (Vygotsky, 1987: 282), which drive the child's expression of self-will, thoughts and the ways he or she acts – or reacts, takes initiative, meets challenges, and relates to others and to the culture and patterns of behaviour they observe and participate in. The 'participation' of the child in this process implies the child experiencing and communicating within mutual, reciprocal, respectful relationships that are informed by the social and cultural context – the “*relational space*” within a “*construction of interactions*” (Rindaldi, 2006: 70).

Regarding the child as an 'agent' implies that their own identity, interests and concerns, their 'motives' (Vygotsky, 1987: 282), should be respected; these may, or may not be the same as those of the adults in their lives. Children's rights give children the opportunity to be “*social actors*” who construct their own knowledge through experiential learning and influence the lives of those around them, as well as exerting an influence on their community and the society in which they live. They possess a 'voice' of their own which should be taken seriously, can engage with others in knowledge-building through experiential learning processes and can be engaged in democratic decision-making through dialogue (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 49).

According to the UNCRC, from birth children should be seen as holding rights, respected as “*people NOW*”, citizens who can express their needs, wants and feelings (Lansdown, 2005: 2). Penelope Leach expresses it in this way:

“Of course babies can't exercise all their human rights, but that doesn't mean they don't have them. A new baby can't exercise control over his own head but that doesn't mean he doesn't have one” (Leach, 2012:

<http://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/1115803/Babies-people/>).

The importance of autonomy and the ability to take initiative and express one's own feelings and opinions is evident even in small babies who express their will (they

can be seen to pull their head away from the breast if they do not want to drink more milk, even if they don't have full control over their head yet!).

The 'right to participation' – in the context of relationships to duty-bearers – appears to be foundational to all other rights from birth: the right to survival, protection and development. It has been found that early development can be prevented and even distorted if the emotional communication between an infant and their caregiver or parent is inadequate or abusive (Richter 2004: 19). The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004: 1) notes that children's emotional development 'build[s] the architecture of their brains'.

Trevarthen (2011: 187) observes that infants communicate their thoughts and discoveries even before 'language' is developed, and the infant is capable of both participating and inventing "*the transmissible culture of constructions, dance, song and theatrical performances*" through playful interactions with others.

Agency can also be witnessed in children's strategies to influence, defend and construct social order as they relate to others (Markström & Halldén, 2009: 112-122; Ebrahim, 2011:121-131) and as they playfully contest 'rules' and decisions and make their own choices – while they develop self-regulation.

The challenge is to work collaboratively with children, as agents of their own life, so that teachers, too, can become 'agents' for transformation and develop the school as an arena for democratic practice. Ideally, the school should be seen as a community project and therefore a public place for dialogue and debate, where children and adults can both participate in decision making processes and which can respect diversity and counteract prejudice, discrimination and improper use of power (Moss, 2007: 7). In this regard, various 'tools' or methods can be used, including the 'Mosaic Approach', the 'Persona Doll Approach', 'learning stories', 'documentation of learning' and others (see 2.4.2 and 4.7).

The understanding of the child as social actor or 'agent' who can shape their identity, participate meaningfully in making their needs known and assert their opinions, is emphasized in UN General Comment No 7 (2005) which stipulates that

the young child is not only a 'rights holder' in the legal sense but that he/she exercises his/her rights "*as a participant in their own life*". It highlights the reality that theory and research reveal young children to be "*social actors*" and their "*survival, well-being and development are dependent on and built around close relationships*" (UN General Comment No 7 2005: 3-4). Lansdown (2004: 6-7) notes that this implies that relationships that respect the "*child as agent of their own life*" should ideally be the basis for exchange between children and adults throughout all the relevant contexts of their lives.

An 'image of the child' becomes socially constructed through this idea of the child as 'agent'. UN General Comment No 7 (2005) emphasizes the fact that "these rights evolve with the evolving capacity of the child" (UN General Comment No 7 2005: 42) and that, accepting the child as 'capable' and 'competent', with 'evolving capacities', should mean developing confidence in the child and providing the supportive context for these capacities to evolve.

Respect for the child's agency is essential to the actualization of the 'right to participate'. According to Lansdown (2004: 5) the 'Right to Participate' (UNCRC) "*requires information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect and power sharing. Genuine participation gives children the power to shape both the process and outcome, and acknowledges that their **evolving capacity, experience and interest** play a key role in determining the nature of their participation*". The process of learning these new capacities does not happen in isolation in the child's mind, but occurs through participation in social and cultural practices and should ideally be a cooperative activity mediated through good communicative relationships with an adult and other children (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 50).

A more respectful relationship with children means analyzing how adult power is seen and used, as well as children's resilience and resistance to that power (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 49). Critical constructivism can help teachers to redefine their identity in regard to their profession and the nature of the pedagogical relationship in terms of power relationships in order to advance their understanding and practice of participatory pedagogical methods. The role could then change from acting '**for**' children, to working collaboratively '**with**' children as actors of their

own lives (Lansdown, 2004: 6-7) and to actively strive to uphold the 'rights of the child'.

2.3.3 The Right to Play

Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) observed that, "Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul" (cited in Prest-Talbot & Thornton, 2009: 7).

Children's rights hinge on respectful reciprocal relationships between adults and children. Critical to the quality of this relationship, is the question of how adults and children understand and communicate with each other, including communication through playful interactions that uphold 'the right to play'. This right is recognized in the UNCRC 1989 (Article 31) and in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 12) as the right of children to play, recreation, leisure, art and cultural activities (Prest-Talbot & Thornton, 2009: 13) and in General Comment No. 7 (2005: 15) "the right to rest, leisure and **play**".

Vygotsky and Elkonin saw play as reaching its fullest potential when used in the context of imaginative play in early childhood (Bodrova & Leong, 2012: 28). Vygotsky (1978: 129, cited by Schrader, 1990: 80) noted that, "*In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior, in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself*". According to Johnson, Sevimli-Celik & Al-Mansour's (2013: 266) research has investigated the critical role of play in the development of self-regulation, co-operation with others and social skills. It has been found to be linked to emerging academic competence and expressive language ability (emergent literacy and numeracy skills) and to encourage creativity and problem-solving skills. Opportunities for mature forms of play have been found to enhance language development and communication skills (Christie, 2010 and Christie & Roskos, 2004, cited by Johnson, Sevimli-Celik & Al-Mansour, 2013: 267).

Piaget conceptualized play as critically important to the child's way of assimilating and accommodating knowledge (schema) and adapting it to his or her life (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2010: 11). Piaget (quoted by Schrader, 1990: 79) observed that

play is *“never a behavior which is an end in itself. It is always a continuation of understanding, but in the direction of differentiation with respect to new models”*. Vygotsky upheld play as the *“leading source of development”* in early childhood (Vygotsky, 1967: 16, cited by Duncan & Tarulli, 2003: 273). The quality and degree of play is important in the way it exercises all the child’s abilities. This was viewed by Vygotsky as dependent on adult *mediation* (Karpov, 2005, cited by Bodrova, 2008: 359). An adult, or ‘more knowledgeable other’ such as a peer or older child, can mediate learning *“so what the child can do in co-operation today, he can do alone tomorrow”* (Vygotsky, 1962: 104).

Play provides learning opportunities in multiple ways. Engaging in play activities has been considered a means by which the child’s personality and ways of interacting socially are formed (Leont’ev, 1981: 396, cited by Duncan & Tarulli, 2003: 272). Changes in the social situation of the child are said to lead to changes in the child’s mind (Davydov & Zinchenko, 1989: 29, cited by Duncan & Tarulli, 2003: 273). Play also encourages creative experimentation and lends itself to the taking of risks, the means being more important than the end product. As children explore different possibilities and opportunities, they could gain confidence to meet challenges and move forward to their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), with play providing the opportunity to extend their capabilities in a non-threatening manner (Duncan & Tarulli, 2003: 287).

Trevarthen (1992: 131) examined the concept of Vygotsky’s ZPD, pointing to the importance of playful interactions which provide learning opportunities, arising out of the infant or young child’s *“motives for cooperation in understanding, in acting and, above all, in message making”* (author’s emphasis). The importance of the motives of the young child relates to the concept of the child as an “agent of their own life”(Lansdown, 2004: 6-7).

2.3.4 Cultural and social bias against children’s participation

In many cultures a child is conceptualized as ‘not yet adult’ and is therefore understood terms of their incapacities and inabilities, as *“unable to reason, unaware, fragile, susceptible, unable to respond to teaching”* (Goodman, 1970:11).

A children's rights approach challenges adults to respect the child's own agency, capacity, potential, capabilities, strengths and participation in their social context. It asks us to respect the child's own opinions, ideas and initiatives - according to the 'evolving capacities of the child' (Article 12.1 UNCRC). In all matters concerning the child, we are informed that we have a duty to consider "*the best interests of the child as a primary concern*" (Article 3, (1) UNCRC, 1989 – and Article 4, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999), which is open to differing cultural and social perspectives.

Article 29 (c) of the UNCRC (1989) stipulates the critical importance of "*the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own*" (author's emphasis).

The UNCRC emphasizes that different communities have the right to enjoy their own culture, practice their religion and use their own language in community with others of their group (Article 30 UNCRC).

Differing values are culturally formed and there are different perspectives on the 'image' of the child (Rinaldi, 2006: 91). Culturally, there are differing communication styles and patterns of adult-child interaction, and, in terms of a socio-cultural theoretical approach, this would be seen as exerting the greatest influence on the development of the child's language ability. Some cultural practices may encourage the type of participation style expected of the child at school, while others might not (Klein & Chen, 2001: 135). For example, lowering one's eyes when addressed by an elder is seen as a sign of respect in some traditional African cultures. Patterns of interaction within cultures can include whether or not the child is expected to reply to the adult and whether the adult responds verbally to the child's non-verbal 'cues' and is able to use language to respond meaningfully to what the child is experiencing. Styles of verbal accompaniment of the child involving '*responsivity, repetition, recasting and expansion*' and using more specific words to label and describe are culturally specific ways of responding to the child (Klein & Chen, 2001: 136-137). This style of communication (direct rather than indirect) might not be a cultural norm and may be interpreted as impolite or disrespectful by

family members, especially when seen in the context of the child's relationship with an adult.

Sawadogo (1995: 284, cited by Geiger & Alant, 2005: 188) contends that "*independence of thought*" is discouraged in traditional African culture, as learning is generally viewed as a "*passive process*". He adds that, "*This dependency relationship is cultivated by traditional societies... and is perceived as the best method to preserve and transmit tradition*".

This provides a possible reason for social and cultural bias against the child's participation in traditional societies, where he/she is seen as immature and therefore not worthy of the full status in society that an adult would hold.

This problem is clearly articulated in UN General Comment No. 7 in relation to the UNCRC Article 12, in paragraph 14:

"Respect for the views and feelings of the young child".

"Article 12 states that the child has a right to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting the child, and to have them taken into account. This right reinforces the status of the young child as an active participant in the promotion, protection and monitoring of their rights. **Respect for the young child's agency – as a participant in family, community and society – is frequently overlooked, or rejected as inappropriate on the grounds of age and immaturity**(my emphasis). In many countries and regions, traditional beliefs have emphasized young children's need for training and socialization.

They have been regarded as undeveloped, lacking even basic capacities for understanding, communicating and making choices. They have been powerless within their families, and often voiceless and invisible within society. The Committee wishes to emphasize that article 12 applies both to younger and to older children. As holders of rights, even the youngest children are entitled to express their views, which should be 'given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child' (art. 12.1). Young children are acutely sensitive to their surroundings and very rapidly acquire understanding of the people, places and routines in their lives, along with awareness of their own unique identity".

Henderson (2011: 26) cites Morrow and Richards (1996) in arguing that even in academic research, children's experiences and opinions are "*not often given due consideration as primary sources of knowledge about their lives. Because of power differentials between people of differing ages, and in relation to gendered inequities*

and a failure seriously to consider children's opinions, silences emerge concerning children's experience".

It should be reiterated that children need a sense of **belonging**. This comes through interactions with adult caregivers or parents and peers (see paragraph 2.6.3 on the EYLF, Australia, 2009 and guidelines for DAP by the NAEYC, 2009: 16 on creating a "*caring community of learners*"). Attachment theory and reciprocal, mutual interactions that infants thrive on are important when examining the essential significance of the sense of belonging in the young child's life (Richter, 2004: 15). However, this sense of belonging may lead the child to conform to socially accepted patterns of behaviour which may not uphold 'the best interests of the child' principle ("*the best interests of the child as a primary concern*", Article 3, (1) UNCRC, 1989 – and Article 4, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999). Children may not be given a 'voice' or receive the empathetic understanding and support from adults that they need (Henderson, 2011: 18-19) as very often adults in a community can set limits in advance on the level of participation they allow them.

Cultural beliefs and practices may also create very differing perceptions of "*the best interests of the child as a primary concern*" (Article 3, (1) UNCRC, 1989 – and Article 4, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999) as this is a contested arena, related to social norms and cultural beliefs and practices. In this regard, it is important to examine issues of inclusion, equity and equality and the anti-bias curriculum (Derman-Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010) in relation to 'the right to participate' and the right not to be discriminated against (Article 2 UNCRC, 1989; General Comment No. 7 2005: 5; Talbot & Thornton, 2009: 15).

2.3.5 Conclusion

Children's participation requires 'space' and 'voice', as well as 'time'. This implies that adults should afford children opportunities to realize the following rights:

"the right to express a view" - Article 12, UNCRC;

"right to have views given due weight" - Article 12, UNCRC;

"non-discrimination" - Article 2 UNCRC; Article 13, UNCRC;

“right to information” - Article 13, UNCRC;

“right to guidance from adults” - Article 5, UNCRC (Lundy, 2007: 932).

All these rights should be critically examined in relation to Article 3 (1), UNCRC, 1989 and Article 4, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999 (*“the best interests of the child as a primary concern”*) and the evolving capacity of the child (UN General Comment No 7, 2005: 42; Lundy, 2007: 932).

The deficit view of the child is therefore challenged by the concept of the ‘image’ of the child (Rinaldi, 2005: 91-105; Blaise & Nuttall, 2011: 119); the “becoming” of the child as the actualization of the potential within the child (de Witt, 2009: 43); the child as “agent of their own life” (Lansdown, 2004: 6-7), and the idea that the child is called on to “be more” than that purely determined by biology or by their historical and social context (de Veiga Coutinho, *in Freire, 1972: 9*).

The ‘cardinal principle’ of Paulo Freire’s philosophy - as expressed in the preface to “Cultural Action for Freedom” (de Veiga Coutinho, *in Freire, 1972: 9*) is that: *“man’s vocation [is] to be more – more, that is, than what he is at any given time or place... the characteristic of the human species is its repeatedly demonstrated capacity for transcending what is merely given, what is purely demonstrated”* (de Veiga Coutinho *in Freire, 1972: 9*).

In this light, children can be conceived of as ‘agents of their own life’ (Lansdown, 2004: 6-7) and ‘the right to participate’ as being fundamental to their holistic well-being.

2.4 Socio-constructivist theory and children’s rights approaches globally:

2.4.1 Historical background

From the time of Moravian humanist, Jan Amos Komensky (1592-1670), or Comenius as he is also known, early childhood education has been concerned with nurturing the *“natural mental and emotional needs of the child as active*

communicator and seeker after knowledge” (Trevarthen, 1992: 101). Comenius was particularly concerned that the child should learn at the mother’s breast and in the mother tongue, rather than through the formal ‘academic’ education in Latin to impart church teachings that was common practice at that time (Trevarthen, 1992: 101).

In the modern era, socio-constructivist theory is influencing not only the curriculum and pedagogy in early childhood education, but research in the field, in order to respect children as actors and knowers (Smith, 2011: 12). From a socio-constructivist perspective, children are seen as ‘creating’ as well as ‘receiving’ knowledge (MacNaughton, 2003: 45). This has implications for research as well as for pedagogy -whether we are doing it ‘with’, ‘on’, or ‘for’ children (Smith, 2011: 12) - and how we come to understand and respect their perspective or viewpoint. Trevarthen (1992: 102) highlights the importance of *intersubjectivity* in the manner whereby human social and cultural knowledge is created, used and transmitted from one generation to another.

Since the UNCRC has focused on situating children’s rights in the global spotlight, the ‘Rights of the Child’ is currently clearly articulated in various ‘Curriculum Frameworks’ and pedagogical approaches; this has facilitated a new understanding of the concept of childhood. Children, as social actors or “protagonists”, and ‘children’s participation’, are regarded as key concepts in the global discourse on early childhood education. A new paradigm shift in early childhood education policy frameworks can be observed (Edwards, 2005).

2.4.2 Children’s Rights and Early Childhood Approaches to Children’s Participation in Global Practice

The following are some examples of strong children’s rights frameworks in which both the identity of the child and the adult have been redefined in order to develop an understanding of more equitable and collaborative relationships, a deeper understanding of the nature of the teaching and learning relationship, and, as the examples from Reggio Emilia and the Mosaic Approach of England show, participatory research methodologies with children as co-researchers.

2.4.2.1 Italy: The Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia Approach emphasizes learning through relationships between parents, teachers and children, a 'triad', as expressed by Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the approach, in his article: "*For an Education Based on Relationships*" (Malaguzzi, 1993: 9-13). He argues that a theory of education based on relationships contains "*interactive-constructivist views of learning, intensive relations among all participants, the spirit of cooperation, emphasis on research as individuals and groups, attention to context, consolidation of affections, two-way processes of communication, and finally, acquisition of knowledge about politics (policies and choices) that affect young children*" (Malaguzzi, 1993: 10). The teacher is regarded as "*a co-creator, rather than merely a transmitter of knowledge and culture*" (Rinaldi, 2005: 125). Carla Rinaldi describes the role of the teacher in this regard: "*The highest value and deepest significance lie in **this search for sense and meaning** that are **shared** by adults and children though always in full awareness of different identities and different roles*" (Rinaldi, 2005: 56, my emphasis). She added that, "*The potential of the child is stunted when the endpoint of their learning is formulated in advance*" (Rinaldi, 1993: 104). Through creative meaning-making and documentation of the learning involved, they engage in co-construction of knowledge – *progettazione*, or the emergent curriculum (Malaguzzi, 1993: 12; Dahlberg, 2012: 225-231).

According to Rinaldi, in 'making learning visible', documentation offers "*moments of democracy*" and is a matter of "*values and ethics*" (cited by Dahlberg, 2012: 230). Documentation is collaborative in nature and involves communication, reflection and action.

One of the major influences on the Reggio Emilia Approach was Dewey's progressive education principles (Gandini, 2012: 38). Dewey saw education and democracy as implying each other and the importance of collaborative, group learning with the teacher as 'guide and facilitator', a means of actualizing democratic principles (Bullard & Hitz, 1997: 19).

Malaguzzi states that the first relationship of the school is with families – then the relationship expands towards the city so that children can also express their

'citizenship' of the community in their relationship with places and people through the creation of 'caring and learning spaces' in the city (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, eds, "The Hundred Languages of Children", 2012: 31).

The social meaning of childhood and the learning and teaching relationship itself is construed as related to the 'image of the child' held by the parents, the school and the wider community. Malaguzzi describes the child as *"rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent, and, most of all, connected to adults and other children"* (Malaguzzi, 1993: 10). Malaguzzi sees the primary driver of learning and development as children's interaction with the environment (referred to in the Reggio Emilia Approach as the 'Third Teacher') and with other people. This, he maintains, can produce cognitive dissonance or conflict of opinion that can lead to new opportunities to construct knowledge and build cooperative activity: *"Relationships are the fundamental organizing strategy of our educational system... a coming together of elements interacting dynamically toward a common purpose... We seek to support social exchanges that better ensure the flow of expectations, activities, cooperation, conflicts and choices, and we favour discussion of problems that integrate the cognitive, affective and expressive domains"* (Malaguzzi, 1993:10).

The significance of the child's active participation in learning through social exchange and dialogue with others, as outlined by Malaguzzi, challenges us to support interactive, experiential learning practice or *"interactive-constructivist views of learning"* as Malaguzzi expressed it (1993:10).

Rinaldi (2006: 101) observes that, *"a new concept of research, more contemporary and alive, can emerge if we legitimate the use of this term to describe the cognitive tension that is created whenever authentic learning takes place"*. In the Reggio Emilia approach, practice actually drives theory, as Lillian Katz (1993: 9) observed in her editor's note, written as a preface to Malaguzzi's article.

According to Rinaldi, the actualization of values in education - how they are *"transmitted, discussed and constructed"* - is important in this process, through placing a value on the perspective of both the children and the adults, valuing

individual difference, participation and democratic processes, and ascribing a high level of importance to the role of play, fun, emotions and feelings (Rinaldi, 2001: 39-43).

The Reggio Emilia Approach now informs global practice. For example, the '*Reggio Emilia-orientated curriculum*' as adopted by some schools in Hong Kong, is seen as being "*Teacher-framed and child-orientated*" as it focuses on "*children's active, constructive and creative learning processes*" (constructivism), but also the responsibility of teachers to provide support to 'scaffold' learning and extend the child's potential and capabilities (Kam & Ebbeck, 2010: 163).

2.4.2.2 England: The Mosaic Approach

The Mosaic Approach was developed by Alison Clark in England as a set of participatory action research methods, inspired by the Reggio Emilia 'documentation of learning' approach. Its origins lie in participatory action research methods used in rural areas with adults (PRA) and socio-cultural perspectives on knowledge creation. Participatory action research links previously isolated practices of "research, education and action" and has the potential to challenge disempowering structures, relationships and practices (Maguire, 1996: 31- 33). In the Mosaic approach these participatory action research methods were used as 'tools' to gather documentation and reflect on the life-conditions of children with children, with a view to transformative action through "*person centred methodology*" in the research process (Clark, 2011 (a): 329). This occurs through "*listening and responding*" (Clark, 2007: 76), using a process of "*internal listening*" to one's own thoughts and feelings (Clark, 2005: 36, cited by Clark 2011: 327), "*multiple listening*" (listening to the other participants' perspectives) and "*visible listening*" through discussion of the different perspectives and interpretations revealed through documentation of the research process. This approach uses multiple means (children's drawings and creative art, photos, map-making, and so on – creating a 'mosaic' to provide '100 ways of listening'). The three stages of the research process follow a participatory 'action/reflection' cycle:

Stage 1: Children gather information and together, adults and children begin to assess it.

Stage 2: Children and adults discuss and interpret the meaning of the gathered information, a process that began in the first stage. This involves the children, the researcher, the practitioner and where possible, families.

Stage 3: Adults and children begin to ask the question, “What is going to change or remain the same as a result of this process?” (Clark, 2007: 77).

The children are involved in the process of research and knowledge creation and are seen as “*active participants, skillful communicators, experts in their own lives, meaning-makers, researchers and explorers*” (Clark 2007: 76) as well as “*rights holders*” (Clark & Moss, 2005: 5, cited by Clark, 2011 (a): 328).

2.4.2.3 New Zealand and Australia Curriculum Frameworks:

The Australian framework *Being, Belonging and Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF, 2009) strongly asserts the importance of the child’s sense of identity and well-being, connectedness to others, ability to contribute to their world, communicate and be involved in their own learning, and to be confident and involved and effective as communicators (Blaise & Nuttall 2011: 104). The Australian EYFS is based on the UNCRC; children are seen as active users of these rights, with valuable knowledge to contribute (Taylor, 2012: 9).

New Zealand’s bi-cultural and bi-lingual early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, also follows a socio-cultural framework which emphasizes these foundational values: Empowerment *Whakamana*, Holistic development – *Kotahitanga*, Family and community – *Whānau tangata*, Relationships – *Ngā hononga* (Ministry of Education 1996: 14, cited by Mitchell, 2011: 222). ‘Learning outcomes’ are seen through concepts such as ‘*working theories*’, ‘*learning dispositions*’ and “*funds of knowledge*” that are culturally shaped within social contexts, and which inform theory and practice (Claxton & Carr, 2004: 88). The idea of ‘learning dispositions’ can be examined in relation to Vygotsky’s idea of motives as a ‘sphere of consciousness’, as Vygotsky expressed it (1987: 282, cited by Rogoff (1990: 9). Such a concept can involve ‘means and modes’ and ‘motives and goals’ – “*Humans*

do not simply find external conditions to which they must adapt their activity. Rather, these social conditions bear with them the motives and goals of their activity, its means and modes... the object-orientation of desires and emotions” (Leontiev, 1972: 47–48, 49-50, cited by Hedegaard, 2008: 307).

The dimensions of pedagogy have been interpreted as interconnected or interwoven in New Zealand’s Te Whāriki curriculum framework - it uses the metaphor of a ‘mat’ - in relation to the education of the ‘whole child’. This framework, which is both bicultural and bilingual, aims to open up possibilities for children and their families to participate with a sense of belonging and the affirmation of their identity and cultural values.

Through the learning cycle for teachers built into the New Zealand curriculum guidelines, the *Te Whāriki* framework, is used for reflective, critical practice by early childhood teachers (see *Self Review Guidelines, section 2* New Zealand Ministry of Education ECE Educate: accessed 6/7/2012)

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Earl>.

Helen Hedges and Joy Cullen (2011: 2) from New Zealand discuss what they term ‘**participatory learning theories**’ as informing early childhood practice in New Zealand and Australia, which they construe as developed from socio-constructivist theoretical perspectives.

2.4.2.4 The Norwegian Framework plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens

According to Dahlberg, Moss & Pence (2007: 49), the rethinking of ‘childhood’ and the ‘image of the child’, is a process that has been occurring in Europe since the 1980s under the influence of socio-constructivist and post-modern perspectives. This has been referred to as ‘a new paradigm of the sociology of childhood’ (Prout & James, 1990, cited by Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 49) within the sociology of childhood, childhood and cultural psychology (the comparative movement) and post-modern philosophy. The research findings have challenged developmental psychology (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 49). Scandinavian countries are said

to have taken the lead due to their concern for social justice and the rights of individuals. Children have been “*extracted*” from being the sole responsibility of their families - with the state only as a ‘back-up’ (Mayall, 1996: 56, cited by Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 49).

This development has led to a change in government policies, with the state and parents **sharing responsibility**—and with children having a **direct relationship** to the state, its policies and goals. Children’s lives are viewed as a separate component of society, and childhood is seen as a social institution that is important in its own right. Therefore the effect on childhood of large-scale socio-economic factors becomes part of government planning and implementation (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 49). As a result, these countries have established a vast network of public-funded early childhood services and institutions.

One appropriate example is Norway, which uses the UNCRC as its legislative framework. This framework applies to all kindergartens, both public and private (Bae 2010: 208). The stated objective is close collaboration with the children’s family home, safeguards for care and play and an emphasis on the **formation** of the children as well as their education. This requires an emphasis on social, religious and spiritual heritage and traditions that are ‘rooted in human rights’ and democratic practice (2006: 7, Section 1: Purpose). The framework goes on to emphasize that:

The children shall be able to develop their creative zest, sense of wonder and need to investigate. They shall learn to take care of themselves, each other and nature. The children shall develop basic knowledge and skills. They shall have the **right to participate** in accordance with their age and abilities (*author’s emphasis*) (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006: 7).

The Kindergartens shall meet the children with trust and respect, and acknowledge the intrinsic value of childhood. They shall contribute to well-being and joy in play and learning, and shall be a challenging and safe place for community life and friendship. The Kindergarten shall promote democracy and equality and counteract all forms of discrimination (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006: 7).

According to Bae (2010: 205), the Norwegian parliament revised the Kindergarten Act in 2006 and included a special section on children's participation, with reference to Article 12 of the UNCRC on "the child's right to participate" by stating that:

"They shall have the right to participate in accordance with their age and abilities".
(Kindergarten Act, section 1, Purpose)

"Children in kindergartens shall have the right to express their views on the day-to-day activities of the kindergarten.

Children shall regularly be given the opportunity to take active part in planning and assessing the activities of the kindergarten.

The children's views shall be given due weight according to their age and maturity".
(Kindergarten Act, Section 3, Children's right to participation, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2006: 15).

Kindergartens are regarded by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research as 'cultural arenas' as well as places which welcome diversity and where a child culture can be encouraged to reflect local and national cultural values while being relevant to the lives of the children and open to global influences. The aim is to promote creativity and play while they develop their cultural identity and learn to communicate across cultures as Norway's population is diverse. Diversity is seen as a resource and a means of strengthening individual and group identity, while developing respect for others' culture (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006: 31-32). The Norwegian framework also speaks specifically to the kindergarten's mission of safeguarding children's need for care and play and promoting learning and **formation** or '**danning**'.

Footnote: "The Norwegian term **Danning** is difficult to translate, as there is no English term that covers this educational concept. **Bildung** is also used internationally. The word formation is used in the English translation of the Norwegian Education Act, and will therefore also be used in this translation of the Kindergarten Act". (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2006: 5)

It is therefore '**danning**' (the social formation or the 'becoming' of the child) that is seen as the basis for development, not vice-versa.

Childhood is viewed as a social construction, with children and adults engaging in “*an actively negotiated set of social relations*”. This can be influenced by factors such as time, place, socio-economic conditions, class, and gender; therefore, there are “*many childhoods, many children*” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007: 48). In this respect, indigenous culture (the language and culture of the Sámi children) is respected and promoted from local municipal level to national level (Kindergarten Act, Section 8, Responsibility of the municipality, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2006: 22). In examining their role within the school, staff is expected to use the opportunity to “*reflect on their own attitudes and values*” (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006: 22).

One would need to critically examine how this policy transcribes into practice within different contexts in Norway. Berit Bae (2010: 205-218) does so in her study on how professionals in Norway understood children’s participation in everyday practice, after the new Kindergarten Act was passed.

2.4.2.5. Portugal

The Childhood Association of Portugal uses a “*pedagogical perspective*” called “Pedagogy-in-Participation” and a ‘praxeological’ approach to research. They regard democratic practice as being at the heart of their approach, providing a ‘*passport to equality*’ and a way of upholding the right of adults and children to participate through the process of education. Pedagogy-in-Participation is described as a “*holistic pedagogical approach for daily life and education for diversity*”, and this “*is experienced in context, through daily experiences with pedagogical spaces and materials, pedagogical times (daily routines), in adult-child interactions, in activities and projects, in observation and planning, in documentation and family involvement*” (Oliveira-Formosinho & Barros Araújo, 2011: 227).

Adult-child interactions are perceived as being of central importance in the creation of empathy and respect for psychological, social and cultural differences. The method of Pedagogy-in-Participation uses Paulo Freire’s method of ‘conscientization’ to undertake what they call “*context based teacher training*”; and to challenge the lack of respect for human rights, societal stereotypes,

preconceptions, bias and inequalities within society; and to build appreciation for diversity and social complexity.

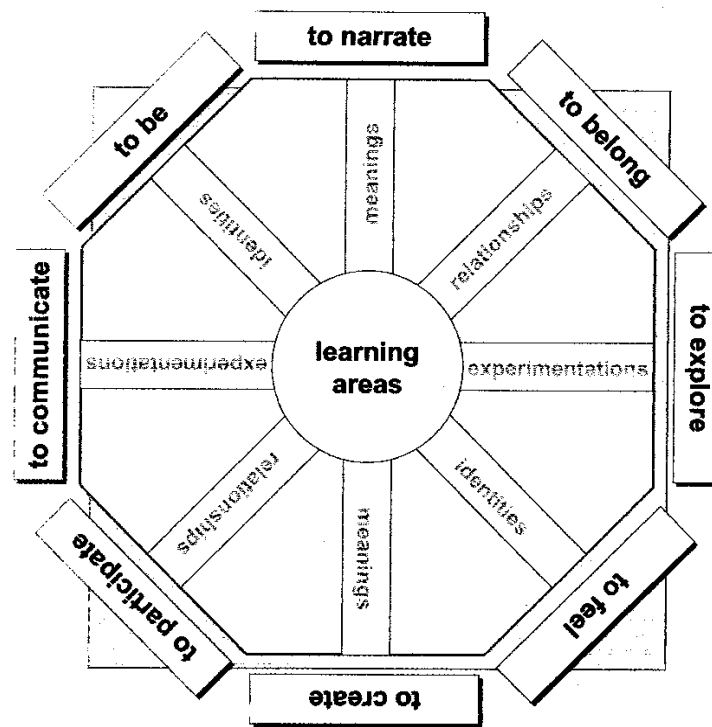
In this way they examine the beliefs and practices within the school that are identified as producing inequality and conformity, emphasizing the teacher's strength in critically reflecting and constructing change and innovation in their pedagogical approach – a process of '*deconstruction*' and then '*reconstruction*' of new pedagogical understanding and action – as a process of transformative change. This is accomplished through '*joint construction*' of their 'vision and mission' of a pedagogy that "*listens and answers to all*" – a pedagogy they say is both responsive and innovative.

This method is regarded as empowering, an experiment in democracy that is collaborative and respects the contribution of every participant. It is claimed that this promotes intercultural dialogue through the use of "*learning journeys*" and "*intentional learning experiences*" that are seen as contributing to "*plural identities and multiple relations*". This becomes a means of upholding a respect for human rights within the pedagogical relationship (Oliveira-Formosinho & Sara Barros Araújo, 2011: 233-234). They define four central axes for '*educational intentionality*' (Apezzato Pinazza, 2012: 584):

- "*first pedagogical axis – to be and to feel – towards a pedagogy of well-being*";
- "*second pedagogical axis – to belong and to participate – towards a pedagogy of connectedness*";
- "*third pedagogical axis – to explore and to communicate – towards a pedagogy of experiential learning*";
- "*fourth pedagogical axis – to narrate and to create – towards a pedagogy of meaning*".

As Figure 1 shows, the learning areas are integrated into, and interrelated between, a system of "*meaning*", "*relationships*", "*identity*" and "*experimentations*" (see below).

Figure 1: Pedagogical axes and learning areas



Pedagogical axes and learning areas.

(Oliveira-Formosinho, 2009: 237).

The Movimento da Escola Moderna (MEM) of Portugal – the Modern School Movement– challenges what they see as “*the individualistic view of development*” in Piaget’s theory. Instead, they follow what they designate a ‘socio-centric approach’ and see the child as the starting point for learning to occur within a “*cultural and social/emotional continuum of experience*”. The citizenship of the child is perceived as “*a fundamental area of education*” (Folque, 1998: 138). The movement has been strongly influenced by Vygotsky as well as “the French Dewey”, Celestin Freinet, who emphasized values such as “democracy, freedom of expression, communication and meaningful work”. They follow experiential learning approaches, where children can learn through ‘trial-and-error’ methods and develop metacognitive awareness in the process (Folque, 1998: 139). Freinet’s idea of co-operative education also exerted a strong influence on Loris Malaguzzi in the initial years of his work in early childhood education in Reggio Emilia, Italy (Gandini, 2012: 37). As with the Reggio Emilia Approach, they have “*an expanded meaning*”

of the school that provides links with challenges grounded in the problems of the community” (Folque, 1998: 132).

MEM proposes three goals of education:

- **Initiation into democratic life** through the group, as the ideal place for social, moral and intellectual development and the place where they see learning as occurring.
- **Re-institution of values and social meaning** – with cooperation seen as the most advanced stage of moral development. Diversity is regarded as a means of enriching the classroom.
- **The co-operative reconstruction of culture** – with education seen as a cultural inheritance. Time is prioritized for the children to play and explore ideas, materials and documents, and to ‘wonder’ (Folque. 1998: 132).

Educationalists within MEM believe that the co-construction of knowledge occurs within the teaching and learning relationship. They assert that, there is “*an epistemological analogy between teaching–learning and knowledge development*” (Folque, 1998: 132). Bodrova (1997: 16) also describes Vygotsky’s theory in terms of ‘co-constructionism’. The MEM regards knowledge as being created through what they call a scientific method, using observations, hypothesis, experimenting, organizing, writing and exchanging knowledge – which, they maintain, should take place as early as possible in the young child’s life. ‘Tools’ of communication, including literacy as a cultural tool and the tools of modern technology, previously a printing press, have a prominent place in their approach to education (Folque, 1998: 133).

2.4.2.6. The ‘Anti-Bias Curriculum’

Outlining their “vision of anti-bias education”, Derman-Sparks & Olsen Edwards, (2010: 2), refer to the UNCRC (1989). This is a vision of a world where children are able to actualize their full potential, a world in which:

- “*All children and families have a sense of belonging and experience affirmation of their identities and cultural ways of being*”

- *“All children have access to and participate in the education they need to become successful, contributing members of society”*
- *“The educational process engages all members of the program or school in joyful learning”*
- *“The children know how to respectfully and easily live, learn, and work together in diverse and inclusive environments”*
- *“All families have the resources they need to fully nurture their children”*
- *“All children and their families live in safe, peaceful, healthy, comfortable housing and neighbourhoods.”*

An ‘anti-bias curriculum’ insists that a positive sense of self-identity and group identity are important factors in promoting positive self-esteem, empathy and a sense of belonging, especially when the child moves between cultures (and is bi-cultural or multicultural), between languages (and is bi-lingual or multilingual) and between diverse ways of thinking (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 151).

It also aims to achieve:

- *Development of a knowledgeable, confident self-identity*
- *Empathic interaction with people and appreciation of diversity*
- *Critical thinking and problem-posing about issues of bias*
- *Ability to stand up for herself or himself, and for others, in the face of unfairness and injustice* (Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force, 1989; Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989, cited by Smith, 2009: 114).

Anti-discrimination and respect for human dignity are integral to the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights and are therefore of critical importance in our divided and fractured society, marked by inequality, bias, prejudice and stigma.

‘Persona Dolls’ can be used effectively to implement the ‘anti-bias curriculum’. The persona doll has a name (the “right to a name”, UNCRC, 1989) and a personal identity, a life-situation and a particular social context which help the children to identify and empathize with the doll. Children (and adults) can develop a relationship with the doll and identify with the doll’s joys and sorrows, successes and failures, struggles and difficulties as it ‘chats’ to them. In the process of interacting with the persona doll, listening to the persona doll’s story and dialoguing

with it and with one another, they can be empowered to cope with the issues that they regularly confront in their own daily life (Brown, 2001, cited by Smith, 2009: 4).

The doll creates a safe 'space' for children to talk about their own situations and problems and share their feelings, opinions and ideas with one another and empowers children to act and change situations for the better. Goal Three and Four of the Anti-bias curriculum describes it in this way:

Goal Three: *"Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts";*

Goal Four: *"Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions"*

(Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1989, cited by Smith, 2009: 114).

Smith (2009: 5) refers to the Persona Doll as an educational 'tool' and asserts that carrying the actual Persona Doll into the classroom, *"ensures that anti-bias issues are carried into the classroom (like a piece of chalk)"*. From her experience and through her masters research in the Western Cape in South Africa (unpublished thesis), she found that teachers trained in the Persona Doll Approach (PDA) are *"more likely to apply their training than those trained in a more general anti-bias approach"* and that the approach provides support for the transformation of attitudes and therefore a change in situations (Smith, 2009: 5). One of the important areas identified for future research in Smith's master's dissertation was this question:

"What is children's participation across the assumed barriers of skin, colour, gender, disability, social class, language and culture?" (Smith, 2009: 135). The Persona Doll approach seems to be able to address all of these issues as it actively encourages dialogue with the children around these matters, in a way they can identify with, if it is relevant or meaningful to their lives.

2.5 Summary and conclusions

The affective relationship teachers enjoy with the children in their care may increase their sense of responsibility and concern, but this may not be enough. Of profound influence on the teaching and learning situation for the young second language learner are our expectations concerning our role as a teacher (our 'image' of the teacher) and how we perceive our responsibility towards the child (our 'image' of the child); as well as our cultural and linguistic sensitivity and responsiveness to the child and the relative importance we assign to the mother tongue in relation to the additional language.

Our image of the child as well as our own image of our identity as a 'teacher' relates to the kind of pedagogy we think is acceptable and what we want children to learn or how we want them to conform. Culturally, children and teachers are assigned a 'place' within society that they are expected to conform to. It should be borne in mind that institutional and personal 'memories' of past educational practices can be carried forward into current practice and that these can be rigid and non-transformative. We operate within the paradigms of our 'community of practice' and this influences what we think is educationally sound or what is developmentally appropriate ("*Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts*", DAP, NAEYC Position Statement, Principle No. 8; Copple & Bredekamp (eds), 2009: 13).

Socio-cultural theory forms the basis for various early childhood educational frameworks (outlined in this chapter), which facilitate the formulation of pedagogical methods and are helping to address cultural and linguistic diversity. Socio-constructivist theory and critical constructivist theory can inform the '*how*' of teaching and learning, rather than standardized curriculums that transmit the '*what*'. Critical constructivism aims at relating theory to practice in order to challenge and transform practice through '*praxis*', as reflective thinking linked to action and knowledge generation linked to activity. In our post-modern context, critical constructivism challenges how we 'reconceptualise' early childhood education (MacNaughton & Dockett, 1999, cited by Edwards, 2005: 2). Critical constructivism

can be used to search for ethics, values, meaning and purpose within our increasingly complex and diverse multilingual and multicultural social contexts.

The teaching and learning relationship reflects the dynamics of social and cultural values and how identity is formed and expressed. “Through others, we become ourselves” (Vygotsky, 1931/1977:105, cited by Schrimsher & Tudge, 2003: 295). This resonates with the African philosophical value of ‘uBuntu’ (showing humanity) expressed as “umuntu, ngumuntu, ngabantu” or (translated) “a person is a person because of other people”. In Africa this can be seen as an expression of the value of humaneness and solidarity. Loris Malaguzzi (1992: 9-13) has discussed how critical the quality of human relationships is to the educative experience.

The child’s emotional and social well-being, their sense of competence and self-esteem, and their growth in knowledge and understanding, all appear to originate through the child’s sense of belonging - attachment theory (Richter, 2004: 15). Participation can develop the conative dimension as well as the cognitive dimension through dialogic ways of thinking and reflection, a process of *intersubjectivity* (Trevarthen, 1992: 131; Trevarthen, 2011: 187).

If we use participation and “the right to participate” (UNCRC 1989), as a critical “lens” to examine practice, creative possibilities can be explored to capacitate (empower) teachers, parents and children while supporting additive bilingual language learning. We can affirm our early childhood education traditions, based on learning through play and our “*uniquely pre-school activities*” that enhance imagination and creativity (Bodrova, 2008: 358). This process can involve creative co-construction of meaning as well as the affirmation of culture and identity.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW: VYGOTSKY'S THEORY, LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

“Consciousness is reflected in a word as the sun in a drop of water. A word relates to consciousness as a living cell relates to a whole organism, as an atom relates to the universe. A word is a microcosm of human consciousness”

(Lev Vygotsky, 1934/2000: 256).

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter provides an overview of a wide variety of perspectives on language acquisition and the relationship between thought and language. The implications of Vygotsky's theory for the development of language in the young child are investigated. A critical analysis of Piaget and Vygotsky's theories is undertaken and the rationale for using a socio-constructivist theoretical framework and critical constructivism to investigate the research question is clarified. The central role of language and communication in early childhood is described and the semiotics of language, as 'meaning-making' is seen as integral to the teaching and learning process. The South African educational context is examined and research on the importance of sustaining the mother tongue while the second language is learned (additive bilingualism) is outlined. The importance of a critical analysis of the area of concern: English second language learning and 'the right to participation' of the young child, is explored.

3.2 SOCIO-CONSTRUCTIVISM

This research study adopts a socio-constructivist perspective on the formation of language in the young child. This perspective conceives of language as expressing concepts or ideas that are culturally formed. The social constructivist theory of

learning does not just provide an analysis of mental or cognitive processes, or language and communication in isolation, but considers the influence of the child's social environment and cultural context. Social constructivism is influenced by Vygotsky's theory on the 'ontogenetic' development of thought and language and his "*belief in social discourse as a method of learning*" (Gordon & Brown, 2008: 421). Ontogenesis is a way of explaining how knowledge is passed down from generation to generation. Because knowledge is seen as culturally mediated, cultural values can influence how language is acquired and used within different cultures.

When a young child is still developing their language abilities, the process of understanding as communication of meaning is mediated through another person, with language used as the means of understanding, as a cultural 'tool' (Vygotsky, 1962: 104). From birth, the brain is "*programmed from heredity*" to be "*poised*" to learn language; however, a social relationship with a significant 'other' in which the child can be immersed in language, is essential. "*The mother talks (or should talk) to the child before he (or she) can understand. From morning to night language passes over him (her) like a fresh bubbling spring. Before he (or she) speaks, a good mother is on the lookout for understanding*"; in doing so, she uses refrains and repeats words and phrases, creating associations and patterns in the brain to make the interaction meaningful for the baby (Brierley, 1994: 47 - 52). This is a dynamic two-way process which occurs within the context of how the mother and child relate and interact, which in turn is formed by the social and cultural context that surrounds them.

Fundamental to language acquisition and the understanding of the other (intersubjective understanding) is the establishment of a loving, trusting relationship. Language is developed through the motivation to understand and be understood. Hurlock (1978: 171) identifies the degree of motivation on the part of the child and the level of responsiveness from the caregiver or parent as the most critical factors: "*the stronger the child's desire to communicate with others, the stronger the child's motivation to learn to talk, the more willing the child will be to spend the time and effort needed for this learning. The more children are*

stimulated to talk, by being talked to and by being encouraged to respond, the earlier they will learn to talk and the better the quality of their speech”.

Social and emotional attachment (attachment theory, as developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth) is seen as not only ensuring that the child is protected and has a better chance of survival, but the ‘social brain’ or social cognition is developed as ‘meaning’ is created within the mind of the child (Richter, 2004: 8 -9). This ‘shared meaning’ seems to be created through mutual, focused attention within a communicative relationship (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden & Bell, 2002:10). This seems to depend on what is interpreted as important or significant to the other within a particular context. The child interprets non-verbal cues (such as direction of the eyes or expression on the face) and the social situation itself, in order to understand thoughts and intentions. This emotional connection with another appears to facilitate the development of language and thought.

Learning may not depend so much on *speaking* to a child, as on relevant and interesting and meaningful learning opportunities, mediated by language. These can be observed within interactions that ‘scaffold’ understanding and extend learning opportunities into the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Mac Naughton, 2003: 43; Rowlands, 2003: 160).

Various researchers have referred to these learning opportunities in the following ways:

- “*serve and return*” interactions (“Experiences build brain architecture” Harvard university. www.developingchild.harvard.edu).
- “*sustained shared thinking*” (Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2002: 10).
- “*intent participation learning*” (Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez, & Angelillo 2003: 176 cited in Hedges & Cullen, 2011: 11 and Trevarthen, 2011: 176).
- “*collaborative creation of meaning*” (Trevarthen, 2001; Frank & Trevarthen, 2010, cited by Trevarthen, 2011: 176) through “*innate intersubjectivity*” (Trevarthen, 2011: 179).

- “*intent community participation*” through the child’s own observation and participation in community activities (Rogoff, 2003).
- “*attentive and focused presence of mind*”, where the adult is attentive to where the child is focusing his or her attention and the teacher provides “*relational space*” (Bae, 2012: 8).
- It is the “*relational space*” within a “*construction of interactions*” (Rindaldi, 2006: 70).
- It occurs when the adult keeps him or herself “*tuned in*” to the child’s thinking and serves as a “*stimulus to thinking*” (Almy & Genishi, 1979: 51).
- According to Rommetveit, it has a “*circular nature*”, referred to by Rommetveit as “*attunement to the attunement of the other*” which is the ability to take the perspective of the other, revealed in care-giver-infant interactions from birth (Neisser, 1985: 42-43; Trevarthen & Hubley, 1978; Trevarthen & Logotheti, 1987; Trevarthen, 1992: 99-137; cited by Rommetveit, 1992: 21).

This circular process seems to unfold hidden potential within situations as it is undetermined. Graumann (1988:4, cited by Rommetveit, 1992: 2) remarks in relation to this open-ended construction of shared realities, that they are not “*static structures but our directed openness beyond the immediately given to potential experience*”. It seems that language and creative, imaginative expression are linked, because as language ‘*mediates*’ or forms a link between actions, the words used can become an important part of ‘*doing*’, as a source of understanding, knowledge building and meaning-making, within that context.

‘*Receptive*’ language ability is generally accepted to be far more advanced than ‘*expressive*’ ability. As the child shows attentiveness to the adult as a ‘teacher’, or to peers, they become partners in co-communication of meanings, intentions and construction of imaginative possibilities - leading to the discovery of new ideas. These ideas can be non-verbal, partly verbal and verbalized, and as they are expressed and exchanged, they are ‘interpreted’ (Richter, 2004: 27). The ‘*dialogical*’ nature of Vygotsky’s theory has been brought to the fore by Ragnar Rommetveit (1992), although Vygotsky also spoke of the ‘*dialectical microgenesis*’ of thought and language. Rommetveit maintains that human communication

develops cognition and both develop from a “*dyadic state of shared social reality*” (Rommetveit, 1992: 23). In this way, infants and young children are both cognitively and linguistically stimulated and this develops a sense of socio-semantics. Rommetveit (2004: 22) states that “*the human infant is dyadically embedded and dialogically operative. Hence the human mind is dialogically constituted*”.

Language involves dialogue and communication, communication of intent, meaning and purpose in reciprocal exchanges with others who are ‘tuned in’ to the cues provided by both the physical and social context as well as verbal and non-verbal input (Levey & Polirstok, 2011: 4). As ‘agents of their own development,’ while engaging in this reciprocal ‘give-and-take’, infants can take the initiative to seek adult attention or avoid unwanted attempts by others to communicate (Richter, 2004: 27), in this way retaining a sense of personal control and autonomy.

3.3 A critical analysis of the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky:

3.3.1 Historical overview of nature/nurture theories:

Sigmund Freud and other behaviourist theorists held a perspective of the child as passive and dependent on the environment for stimulation. They perceived the child’s development as occurring when their basic needs (sexual drive, drive for destructiveness and survival instincts) were met and reinforced or reduced. In this way, each stage involved conflict with the parents, which resulted in certain types of behaviour and personality development, manifested through the id, ego or superego (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 133). According to Linda Richter (2004: 12), this was a “*reductionist and deterministic*” view of the child; however it did facilitate new understanding of the importance of the long-term consequences to the child of the type of relationship they had with an adult. It also resulted in increased awareness of “*bidirectional effects*” within child/adult interactions (Richter, 2004: 12). These could involve reciprocal, shared interactions with each participant able to be observant, attentive and responsive to the other’s intentions and meanings or ‘*attunement to the other*’ as expressed by Rommetveit (1992: 21).

According to Richter (2004: 12), there is now a far more complex understanding of the different dimensions and aspects of child development and learning. This has grown from various theorists, including psychoanalytic theory, such as that developed by Donald Winnicott, who described the early relationship of the mother and child in terms of the 'gaze' of the mother and highlighted the psychological 'containment' provided by the mother to the child (Richter, 2004: 12). This includes the theory developed by Vygotsky and his followers, known as socio-cultural theory, developmental psycholinguistics and developmental psychology.

3.3.2 A critical analysis of Piaget and Vygotsky's theories

As a developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget investigated how a child interacts with the environment in order to interpret reality, acquire thought processes ('*schema*'), and develop knowledge, including logico-mathematical reasoning (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 458). He studied the cognitive development within the child from birth to adulthood and how it changes throughout the process of ontogenetic growth and development (Gordon & Browne, 2009: 144). Piaget postulated that the role of the adult was to adapt the process of inquiry according to the responses of the child in order to assess the child's level of development in an objective (scientific) way (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 142-143).

A process of '*assimilation, accommodation and equilibration*', occurring in the child's mind, as well as social experience, built '*schema*' to make sense of the world (de Witt, 2009: 14). Piaget maintained that children learn best by constructing their own knowledge, through exploration and discovery (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 142). This theory was influenced by the scientific, positivist tradition of the time; therefore, Piaget interpreted what he saw as objective, universal 'truths' or norms about child development emerging in 'stages' as children grew (Richter, 2004: 12), although his research was based on his own children's development. Certain of Piaget's beliefs were challenged by Vygotsky.

Vygotsky (1962: 11-12) was emphatic that, "*Directed thought is social*". It is this opposite view of Piaget's theory that gave rise to socio-cultural theory (and in the post-modern sense, this de-constructs 'truth', creating a paradigm shift). He

asserted that "*Piaget's view may hold true for the particular group of children he studied, but it is not of universal significance*" (Vygotsky, 1962: 23).

Vygotsky (1960, 151-152) insisted that the development of the child is subject to social and cultural influences as well as "*the active adaptation of the child to the external world*". For example, he criticized the unidirectional progression of Piaget's 'ages and stages'. While he agreed that development is progressive, he also affirmed that it could regress. He saw the connections between the developmental stages of a child as being in '*dialectic*' relationship to each other and in a changing state of flux. Therefore, he asserted that this implies progress and regression as they are "*copied, destroyed and transformed into a higher stage*". He stated that one can see "*that each successive stage in the child's development implies a change or negation of the preceding stage*". Vygotsky detected no smooth, linear progression, but rather complexity in the way a child operates in developing mastery and control over his or her behaviour and actions (Vygotsky, 1960 in Wertsch, 1979/81: 173-174). In particular, language, as a 'sign system' affects the child's understanding of concepts, memory and problem-solving abilities in a way which fundamentally changes 'the natural course of development' (Vygotsky, 1960 in Wertsch, 1979/81:175). This could promote "*the mastering of behaviour*" by the child (Vygotsky, 1960 in Wertsch, 1979/81: 176).

According to Vygotsky (1960: 92), Piaget spoke about '*spontaneous concepts*' as the non-conscious processes of the child in interaction with concrete objects (the child's mental strategies). This could reflect the developmental 'stage' that the child had reached according to the level of maturation and innate capabilities - a way of forming conceptual understanding (schema) independently through his/her own mental efforts (Vygotsky, 1960: 84). Vygotsky maintained that it was important for the child to think about the thinking (metacognitive learning) and for the adult to mediate learning to facilitate the child's mental growth. He envisaged the development of scientific concepts as progressing *downward* to the concrete level (through mediation), while the spontaneous concepts were seen as proceeding *upward* in reverse direction to each other, with both processes interconnected (Vygotsky, 1960: 108), while Piaget distinguished between 'spontaneous' and 'non-spontaneous' concepts or those influenced by adults (Vygotsky, 1960: 84).

Vygotsky (1960: 97) identified a relationship between instruction and development and an “*optimum time*” for the learning process, not just because of biological maturation but also because of social and cultural factors in the child’s life - particularly patterns of adult-child interaction, and the child’s dependence on the adult’s co-operation in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1960: 104-105).

Vygotsky examined Piaget’s theory of ‘*egocentric speech*’ (which was seen as reflecting the child’s inability to take the perspective of the other and engage in reciprocal communication) and argued that it is not related to the egocentricity of the child but is rather ‘*private speech*’, transforming later to ‘*inner speech*’ (also termed ‘*endophasy*’ by Vygotsky). ‘Private speech’ was seen as a way of thinking by using words silently within the mind. ‘Egocentric speech’ was therefore seen by Vygotsky as providing the ‘*key*’ to the study of inner speech (Vygotsky, 1960: 130-132). Vygotsky postulated that external operations (private speech as externalized thought) result in internal representations –such as the example he gives of a child moving from counting on the fingers to counting mentally – are externally mediated processes leading to internally mediated processes and higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1960: 183-186; Vygotsky 1956: 199). Piaget saw egocentric speech as fading away and losing importance as the child matured. However, silent speech can become private speech once again if a person (child or adult) needs to use it to guide themselves through a task they find difficult (Woolfolk, 2007: 43; Gordon & Browne, 2008: 150).

Vygotsky’s theory highlights the importance of the adult’s sensitivity to the developing capacities of the child so that the adult can mediate the child’s learning into a form that is meaningful to the child and which can extend the child’s capabilities into the ZPD (Richter, 2004: 13). It is in this conception that Vygotsky differs from Piaget: Piaget insisted that the stages of development within a child were dependent on maturation, whereas Vygotsky maintained that interaction with ‘more knowledgeable others’ developed thought and language itself (Vygotsky, 1962: 104; Winsler, 2003: 257-258). He understood language as mediating learning from the inter-subjective (interpersonal level, from ‘more knowledgeable other’) to the intra-subjective level, with the internalization of understanding and the development of thought processes that take one into the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1962:

104). Assessment of the child becomes ‘*dynamic assessment*’, with instruction seen as leading development – independent problem solving activities alone could not be viewed as reflective of a person’s ability. Vygotsky (1956: 448) is cited by Wertch & Rogoff 1984: 3) as criticizing the belief that “*instruction must be orientated towards stages already completed*”. It was important to “*take stock of the processes coming into a state of being*” (Vygotsky, 1956: 447-448, cited by Yildirim, 2008: 301-308). Such a standpoint can be seen as an opposite explanation of learning to that of Piaget. Piaget studied what the child was capable of doing independently (Edwards, 2005: 4). Vygotsky held a different perspective reflected in his use of the Russian word “*obuchenie*”, which has no equivalent in English, but can be translated as the ‘teaching and learning process’. From the Russian perspective, this means that learning cannot be separated from teaching. Vygotsky is cited by Wertch & Rogoff (1984: 3) as asserting that “***Obuchenie*** (the teaching and learning process) is good only when it proceeds ahead of development. It then awakens and rouses into life those functions which are in a stage of maturing, which lie in the zone of proximal development”.

Woodhead (2005: 94, cited by Smith, 2011: 16) observes that, “*respecting children’s competence isn’t about measuring the progress of their development, like you might measure the height of a growing tree in order to decide when it should be felled. The more useful question is ‘How do children’s competencies develop through appropriate levels of participation?’*”(author’s emphasis) To adapt Vygotsky’s theories or try to assimilate them into Piaget’s theory has been likened to “*putting our present ideas into new wine bottles wrongly labeled Vygotskian*” (Rowlands, 2003: 166). However, it is said that post-Piagetian psycho-constructivists and post-Vygotskian social constructivists are becoming more aware of how their research on learning and development has perhaps produced “*complementary explanations*” of thinking processes (Fleer, Anning & Cullen, 2004: 176 - 177) as both Vygotsky and Piaget’s theories attempted to explain the processes by which young children develop knowledge and skills by constructing their understanding – they are both constructivist theories.

The apparently clear distinction between the social and cognitive processes has been found to be not as clear as previously thought, through recent research into the development of the human brain.

Current brain research shows that the biological and social are complementary and we cannot understand cognition without observing interaction, as the brain develops within relationships (Richter, 2004: 19; Cranley Gallagher, 2005; Shonkoff, 2009, Centre of the Developing Child, Harvard University). This shows that experience, both positive and negative, shapes the way synaptic connections are formed in the brain. In the early years, it is important for these connections to be reinforced by repeated experiences because those that are used are retained and those that are not, are pruned, as a normal part of development (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 17). The child goes through 'sensitive periods' where their brain is particularly responsive to particular experiences, essential to the development of certain competencies (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000: 195). *“Early intervention may be important, not because doors remain permanently closed without it, but because with it, doors swing open that might otherwise have been inaccessible at that moment in the child’s development”* (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000:145).

Language and communication facilitate the development of what is known as 'self-regulation' (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000: 93-123). Vygotsky examined the development of what he called 'higher mental functions' (as internalized social relationships) as he studied the origins of the child's cultural development – how they develop self-regulation by internalizing socially accepted norms of behaviour (Vygotsky, 1960: 182-223 in Wertsch, 1979/81: 157) Language and social communication seem to have a profound effect on how young children learn the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within their culture and are also the means whereby their behaviour is interpreted and feedback given. They also impact how they can express their emotions to others in relation to social expectations, and are understood (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000: 93-123).

Both Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories have been critically analyzed by Colwyn Trevarthen who maintains that neither described or explained the importance of the affective dimension in the interpersonal relationship, from which motives and

intentions arise, and within which language and thought originate and are developed (Trevarthen, 1992: 102). He argues that it is essential to move from a scientific, rationalist tradition that venerated “*natural logic*” and left out “*connotation*” and “*emotion*” (Trevarthen, 1992: 100-101). Trevarthen emphasizes that language is a socially learned process, involving emotion and connotation, as it is a semiotic tool for meaning making.

Rogoff (1994: 209-229) studied the relationship between culture and learning in diverse early childhood contexts, including the cooperative preschool her own children attended in the United States. She took socio-constructivism further in challenging our assumptions and beliefs about what children can, and cannot, do at different ages and stages of their development.

Vygotsky (1950, cited by Lindqvist, 2003: 249) described imagination as the basis for all creative action, as it is both emotional and intellectual, not just in art but in science and technology. In this way he viewed imagination as essential to the process of consciousness – and to the very existence of human society. Lindqvist critiques Vygotsky’s book, “*The Psychology of Art*” (1971), which highlighted the central importance of emotion for human survival, as it links consciousness with meaning and so enables the human imagination to envision future possibilities: “*without new art there can be no new man*” and “*Art is the organization of our future behaviour*” (Lindqvist 2003: 248). According to Lindqvist (2003: 248) Vygotsky (1971) regarded consciousness as dynamic, like a work of art, formed through its social “*dialogicality*”, the role of dialogue in forming language and thought. Accordingly, imagination was described by Vygotsky as a form of consciousness and he saw no opposition between imagination and reality. “*He saw play as imagination in action: a creative process that develops in play because a real situation takes a new and unfamiliar meaning*” (Lindqvist 2003: 249).

Vygotsky (1962: 129) saw word meanings as having an inner ‘dynamic’ rather than a ‘static’ nature, changing according to function and use, both over time as the child develops and according to their purpose and function (to solve problems and establish connections and relationships between things). He saw this as a continual movement between thought and word, word and thought – each changing

the nature of the other. He envisaged meaning-making (or the semantics of language) as starting from the *whole* to the particular (sentence to word) *in reverse* to the mastery of spoken (phonetic) or external language. Furthermore, he regarded spoken language as moving from the particular word to the whole sentence. It was this backwards and forwards interdependence of word and thought that he considered as forming the child's own inner psychological processes and as going through many changes, not just in finding expression through speech but in the emergence of "*signification independent of naming and meaning independent of reference*" (Vygotsky, 1962: 130). In this way, Vygotsky saw intrasubjective understanding emerging independently of the specific word or the objective context in which intersubjective understanding was originally formed.

Vygotsky construed language not just as a cultural 'tool' but as a means by which children could *change themselves* – and drive their learning and development as 'agents of their own life'. He maintained that language is "*a means of psychological action on behaviour, one's own or another's, a means of internal activity directed at mastering man himself*" (Vygotsky, 1977a: 62, cited by Jones, 2008: 82). In light of this perspective, one can regard the development of language in the child as part of the process towards the '*mastery of one's own behaviour*' and therefore as aiding in the development of self-regulation, autonomy of will and sense of purpose and meaning. It is also an expression of one's personality and identity in that it reflects the '*cultural devices of behaviour*' (Vygotsky, 1997a: 91, cited in Jones 2008: 82). Language is not just developed from activities, but can also create activities or be used to create objects while creating new perspectives and understandings at the same time.

3.3.2 Conclusion

Both of these theories still seem to challenge current thinking and research on early childhood education and they represent different paradigms. Developmental theory as interpreted from a Western, individualist construct has tended to dominate discourse (Edwards, 2005: 2). Socio-cultural theory however, interprets social and cultural interactions (arising from the needs and aspirations of the community in which the child lives) as responsible for development itself (Rogoff, 2003). Lev Vygotsky believed that, "*thinking depends on speech, on the means of thinking, and*

on the child's socio-cultural experience" (Vygotsky, 1987:120, quoted in Woolfolk, 2007: 42).

Arendt (2008: 128) points out that a '*balance*' is needed between the influence of the political, social, cultural and historical influences on the individual and the individual's own '*opportunity for development*' through exploration, self-awareness and expression of will and purpose. Children are active seekers of information (see 2.4.3 "The young child as 'agent' of their own life").

Language as freedom of expression, seems to be essential to the envisioning of something 'different' from the given and for creating new possibilities and choices (Jones, 2008: 82). In our social relationships with others, if there is a problem in being understood or in understanding, the use of force or violence to change the situation and assert one's will, can be a strong temptation, if not a last resort.

3.4 Learning a second or additional language

3.4.1 Introduction

Issues around mother tongue, bilingualism and multilingualism are of particular concern in South Africa's multicultural and multilingual society, especially when these reflect social, cultural and linguistic barriers to communication and – even more - where competency in English is one of the factors that can open doors to economic, political and social success ("The language context in South Africa"). This research study is concerned with particular factors which may work against mother tongue competence while the young child is learning a second language. A strong mother tongue foundation has been found to be important in facilitating the process of learning a second language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1987: 26–51; Gordon & Browne, 2008: 490).

3.4.2 Disputed opinions

There is no consensus on the age children should be taught a second language. Some scholars refer to the near native-like pronunciation of the second-language if

the child learns a second-language under the age of five years, while others maintain that it is better to develop competency in the first language before being exposed to the second language (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 612). While the young child may achieve native-like proficiency, there is no evidence that younger children are more successful with vocabulary and syntax (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 489).

Children can learn a second language simultaneously (simultaneous bilingualism) under the age of two, from the languages used at home. This would develop bilingualism unconsciously and naturally. Wolff (1999: 12) states that: *“The results of pedolinguistic and psychological studies over the last 80 years strongly suggest that multilingual exposure should ideally take place from the earliest years of a child’s development.”*

Successive bilingualism, occurring after the age of two, has its own ‘stages of development’ (Gordon and Browne, 2008: 489-490). Brantley (2007: 46) outlines the following stages, citing Hurley & Tinajero (2001); Krashen & Terrell (1983); and Terrell (1977):

1. Pre-production (the ‘silent period’),
2. Early production (single words and early word combinations),
3. Speech emergence (simple sentences with grammatical errors),
4. Intermediate fluency – described as social fluency (which could be regarded as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, or BICS),
5. Advanced fluency – which can lead to cognitive/academic language proficiency (or CALP).

According to Tinajero & Hurley (2001: 3) this may involve “spurts and lags” (cited by Brantley, 2007: 46).

- The **silent period** is where children’s receptive abilities are developed and when they may know a few words, but many do not speak during this period;
- **Single words** and early word combinations follow the silent period, when children may use one word to indicate their wishes and leave out other words, such as auxiliary pronouns, adverbs and verbs and when grammar may reflect the first language;

- **Simple sentences** then emerge, which may still reflect grammatical errors or may be 'formulaic';
- **Social fluency** or basic interpersonal communication skills (**BICS**) then develop, however there may still be large gaps in their understanding and expressive abilities;
- This is followed by **Cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP)** in which analytical and critical thinking skills and abilities are developed and through which hypotheses are constructed, and creative problem solving can occur (Klein & Chen, 2001: 148-150, citing Tabors, 1997).

Steven Krashen (1980, 1981) developed a theory of language acquisition. He interpreted language as being acquired rather than being formally 'taught' (Anderson, Moffatt, McTavish & Shapiro, 2013: 119). Contrary to this position, a number of researchers have found that the role of the teacher or parent is critical to the language development of the young child (Anderson, Moffatt, McTavish & Shapiro, 2013: 119; Vygotsky, 1962: 100). Dodson's (1985: 325-346) analysis of the development of bilingualism in early childhood education proposes the following steps to be taken in early childhood settings in order for the teacher to consciously support the second language while the first is sustained, with the aim of striving towards a more 'balanced bilingualism':

- Initially, the teacher would use the '*preferred language*' (of the children) and linguistic 'short cuts' (formulaic phrases) which would include words to meet immediate needs satisfaction (high-frequency words) in the '*target language*' (the language they are weaker in);
- This could include 'paralinguistic and non-verbal communicative behaviour' or cues related in a meaningful way to context, intention, and behaviour which should be consciously incorporated by the teacher in order to meet the needs of all the children at their differing levels of cognitive and verbal development;
- In the early stages, concepts should be introduced in the first language and reinforced in the second language to strengthen both conceptual and linguistic development – promoting the positive aspects of language switching;

- Initially, simple (high frequency) language constructions in the second language should be introduced, followed by more complex language constructions, the degree of difficulty being adjusted by the teacher;
- The *manipulation of language* (learning new vocabulary and the ability to use the old and the new vocabulary together in sentence construction) was seen as the most important **language skill** to be learned. This should not be confused with communicative skills in simple sentences, which can be learned in a formulaic fashion (NOTE: This seems to affirm the value of 'code-switching' by the young second-language learner).

Learning a language seems to depend on the amount of time spent on that language and the proficiency of the adult in mediating learning through the first or additional language. In this way, the first language can be used as a resource in order to mediate learning in the second language (Vygotsky, 1962: 100). Dodson (1985: 325-346) also believed that, from the age of three, the average child could use the first language to support the learning of a second language, and an adult could assist the child to compare and contrast the two languages, using explicit instruction. This means that the adult should be sufficiently fluent in both languages, so that one does not gain predominance over the other.

Vygotsky (1962: 100) described what he saw as an 'analogy' between the development of the mother tongue and the learning of a second language and the interaction of spontaneous and scientific concepts. He saw languages as influencing each other in reverse direction, higher level to lower level, and lower level to higher level. He developed the hypothesis that each language influences the other and can benefit from the other's strong points. This hypothesis seems to depend on the role of the adult (as the more fluent person) in supporting the sustaining and nurturing of each language, without one taking over the role and function of the other.

Research has also been undertaken into English second-language learning in the early years and the role of 'private speech' and self-regulation, in an additive bilingual environment. It was found that private speech appeared to develop

normally, increasing with the difficulty of the task and gradually decreasing into subvocalizations (whispers and mutters). The experience of learning a second language was said to have a 'positive effect'. No evidence was found of 'code-switching' while the children engaged in problem-solving activities, although it was said to happen during social activities. The children were supported by adults who used the second-language as well as the first to give instructions (Diaz, Padilla & Weathersby, 1991: 6, 377-393).

In countries such as Britain and the USA, where the majority of the population speak English as a first language and a minority as a second or additional language, some believe that the transition to English should be at as young an age as possible (the *immersion* or *submersion* approach) because valuable time is seen as 'lost'. The aim is to assimilate minority language speakers into the dominant culture and language (Heugh, 1995: 45). It is claimed that one of the key factors in developing a second language is to start early (Gunnin, 2005: 534; Potter, 2007: 171-172 cited by Lenyai, 2011: 79). However, studies have found that this may lead to '*subtractive bilingualism*' where the learner becomes *semi-lingual* (Cummins, 1979: 230), that is, neither cognitively nor academically capable in either language. Heugh quotes Cummins as observing:

“Educators who see their role as adding a second language and cultural affiliation to student’s repertoire are likely to empower students more than those who see their role as replacing or subtracting students’ primary language and culture in the process of assimilating them into the dominant culture” (Cummins, 1988: 139, cited by Heugh, 1995: 48).

The young second-language learner can appear to learn the second language rapidly – a 'surface' appearance, at the 'lower level' in Vygotsky's analogy (Vygotsky, 1962: 100) –but this may be without the necessary meaning and understanding unless supported by the first language (at the 'higher level'). The result may be a lack of ability to use the second language for abstract conceptual understanding, symbolism and problem-solving. Conversational English may be learned – “BICS” or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills ('playground English') – but Cognitive Academic Proficiency – “CALP” (problem solving skills in

the second language) will lag behind (Cummins, 1979, cited by Young, 1995: 67; Cummins, 1991, cited by Gonzalez, Yawkey & Minaya-Rowe, 2006: 203 and Levey, & Polirstok, 2011: 248).

Because of the problem of 'subtractive bilingualism', some scholars are of the opinion that it is best for the young child to learn only one language, namely their mother tongue. However, research has shown that *"young children have the brain capacity and the neural flexibility for learning two or more languages without becoming confused, they are not slower in developing speech"* (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 490). Nonetheless, learning English by immersion, that is, not offering any support for the mother tongue or first language (L1) is problematic and can lead to what is called subtractive bilingualism (Levey & Polirstok, 2011: 249). Immersion can result in an abrupt mismatch between the child's natural cognitive abilities and the ability to express ideas and engage in problem-solving in the second language. If a child cannot understand and express ideas freely in the first language (L1), and is not supported by that language while learning the second (additive bilingualism), his/her cognitive development and academic progress could be stunted (Heugh, 1995: 46). According to Heugh (2008: 356), early transition to the second language (L2), as the language of learning and teaching, is not advantageous in the long term. She notes that the academic results of L2 learners in Grades 1 – 3 may show positive results initially, but these start to decline from Grades 4 – 9 because of the inadequate foundation in literacy and numeracy due to limited conceptual understanding in the L2 (cognitive proficiency).

A study by Skutnabb-Kangas (1987: 26–51) found that Finnish children who emigrated to Sweden and had nine years of Finnish instruction with good Swedish language instruction (additive bilingualism) had an advantage, regardless of their socio-economic status. They achieved better results than their middle-class Swedish counterparts and their Finnish was almost on par with their counterparts living in Finland (Magga, Nicolaisen, Trask, Skutnabb-Kangas & Dunbar, 2004: 4).

It takes time to develop BICS (2-4 years) but even longer to achieve CALP. According to Heugh (1995: 47), there are various estimates for the amount of time it may take to achieve CALP. Cummins (1984: 133) observes that it may take 5 – 7

years for a child to achieve CALP, after entering a bilingual programme at the age of six or seven. This implies that many children may need continuous support into post-adolescence.

3.4.3 The advantage of additive bilingualism

It is important to sustain the mother tongue while English is learned as a second language (additive bilingualism) for various reasons, including the fact that it is supported in the language-in-education policy of the South African Education Department (1997). Other reasons include the following:

- According to Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukoumaa (1978: 9, UNESCO study), the child's ability in the mother tongue is strongly correlated with the development of their ability in the majority school language. A positive self-concept and self-identity and pride in one's group-identity are developed (Derman-Sparks & Olson Edwards, 2010: 4-5).
- Bilingualism has been found to facilitate the learning of a third language and multilingualism (Arsenian, 1945; Spoerl, 1946; Pearl & Lambert, 1962; Tabouret & Keller, 1963; Oksaar, 1971, 1978; Feldmann & Shen, 1971; Janco & Worall, 1972; Totone, 1979, cited by Wolff, 1999: 12).
- Other advantages of bilingualism or multilingualism include the development of '*metalinguistic skills*' – the ability to analyze and control language processing. "*Bilingual children tend to reflect on the structural properties of their mother tongue and the other language much earlier i.e. at the age of 4 – 5 years* (Wolff, 1999: 12). An object can be referred to by more than one word, which can lead to the ability to think more abstractly (de Klerk, 1995: 54).
- Greater metacognitive awareness through critical thinking and problem-solving can also be developed. Bilingual children have been found to be more creative in their thinking processes than monolingual children (de Klerk, 1995: 55).
- Controlling attention in two languages is said to boost executive control processes for young bilinguals (Bialystok, 2007: 210).
- Bilingual children are also bicultural and can achieve a "*sort of bicognitive development*" (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 151). This may help them to be

sensitive to communicative 'cues' and the different 'modes and means' of communication within different cultures (de Klerk, 1995: 56 and Klein & Chen, 2001: 13; 134-143). This could result in them adapting their knowledge and ability to the various social expectations they perceive within different social contexts, including verbal and non-verbal expression in one language or another.

- Spending instructional time in the mother tongue encourages the development of academic skills in the second language. A positive relationship has been found between mother tongue competence and reading readiness (Yazıcı, 1999, cited by Yazıcı, Genç İlter, & Glover, 2010: 261).
- Additive bilingualism overcomes the problem of sustaining cross-generational communication and the transmission of social norms and values, traditions and cultural beliefs and practices (Wong Fillmore, 1991). There may even be conflict between the home and school culture (Cummins, 2001: 3; Ileri, 2000: 30, cited by Yazıcı, Genç İlter, & Glover, 2010: 260).
- Sustaining the mother tongue avoids the danger of subtractive bilingualism where the child opts for the dominant language without having developed a strong foundation in the mother-tongue, resulting in a lack of academic competence in both languages; behavioural problems and cultural alienation (Toukoma, 2000: 214-217). Kathleen Heugh notes that a child "*can have his cognitive development abruptly disconnected when his primary language is taken out of the learning environment*" (Heugh, 1995: 178).
- Continuing to use the mother tongue at home can help to overcome the 'silent period' in second language acquisition, where a child may refuse to speak the home-language, even at home to family members (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 490). McLaughlin (1995: 2-3) sounds a warning that "*language will only be maintained if there is exposure to speakers of that language and opportunities to use it. Children should be encouraged to speak their home language and opportunities for use should be sufficient to maintain that language*". Language and communication barriers at home can isolate a child, cause emotional problems and be experienced as disempowering. The child's 'right to participation' can become a value to uphold in such a situation, where choices in language use are made.

- Using the language the child understands best, or both languages (code switching), can help children to engage in '*sustained, shared thinking*' (Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2002: 10) and co-construction of knowledge and meaning making (See 3.2 in the Literature Review). This occurs because the total language ability in both languages may be the same as that of a mono-lingual child, while learning the second language (McLaughlin, 1995: 2). The language of learning and teaching (Lolt) may be just the "tip of the ice-berg", that is visible at school.
- It will give the child advantages if it opens up career opportunities (Neville Alexander, 2008, verbal communication at the colloquium on mother tongue education, UKZN). The political, social and economic advantages to a nation state are also clear: according to Wolff, "there will be no successful and competitive national development of multilingual states in Africa without the recognition of the '**Three Big "M's**': "*multilingualism and multiculturalism, modernization of the mother tongues and mother tongue education*" (Wolff, 1999: 13).

In a child's early years of life, it is important that the development of the mother tongue is consciously encouraged: the mother tongue is fragile at this time as the child's abilities in the two languages are seldom balanced and the dominant language can begin to overtake the other. Receptive abilities in the mother tongue may be maintained, but as the child grows into adolescence, a 'linguistic chasm' with consequent social and emotional implications, may grow (Cummins, 2001: 19).

In learning a second language, it seems to be important that the child or the teacher listens attentively or observes intently and is able to show respect for others who may struggle to find the words to express concepts in either the mother tongue or English. Some concepts in English are not easily translatable or the literal translation can obscure the concept – the Zulu language has no word to express the concept of 'shape', for example and so a phrase is used – roughly translated as the kind, or nature of something in relation to something else or "how it sits", which means something different to the concept of 'shape' as the way an object or entity is formed in relation to the space that surrounds it. The Zulu language does not possess a word to express the concept of an 'angle' either, as traditionally the walls

of their homes were round. In Zulu we have “okubuso-buthathu” or “three faces” and in Xhosa, “unxantathu” or ‘three’ of (something indeterminate), to describe a ‘triangle’ (verbal communication from a Zulu/Xhosa speaker). Other examples are the colours ‘green’ and ‘blue’, which do not have different names in many African languages. The word “uhlaza” is used in Zulu for both colours. According to Kuhn (1996: 44-46), Wittgenstein, asked what it was that we need to know, in order to apply terms like ‘chair’, ‘leaf’, or ‘game’, so that these terms are generally understood, where there may be conflict of ideas, and possible argument. He questioned how we understand ‘family resemblance’ and common characteristics without ‘language games’, within problem solving activities, in order to develop our theory or hypothesis and our conceptual understanding (Kuhn, 1996: 44-46).

The National Centre for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning (1995) has formulated eight principles to guide educators in their work with linguistically diverse learners and to help them recognize and value “*the developmental nature of bilingualism*” (McLaughlin, 1995: 2). These principles can be used to critically reflect on our practice, to see how we affirm, support and extend the child’s language abilities and learning processes and uphold an additive approach to bilingualism:

- *Bilingualism is an asset and should be fostered.*
- *There is an ebb and flow to children’s bilingualism; it is rare for both languages to be fully balanced.*
- *There are different cultural patterns in language use.*
- *For some bilingual children, code-switching is a normal language phenomenon.*
- *Children come to learn second languages in many ways.*
- *Language is used to communicate meaning.*
- *Language flourishes best in a language-rich environment.*
- *Children should be encouraged to experiment with language.*

3.4.4 The language context in South Africa

South Africa has 11 official languages, although sign language is also mentioned in the South African Constitution and is permitted as a subject for examination purposes at school (South African Schools Act, 1996). Chapter 1 (6: 5) of the Constitution empowers the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) to “*promote, and create conditions for, the development and use of (i) all official languages (ii) the Khoi, Nama and San languages; and (iii) sign language*”). However, English seems to have become the *de-facto* ‘adopted’ language of the political and economic elite and is therefore assumed to be a means of gaining access to a better quality education as well as social status, power and privilege.

Learning in the medium of English has become an issue of equity and access in our present unequal education system, although the official language policy is one of ‘additive bilingualism’ with learners seen as benefiting most from dual medium or two-way immersion programmes (Republic of South Africa, 1997 *Language in education policy*). Education in the medium of an indigenous language is a contentious issue. Part of the colonial and apartheid legacy is a system which continues to disadvantage the poor, the majority of whom speak indigenous languages as their mother tongue.

The unequal distribution of resources has led to a ‘bimodal education system’ (Pretorius, E, 2008 cited by Lafon, M, 2009: 7). The majority of poor, black children attend dysfunctional, impoverished schools that suffer from high drop-out rates and high failure rates in the Senior Certificate Examinations for school leavers, caused by “*inadequate infrastructure*” and which historically catered for so-called ‘African’ learners exclusively. Under the old Department of Education and Training (DET) in the apartheid Era, English/Afrikaans (the 50:50 rule) as a medium of instruction was only introduced from Standard 5 (currently Grade 7), and later from Standard 7 (currently Grade 9) (Lafon, 2009: 5).

Until 2011, African indigenous languages were offered as the medium of instruction up to Grade 3. Thereafter, English or Afrikaans became the medium of instruction, with teachers supporting the learners to understand the content of the curriculum

through the use of urban vernacular and 'code-switching'. Since 2012, a first additional language is taught from Grade 1 to support the policy of additive bilingualism (S.A. Department of Basic Education, NCS, CAPS, English First Additional Language (EFAL) 2011: 8). Generally, there is a transition from Grade 4 onwards, to using English (as a second language) as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). In the 2011 CAPS document (Curriculum, Assessment and Policy Statement, South African Department of Basic Education), teachers are urged to accelerate learners' progress in the acquisition of English as a second language, although the acquisition of language follows its own pace and timing. According to Cummins, it requires 5-7 years to develop academic proficiency in the second language (CALP); therefore this transition is taking place at a time when the learner may not be able to cope cognitively with the demands of the educational situation in either language (Cummins, 1984: 133).

There are various reasons why, despite the Government's language in education policy (LoLT) and the reported increase in the use of mother tongue instruction in the Foundation Phase (LoLT Report, DoBE 2010: 18 "Annual School Survey") code-switching is used by teachers in the earlier grades and teachers cannot isolate English into a set lesson time, as required in the CAPS document. One reason has been identified as learners entering Grade 1 having already acquired the English vocabulary for mathematical concepts, or the days of the week, but who have not acquired this vocabulary in their mother tongue (Mashiya, 2011:25).

Another reason could be that before they enter formal schooling, South African children have already been exposed to a variety of different languages. They hear different languages in different contexts: in their home, through the languages their parents and older siblings speak, different languages on TV and those spoken in the community, in shops, streets, at church and so on (Msila, 2011:49). Cultural influences impact communicative skills and abilities, as learning a language is dependent on social context and the persons involved (Klein & Chen, 2001: 134-146). Children, as well as adults are already using different languages in different ways, 'code-switching', and children then bring these languages into the classroom spontaneously, 'code-switching' themselves, in imitation of adult practices. This practice has been questioned as it is claimed that it may not encourage proficiency

in either language while children are still in the process of developing their language skills and it is thus been termed 'regressive code switching' in an article by Xola Mati (quoting Gonzalez & Maez, 1980) on the Thutong website of the South African Department of Basic Education

(<http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/resourcedownload.aspx?id=19148> downloaded 20/08/2013).

McLaughlin (1995, Principle 4) refutes this as a 'myth' and maintains that studies have shown that code-switching as a normal phenomenon that is also used by skilled bilinguals as a *sophisticated rhetorical device* to convey meaning derived from shared values or a common perspective, or to reflect their identity within society; it is therefore preferred by bilinguals over other rhetorical devices. In using code-switching, children are imitating adult patterns of speech and are learning how to use it in appropriate contexts. Adults who code-switch may also, be using it to communicate effectively with children in the context of their community and culture (for example, for nuances of meaning and emphasis). McLaughlin emphasises that it is a mistake for such an adult to stick to an absolute rule, to only speak one language.

It is important to note that in South Africa, children entering formal education are tested on their competence in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in the National ANAs (Annual National Assessments). The ANAs (supposedly conducted in the child's home language) have tested children from Grades 1 – 6 since 2011 and have revealed their inadequate comprehension of test questions and a lack of ability to follow instructions as well as exposed the difficulties teachers have in adequately covering content areas. However, a 30% score in a literacy test may obscure the fact that this same child may eventually speak six languages fluently (Chisholm & Wildeman, 2013: 92-93).

According to Bialystok (2006/2008: 3), bilingualism can disadvantage children in that the amount of vocabulary they may have acquired in either of the two languages may be less, compared to that of a monolingual of the same age. Bilingual children have the task of remembering the words from two languages when they have learned these words in specific situations (school or home) or

cultural contexts from different people (teacher or parent), which may make it more difficult to recall the words later. However, the total amount of vocabulary and the range of vocabulary in both languages may be the same as that of a monolingual, when both languages are considered together. If a bilingual child cannot think of a word in one language but thinks of the word in the second language, this might serve as the word chosen as a matter of expediency – even if it belongs to the other language and not to the initial language in use. It may also be selected because of a particular cultural connotation. It also seems important that children possess an adequate vocabulary in the L2 even if it is not their mother tongue, so that their emerging literacy skills can develop in that language.

It is ironic that additive bilingualism means ‘more’ – an added richness and complexity of thought through added vocabulary as intellectual development involves two languages and two cultures, instead of one. ‘Elite’ bilingualism (as ‘additive bilingualism’) is said by linguistic researchers to develop within the higher socio-economic class, where there are books, intellectual stimulation and support for the second language as well as the mother tongue. ‘Common’ bilingualism (as ‘subtractive bilingualism’ or ‘semilingualism’) is said to develop in the lower socio-economic class where family members have little formal education and lack the time, energy and motivation to teach their mother tongue to their children, as it holds low social status (Toukoma, 2000: 215). Children become more schooled than their parents in English which can lead to intergenerational break-down of communication and disrespect for the ‘wisdom of the elders’ (Wong-Fillmore, 1991: 323-346).

One reason why formal education seems to have been dependent on the medium of English concerns the lack of access to books in the mother tongue at primary schools, particularly in poverty stricken areas. Studies have revealed the disastrous effect on Grade 7 literacy results, with some learners scoring higher in literacy in the *second* language than the home language (Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007:55). To exacerbate the situation, the Matric exams (the Senior Certificate Exams for school leavers) are only offered in English or Afrikaans as a first language despite the fact that 11 official languages are recognized as equal, including sign language (South African Constitution, 1996) and that School

Governing Bodies (SGBs) have the power to decide on their school's language policy in terms of the Language in Education Policy, the National Curriculum Statement (1996) and the South African Schools Act, Section 6(1), 1996 - the Norms and Standards regarding language policy 5(1).

Furthermore, bias or prejudice, known as 'linguicism' can manifest itself towards children who speak more than one language. They can be "looked down on" if their home language does not possess the requisite social status or political power, or if they speak the language of power with an accent, proving that it is not their mother tongue. *"Bilingualism has been seen as a personal and social problem in that many bilingual individuals tend to occupy rather low positions in society and knowledge of another language becomes associated with 'inferiority'. Bilingualism is seen as a personal and social problem, not something that has strong positive connotations"* (Wolff, 1999: 10). At the same time, those that speak English with near-native fluency but have lost conversation proficiency in what was supposedly their mother tongue, are derided or dismissed by their township peers as "coconuts" i.e. "black" on the outside, but "white" on the inside. They have lost their social and cultural connection with their family and their community (Lafon, 2009: 10, Toukomaa, 2000: 217). If the child refuses, or cannot speak the mother tongue, and the parents are not sufficiently fluent in the second language, this can create serious problems for the socialization of the child through a breakdown in communication across the generations, particularly between grandparents and their grandchildren (Wong-Fillmore, 1991: 343). Cummins (2011: 10) points out that when parents who are not sufficiently fluent in English attempt to communicate with their children, they provide a poor model of the English language and prevent their children from developing their full capabilities in the home language.

Bilingualism or multilingualism has social and political implications. Robb (1995: 19) quotes Nieto (1992: 162) as asserting that bilingual education will always be a political issue because it has the potential to empower traditionally disempowered groups. This occurs provided the important role of the mother tongue in the affective and cognitive domains is affirmed, so that high levels of conceptual and linguistic skills in *both* languages are developed.

Active collaboration with the parents to achieve this outcome becomes important when one considers the following statistics from the South African Government EMIS Department (2008) compared with the 2011 National Census, which illustrates the extent of the problem:

The **Eastern Cape** had 5.7% of learners who spoke English as a home language, yet 70% chose it as the medium of instruction.

In **Gauteng** 13.3% of learners spoke English as a home language, yet 87.25% chose it as the medium of instruction.

In **KwaZulu-Natal** 13.2% of learners spoke English as a home language, but 87% chose it as the medium of instruction.

In **Limpopo**, 1.5% of learners spoke English as a home language, yet 79.6% chose it as the medium of instruction.

In the **Western Cape**, 20.2% of learners spoke English as a home language, but 42% chose it as the medium of instruction.

The National Census (2011:24) found that the three most spoken indigenous languages were Zulu (22.7%), Xhosa (16%) and Afrikaans (13.5%). English was only spoken by 9.6 % of the population, although it has a dominant position economically and academically. Furthermore, 1 167 913 or 2.9% of the total population identified themselves as 'black African' residents of South Africa stated that English is their first language (National Census, 2011: 26).

3.5 Conclusion

Second language learners may experience communication barriers if their mother tongue as well as their individual and cultural identity is not nurtured, sustained and developed. However, meaning-making should not only rely on the limitations of language; it can and should incorporate different tools, methods or modes and means for the child to think and express their thoughts and feelings- all equally important to the young language learner, whose verbal ability may still be limited in whatever language they use. Different cultural means of expression should also be respected. 'Voice' and 'space' in relation to 'the right to participate' can be explored through multimodal means of expression. We can develop multiple ways of listening to children who may otherwise confront barriers in communicating their

thoughts, ideas, feelings and intentions – and in expressing their ‘agency’ or competence and capabilities. Supportive, informal pedagogical methods which respect this ‘agency’ of young children and how they act creatively, imaginatively and playfully within their cultural, social and physical environment to influence or change it, result in ‘meaning-making’ and ‘knowledge-building’ activities, or ‘100 ways of listening’ (Rinaldi, 2012: 233-246, “The Pedagogy of Listening”) and ways of researching with children, as seen in the Mosaic Approach (Clark, 2011: 327).

Language can be viewed as being inextricably entwined with identity and culture and the way the child actualizes his or her sense of ‘being’, ‘becoming’ and ‘belonging’ within a social context. The young child learns language as an active participant within that context.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

“Education should not be perceived as a straight, horizontal line. Rather we should think of it as a number of moments revolving in endless cycles, with not a single moment ever being the same twice. Hence the exhilarating adventure that education is”.

(Professor Es'kia Mphahlele (1992) quoted in The Daily News 5 July, 2012)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the empirical phase of the qualitative research design. It presents a time-frame for the research and the research plan, based on the purpose of the study and the research questions. In particular, taking ‘the right to participation’ of the young English second-language learner within a children’s rights approach a ‘lens’ for critical, reflective practice, has consequences for the methodology. These are explored in a literature review on ‘praxeology’ in order to develop awareness and understanding of this framework. This chapter also discusses the identification, collection and analysis of the data for the study and its use within the participatory action research process. The ethical guidelines and measures to ensure trustworthiness are also highlighted.

4.2 Research Design: Participatory Action Research

Introduction:

According to Henning, van Rensburg & Smit (2005: 1), the purpose of a research study has the most influence on the data collection method selected. Praxeological research reflects a way to realize ‘praxis’ and provides a different perspective on how participatory action research, the chosen methodology for this research, can be applied within the context of early childhood education, as a means of promoting ‘wise practice’. Wise practice is defined by Goodfellow, (2001: 5) as a way integrating knowledge with ‘*value judgments*’.

4.2.1 Overview of the conceptual paradigm – PRAXEOLOGY

According to Saugstad (2002: 380-381), the Aristotelian definition describes knowledge not just as episteme (factual knowledge or “*universal, certain, eternal, general, non-contextual and abstract knowledge*”), or *techne* (skills, or “*practical knowledge and rational ability*”), but knowledge developed through praxis, incorporating values and ethics – through *phronesis* as “*knowledge of political, social and ethical practice*” and “*an ability to act morally correctly on the basis of the correct deliberations*”. Kemmis, (2010: 418) describes the Greek philosophical concept of praxis as being “*under the disposition of phronesis*”, with praxis holding together “*logic (avoiding irrationality and falsehood), physics (avoiding harm, waste and excess) and ethics (avoiding injustice, exclusion and suffering*”. He adds that, “*saying, doing and relating – each inform the other*” and assist the development of ‘wise practice’.

Bent Flyvberg (2004: 402) succinctly describes *phronesis* as follows:

“*Phronesis: Ethics. Deliberation about values with reference to praxis. Pragmatic, variable, context dependent. Oriented toward action. Based on practical value, rationality*”. He adds that, “The original concept has no analogous contemporary term...*phronesis* is concerned with deliberation about (including questioning of) values and interests aimed at praxis”.

Values, in this sense, are an interpretation (subjective and intersubjective) in relation to a concrete situation, involving a dialectical process in order to discern how values are actualized through practice and are therefore not just a question of *techne* or instrumental action or *episteme* which Aristotle saw as the discovery of universally valid truths. As Elliot (1987: 161) emphasizes, “*ethical values are realized in, rather than a result of, praxis*” as both the situation and the method of translating a value into practice involves an “*interpretation of what that value means as well as what the situation means*”(author’s emphasis). Educational theory can also become “re-contextualized”, creating the opportunity for *praxis* (Elliot, 2009: 32). According to Rinaldi (2001: 39), the *interpretation* of our values (our discourse) is thus relative to the historical, political and cultural context and both emerge from culture (in terms of new beliefs and practices in relation to our desires

and aspirations) and is dependent on existing cultural norms and values. This poses the question: “What kind of society do we want and how do our actions realize the values of that society?” As Rinaldi (2001: 45) points out, the question can be asked: “*What kind of future can we construct together?*” based on values such as diversity, participation and democratic practice.

4.2.2 Historical overview of praxeology and action research:

Pascal & Bertram (2012: 482) trace the origins of the term ‘praxeology’ to Espinas (1890). However, Louis Bourdeau (1882) proposed the name “praxeologie” as a “science of functions” in his ‘theory of the sciences’. Espinas is seen as the ‘father’ of the term as he developed a different meaning of the word ‘praxeology’ (Alexandre, 2000: 7). Both von Mises (1949) and Espinas recognized that human behaviour cannot be predicted and identified the need to systematically examine a situation within a local context in order to find solutions, thus implying social transformation (Pascal & Bertram, 2012: 482).

Adelman (1993: 7) regards social psychologist, Kurt Lewin as the founder of Action Research. McTaggart (1997: 27) notes that Lewin described action research as a ‘spiral’ of four steps: planning, acting, observing and evaluation. According to Adelman (1993: 12), as a psychologist, Lewin was a ‘scientific pragmatist’. Stetsenko (2008, cited by Somekh & Zeichner, 2009: 7) states that Lewis was familiar with the work of Vygotsky in the Soviet Union before he left Germany in the 1930s as a refugee from the Nazis. It was Lewin who observed: “If you want to truly understand something, try to change it” (Snyder, 2009: 226).

Vygotsky quoted from Engels’ “Dialectics of Nature” in the foreword to his book, “*Mind and Society*” (1978, cited by Rowlands, 2008: 162). Engels observed that, “*It is precisely the alteration of nature by men, not nature as such, which is the most essential and immediate basis of human thought*”. In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, Vygotsky would also have been well aware of this statement by Karl Marx: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it” (Marx X1 Thesis on Feuerback, cited by Rowlands, 2003: 162).

Adelman cites Argyris *et al.* (1985) in asserting that action science goes back to the “traditions” of John Dewey and Kurt Lewin, and their emancipatory ideas concerning democratic practices in the workplace or at schools (Adelman, 1993: 15). As a pragmatist rather than a positivist, Dewey criticized the traditional separation of knowledge and action; starting from life situations, his method of enquiry was both a scientific method of enquiry and a method for social practice.

According to Saugstad (2002: 377), Aristotle’s description of ‘practical learning’ is reputed to have had a “*direct influence on Dewey*”, discernable in Dewey’s term, ‘*learning by doing*’ - a term which has been echoed in early childhood education down the years.

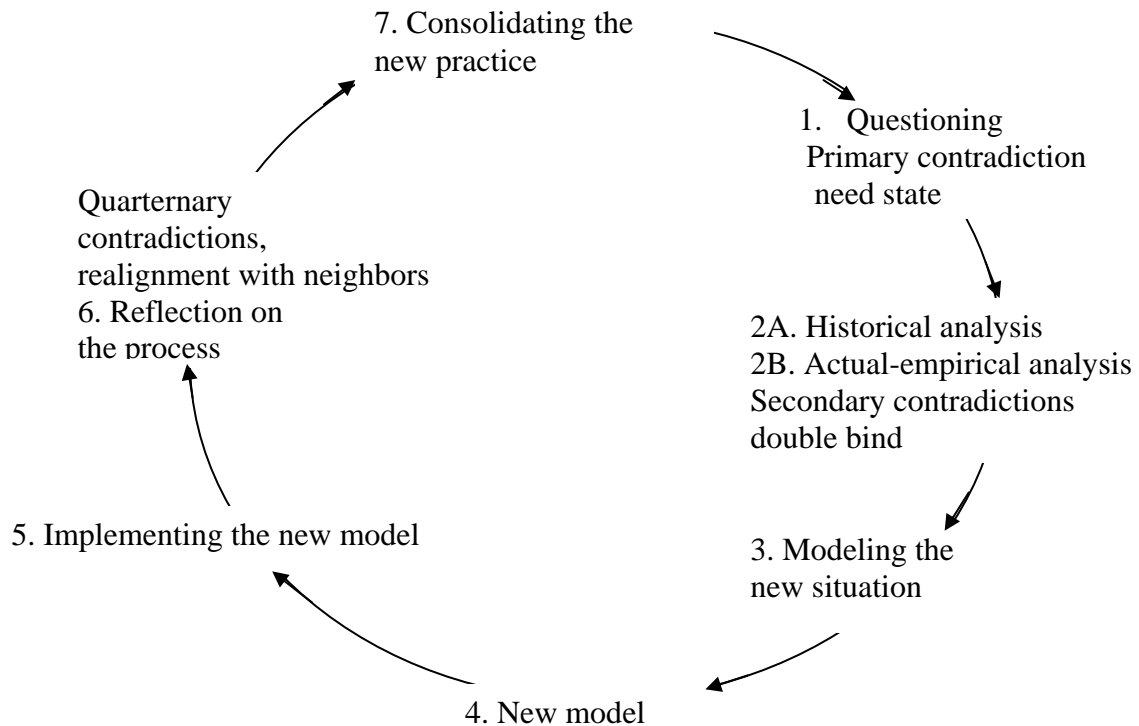
Argyris *et al.* (1985, cited by Adelman, 1993: 7) argue that the “heart of pragmatist epistemology” is the idea of scientific experimentation to test conceptions in action. In the field of early childhood, reflective practice and experiential education as action research and the development of laboratory schools, was strongly influenced by John Dewey (Gordon & Browne, 2008: 27). His book published in 1933, “*How We Think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*”, posited that interaction, reflection and experience are interrelated. He emphasized the implementation of democratic ideals in schools and pioneered experiential education through practical enquiry for teachers’ professional development (Schubert & Lopez-Schubert, 1997: 210-211). “*To see what is going on and to observe the results of what goes on so as to see their further consequences in the process of growth ... is the only way in which the value of what takes place can be judged*” (Dewey, 1929: 74-75, cited by Schubert & Lopez-Schubert, 1997: 213).

Dewey’s idea of the ‘reflective practitioner’ appears to have been taken up by Donald Schön. His book, “*Educating the Reflective Practitioner*” (1987) examined the role of reflection in action, and reflection on action. Alexandre (2000: 3) pays tribute to Schön as a praxeologist. Argyris, who was a former colleague of Schön, continued along the lines of Lewis, concentrating on organizational development and group practice (Adelman, 1993: 21).

In the field of education, Lewin exerted an influence on the development of emancipatory action research in the United Kingdom through Stenhouse, who joined the Humanities Curriculum Project in 1968. Elliot joined the project in 1971 and subsequently was joined by Adelman (Adelman, 1993: 17). Stephen Kemis, a colleague of Adelman extended educational action research to Australia, four years after Rae Munro (1974) had introduced it in New Zealand (Adelman, 1993: 17). There he was joined by McTaggart, Grundy and other participatory action researchers at Deakin University (Grundy, 1997: 140). According to Adelman, (1993: 17-20), action research was pioneered in Australia and globally by Carr & Kemis (1986).

Other strands have emerged in participatory action research. McNiff and Whitehead (2009: 313-323) developed the concept of self study for improvement of practice and 'living theories'. Wenger, (1998) a social learning theorist developed the concept of 'communities of practice'. The Danish academic, Flyvberg, (1998, 2004) introduced the concept of 'phronesis' to political science, social planning and project management; the Norwegian philosopher, Eikeland (2008) developed phronetical social science, and Reason and Bradbury (2008) promoted participatory and cooperative inquiry methods. Engeström's Activity Theory (AT), has its roots in cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) and socio-constructivism, as can be seen in his model of 'expansive learning' in the workplace (Engeström,2001: 152, Figure 11 - see below).

Figure 2 “Expansive learning in the workplace”



According to Wenger (1998/2009: 210-122), a community of practice is formed through participation in a learning process ('learning by doing') which involves interpreting and reaching agreement on 'what we know' ('learning as experience'), which leads to the sense of 'community with others' ('learning as belonging'). This involves shared definitions of the value of actions undertaken and the recognition of the competence involved. It can be seen as developing a sense of identity in the participants ('learning as becoming') and a personal history within the learning community that can be reflected on and reviewed with others.

These diverse strands all seem to be woven into the emerging idea of praxeological research in the field of early childhood. The neologism 'praxeology' expresses the concept of action research as a science which seems to involve different elements to be held in balance, including but not limited to: ethics and power; political and social analysis; reflective practice as the development of professionalism; the relationship between theory and practice (praxis) and action-for-change as a process of 'conscientization'; critical consciousness as awareness of one's own role and responsibility as an 'agent' for change; religious and social values; and moral and ethical principles. It seems that interpersonal and intrapersonal change can result from the development of critical consciousness through reflection on specific

contradictions or problems and deeper understanding of conflicting perspectives. This can result in social change and personal transformation as has been visible in both Freire's pedagogy and in feminist theory and practice (Weiler, 1991, cited by de Koning & Martin, 1996: 8).

The researcher therefore regards it as important to develop a critical consciousness in relation to a children's rights approach because this has the potential to give a 'voice' to the disempowered. An early childhood educator or parent, who sees their role as *adding* a second language, while supporting the development of the home language, is seen by the researcher as more likely to empower the child (see Chapter Three). The Childhood Association of Portugal uses Paulo Freire's method of 'conscientization' to undertake what they term "*context based teacher training*" and develop their methodology of 'pedagogy-in-participation' (Oliveira-Formosinho & Sara Barros Araújo, 2011: 233-234; See paragraph 2.5.2.5: 'Portugal').

Paolo Freire's critical pedagogy unites "knowing, learning and action" through an on-going cycle of action and reflection (de Koning & Martin, 1996: 6). The aim is to counteract the 'banking' concept of education where ideas are 'deposited' in another, or 'consumed' in discussion (Freire, 1972: 61). Freire (1972: 62) cites "*the naming of the world*" as an act of "*creation and re-creation... infused with love*" and "*because it is loving, it is dialogical*". The aim is to develop 'conscientization' (Freire, 1972: 51).

In practice, this implies the creation of critical consciousness through awareness of the broader social, political and economic causes of problems and empowerment to act for justice and human rights. Freire was probably influenced by the Catholic Action Movements and Joseph Cardijn's method of "SEE, JUDGE, ACT" as social enquiry for social action. Liberation Theology in South America was also influenced by the Catholic Action Movements and their theological approach (see comment from Phillipe Denis, below). The reality of a situation (antithesis) can contradict Christian ideals and values (thesis) and pose a challenge for praxis or 'synthesis' (Cardijn, 1935: "The Three Truths: antithesis, thesis and synthesis" <http://www.josephcardijn.com/the-three-truths>, downloaded 20/09/2012).

Phillipe Denis, a researcher of church history at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, states:

“The fact that Paulo Freire started his career in Pernambuco is, in my opinion, very significant. He was present in the early 1960s when the “fidei donum” priests developed Liberation Theology from their Catholic Action background. The word “oppressed” is typical of Liberation Theology. The link between the two movements is the “See – Judge – Act” methodology which, in the 1970s, was seen as a bit archaic in Europe but which, in the so-called Third World, fully resonated with the aspirations of the Christian activists” (personal communication, December 2012).

Freire (1972: 57) proposed ‘*problem posing education*’ as transformative practice, requiring theory to illuminate action (Freire, 1972: 96). This approach seems to involve experimentation with change processes and the relationship between reality as experienced, thought as reflection on that reality, and action for change, in order to develop critical analysis of the causes of problems and become aware of the dichotomy between what we see and experience and what we desire to happen but are not able to actualize at that time - “*critical reflection is also action*” (Freire, 1972: 99).

4.2.3 Praxeological research in early childhood:

Kemmis and Smith (2008a, 4, cited by Kemmis, 2010: 418) describe praxis as ‘action that is morally committed and oriented and informed by traditions in a field’. In seeking a pedagogical approach that is respectful of ‘*the right to voice and participation*’, Formosinho & Oliveira, Formosinho (2012: 600) ask whether there is anything “*that speaks more to social justice than the pedagogy of listening to very young children?*”

Different aspects should be taken into account, when analysing the concept of ‘**praxeology**’, as the study of human thought and action, and as participatory, democratic and collaborative practice. Its relevance to the field of early childhood education lies in the site of action which is the interface between the lives of the parents and children, the educational environment, the teaching commitment of the

practitioner researcher, the social and political context and educational policy (Pascal & Bertram, 2012: 484)

As participatory action research, praxeological research incorporates empowerment, personal formation and social transformation, through the action/reflection cycle of 'enquiry' and 'review'. Kemmis (2010: 418) cites John Dunne (1993: 130) who states that "*praxis* is always as much a process of self-formation as it is a matter of achieving an external goal or satisfaction". Pascal & Bertram, (2012: 481) argue that the focus on 'praxis' is about transformation, in a situated social and political context and concerns "*deeper concepts, reflexivity, processes, actions and interactions whilst being deeply cognisant of environments of power and values*".

A praxeological methodology seems to be congruent with the theoretical foundations of this research, which is socio-constructivist and uses a critical constructivist approach in holding up the 'lens' of children's rights to practice.

A praxeological methodology can be a powerful means to illuminate the connection between perceptions and values, knowledge and experience, reflection and practice, interactions and relationships (Pascale & Bertram, 2012: 480). It is relevant to the study of the young second language learner, as the research study aims to explain the social and cultural context within which meaning-making develops. It also provides a means of enquiring into the situation, critical reflection and transformative action. Language only emerges and exists within the context of human interaction.

The box below outlines some of the principles involved in praxeological research (Pascale & Bertram 2012: 486):

Principle 1: PR is ethical, moral and values driven/committed

Principle 2: PR is democratic, participatory, inclusionary, collaborative, empowering, aiming to redistribute power more equitably

Principle 3: PR is critical, risky, courageous and political, with a concern for social justice and equity

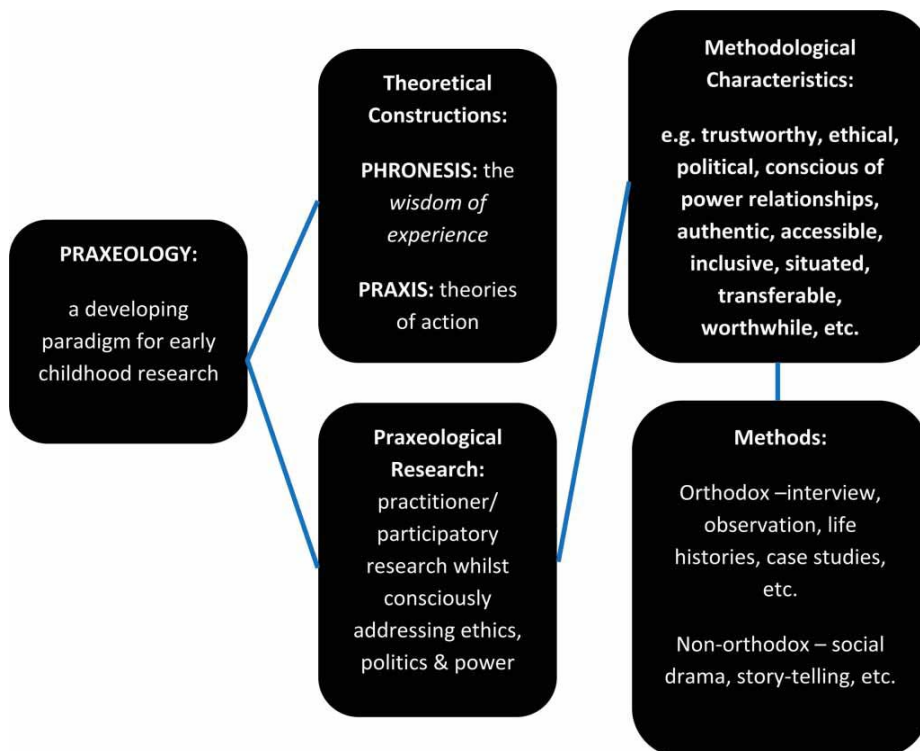
Principle 4: PR is subjective, acknowledging of multiple perspectives

Principle 5: PR is highly systematic and methodologically rigorous

Principle 6: PR is action based, educational, useful, creative and transformational, generating and sharing learning in a dynamic and continuous cycle of praxis

Pascal & Bertram (2012: 480) regard the “praxeological worldview in early childhood research” (combining phronesis, praxis, ethics and power) and early childhood practice as a way of responding in a flexible and appropriate way in developing a “participatory paradigm”. This can increase our awareness of how we relate to others, and address the issues of ethics (values) and power (politics), inherent in that situation (see Pascal & Bertram, 2012: 480; Figure 1).

Elements of a praxeological research approach: Figure 3



(Pascal & Bertram, 2012: 480; Figure 1)

Cognition (thinking), connotation (feeling) and the development of phronesis (praxis) through action are all integral to problem solving. Rogoff (1990: 9) cites Vygotsky (1987: 282): “Thought has its origins in the **motivating sphere of consciousness**, a sphere that includes our inclinations and needs, our interests and impulses, and

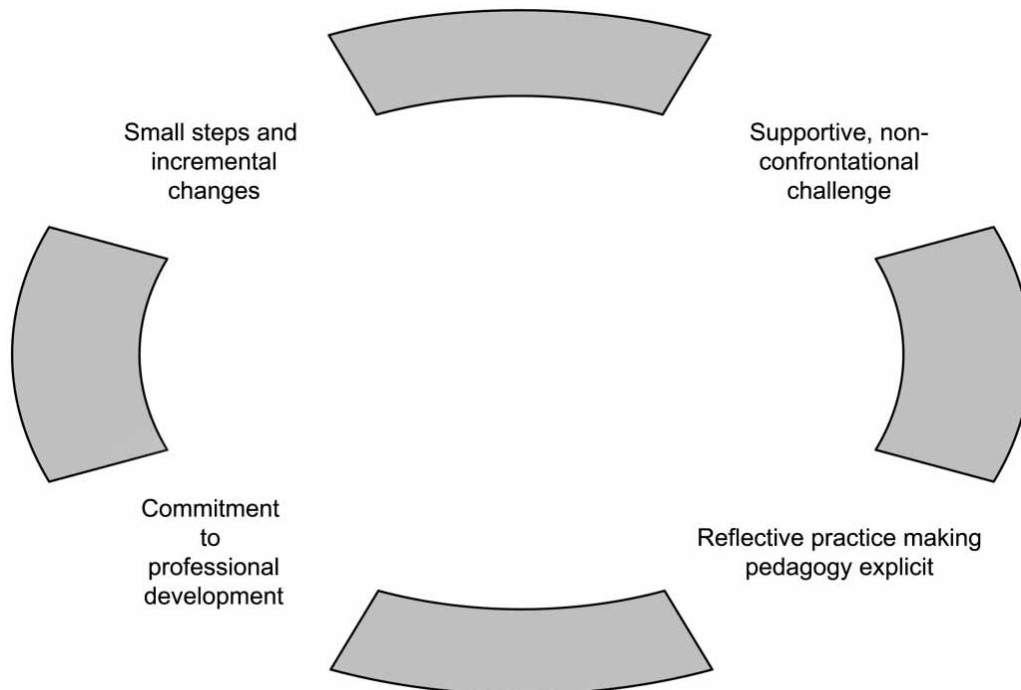
our affect and emotion. The affective and volitional tendency stands behind thought. Only here do we find the answer to the final 'why' in the analysis of thinking".

Vygotsky emphasized the interconnectedness between knowledge and action, through his concept of the 'zone of proximal development' in which knowledge is socially mediated, through collaboration with and support from, the 'more knowledgeable other'.

The social constructivist approach to knowledge creation followed in this research study approaches the 'theoretical ideal' of 'children's rights' as an *ideal* to be juxtaposed against practice in order to challenge and inform our intra-personal and inter-personal relationships, encouraging our movement towards our own 'ZPD' in terms of professional practice (McDowall Clark, 2012: 398). The ZPD describes cognitive development as "*development in process and change*" (Rowlands, 2003: 163). It is this idea of the social construction of knowledge, as a process that leads change that informs this research study on the difference between the actual situation confronting second-language learners, and the potential for change, or transformation of practice. Meaning and purpose in what we do, and how we do it, is sought through collaborative dialogue, using the action/reflection process. The lead researcher mediates between the task and its fulfillment, and acts as a facilitator or 'catalytic agent' in the enquiry process (McDowall Clark, 2012: 398).

"Dialogue is thus an existential necessity... it is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized" (Freire, 1972: 61). Contradictions between the reality and the ideal could be identified through an enquiry process, in order to expand the teachers' capacity to respond to the challenges.

Figure 4: Leading from within as a catalytic agent



(McDowall Clark, 2012: 398; figure 1)

Evaluating the situation of young second-language learners and our role as adults (our practice), in relation to theory and our social/cultural values and moral/ethical ideals (phronesis) leads to a further challenge to action - as the ideal will always differ from reality and new challenges in developing praxis (theory related to practice) will always emerge.

“To aim at the good through praxis, however, is not the same as knowing with certainty what the good consists of. What constitutes good conduct in any particular case is a matter of judgment. What constitutes the good in any practical case (i.e. in a case in which a decision must be made about what to do) is very frequently contested” (Kemmis, 2010: 418). This in turn poses an ethical challenge; *“the best interests of the child as a primary concern”* (Article 3, (1) UNCRC, 1989 – and Article 4, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999) to be met by praxis, or the pedagogical practices of teachers. As Paolo Freire (1972: 57) expressed it: *“The point of departure must always be... the ‘here and now’, which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge,*

and in which they intervene. Only by starting from this situation – which determines their perception of it – can they begin to move”.

As this is a *qualitative* research study, using participatory action research methodology, it focuses not only on the situation of the young second language learner themselves, but analyzing the deeper causes as to how and *why* the situation is the way it is, with a view to transforming practice. Transformation may be identified in any of these areas: “*discourse, organization, power relations and practice*” (McTaggart & Garbutcheon-Singh, 1986, 1988; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988a, cited by McTaggart, 1994: 315).

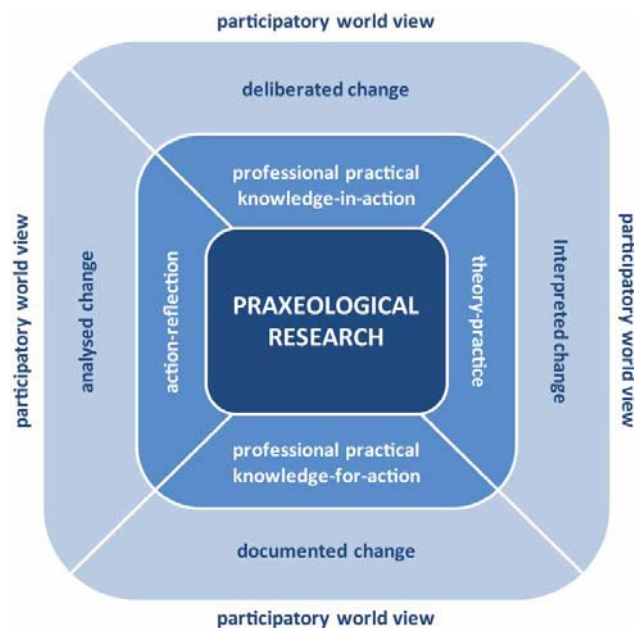
As an interpretive and critical/emancipatory enquiry process, praxeology provides insight into a situation through a process of in-depth enquiry. This occurs through describing the situation, exploring differing view-points, thoughts and feelings, holding up the critical ‘lens’ of children’s participation as a ‘right’ and examining the relevance of research and theory in order to inform practice.

According to Freire (1970: 76), “*cultural action for freedom is characterized by dialogue*”. Dialogue is marked by the search for the “*sense and meaning*” as Rinaldi (2005: 56) expresses it. This is described by Formosinho & Oliveira Formosinho, (2012: 604) as “*a hermeneutic process, an interpretation of many interpretations*” with the openness and reflexivity required in relation to diverse perspectives in order to enlarge our interpretations of experience (Formosinho & Oliveira Formosinho, 2012: 597).

This process can provide a conscious means of developing attentiveness and awareness (reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schön, 1987: 26)) as well as acceptance of our responsibility (reflection-to-action), in order to work for transformation and social change. This is seen as an on-going process of developing intra-subjectivity and inter-subjectivity as one reflects critically on practice (Schön, 1987: 26). There is a natural flow between action and reflection within participatory action research and during this process data can be generated and reflected on, which can lead to further avenues for research. This can be compared to a learning journey, with the process itself an important way of

generating data as well as further significant research questions. The following figure by Formosinho & Oliveira Formosinho illustrates the different aspects of praxeological research and change (Formosinho & Oliveira Formosinho, 2012: 600 - Figure 1).

Aspects of praxeological research and change: Figure 5



Goodfellow (2001: 4) talks about ‘wise practice’, juxtaposing it to ‘best practice’ and describes it as ‘artistry’. She identifies the need for a holistic view of professional (tacit) knowledge, rather than concentrating one’s focus on the ‘top of the iceberg’. She examines the importance of combining theory with practice (praxis), but thoughtfully considers the moral/ethical dimension – how our feelings, attitudes, beliefs and values as personal qualities, drive our ‘doing’. Values are relative perceptions about what is, or is not, important and arise from culture and tend to be determined by cultural norms (Rinaldi, 2001: 39).

Reflection on practice can thus be seen as fundamental to the work of an early childhood teacher and a tool for professional development, with the teacher becoming an ‘agent’ of her own professional development (Reed & Canning, 2010: 1). Grieshaber (2008: 514) notes that a “*sense of cultural responsiveness necessitates an element of human agency, something that is fundamental if theoretical bounds are to be bent, broken, and remade and if pedagogies are to be transformative...it is at the interface of practitioners working with children and*

families on a daily basis that it is more likely for examples of rule bending, breaking, and remaking to occur and transformative practices to be created”.

4.3 Methodology

As this is a *qualitative* case study, using participatory action research methodology, within a praxeological paradigm, it not only enquires into *what* happens but reflects on the deeper causes as to *how* and *why* it occurs with a view to transformation. Flyberg (2006: 233) maintains that the advantage of a case study lies in the ‘*nuanced reality*’ it presents and in providing a means for the concrete study of reality, with context dependent knowledge through feedback from those participating in the study.

This case study is seen as a means of developing critical awareness, reflecting on our practice in relation to our values and deciding on what changes are possible and necessary. Construction of understanding was created through experienced-based enquiry rather than by acceptance of a pre-existent theoretical ‘truth’ (Bullard & Hitz, 1997: 20-21). The research process served as a way of examining the rationality, the meaning and intention of educational practices in order to deepen understanding and critique of these practices in relation to the specific social context of the young second-language learner.

Reflective enquiry by teachers has the potential to create a paradigmatic shift and transformation of practice as it encourages a spirit of enquiry through observation and reflection ‘*in-action*’ and ‘*on-action*’ (Schon, 1987: 26), leading to a challenge, ‘*to-action*’. This study therefore followed an emergent design “*in which each incremental research decision depends on prior information*” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 317).

The study represents a process of analysis of practice in relation to theory, enquiring into practice by using the ‘lens’ of children’s rights, with awareness of different interpretations and perspectives from the collaborators as action research is participatory and develops through a “*self-reflective spiral*” (Kemmis &

McTaggart, 1988: 22). It is also a method of “*problematizing*” pedagogy by creating a safe space where everything can be questioned and nothing ‘taken-for-granted’. McTaggart, (1994: 315) does not see action research as a ‘method’ or ‘procedure’, but rather as a “*series of commitments to observe and problematise through practice the principles for conducting the social enquiry*”.

All these processes create a space for dialogue and creative thinking. Research conversations allow for the sharing of divergent perceptions of experiences, through group reflection on and interpretation of the research data. The research ‘spiral’ encourages deeper understanding of the issues involved and our own responsibility to uphold the ‘rights of the child’. In examining the pedagogical relationship between teacher and learner, “*unacknowledged concepts of what teaching is about*” can emerge (Levine, cited in Papatheodorou, 2009: 49). In the process, the teachers become ‘co-constructors’ or ‘collaborators’ in the research process.

4.4 Ethical measures:

4.4.1 Process

Research protocols were proposed and discussed with all the research participants (parents, children and teachers) and the right to informed consent was upheld.

- All adult participants were given full information on the purpose of the research study and the procedures for data collection, storage and analysis.
- The data obtained were presented and reviewed with all participants (adults and children) for approval and any action plans were drafted and discussed before being acted upon.
- The teacher-researchers collaborated in documenting and assessing any changes.
- The protocols to protect the identity of the participants were discussed.
- It was explained to all participants that confidentiality would be maintained.
- The right to privacy was respected and safeguarded.
- The data contains the actual words and actions of the participants and is therefore an accurate reflection of their opinions and perspectives.

- Parents, teachers and children had the right to expect the research to be conducted responsibly and conscientiously, with sensitivity to all participants.

4.4.2 Confidentiality and protection of identity

A letter was sent to all adult participants and the parents of child participants, seeking their consent and assuring them of confidentiality and the protection of any information which may disclose their identity, or the identity of their child. All information that could identify individuals in the data was removed (coding was used for all names). Pseudonyms were substituted for all names. Certain background information was removed from the research in order that the school would not be identified; however, steps were taken to ensure that this would not distort the data. All photos of children, or of the teachers and parents, had signed consent on the back of the photo as well as on a consent form, and their eyes were 'masked', with an indelible black marker if requested. In one case, strips of paper were placed over the eyes of the person in a photo before it was re-photographed in order to respect the emotional value of the photo for the participants. Data (such as videos or photos) used in the final dissertation have signed consent for publication from all adults and the parents of children who participated in the study. It was explained to all the participants that they would be able to withdraw their data at any stage of the research process without any sanction or penalty.

4.4.3 Informed Consent

The aim and purpose of the research study was carefully explained to all parties and direct, signed consent was obtained from the adults both on their own behalf and on behalf of their children. The informed consent of those collaborating was made freely without any prejudice. Expectations and guidelines as to what the research study would involve in terms of time and commitment (participant burden) were discussed and negotiated with the participants. The lead researcher had to be sensitive to power-relations within the school and aware of her own power and authority; part of the research process was to work out ways to encourage co-operation and collaboration in a non-threatening manner. Ethical guidelines on keeping confidentiality in relation to the children, the teachers and the parents were discussed before informed consent was sought from the participants.

It was explained to all the parents of the children participating, that consent forms would be signed freely and voluntarily. Written consent was obtained from parents and verbal or non-verbal assent/dissent (with a witness present) from the children before using any photos, videos or samples of artwork or any means of documentation and recording as data. South African courts have ruled that a person has the right to privacy if the person can show that:

- *He or she has a legitimate expectation of privacy; and*
- *This expectation would be regarded as reasonable by the community*

(Human Research Ethics Committee UCT, 209: 6)

Both the *consent* and the *dissent* of the child were allowed for, in order to involve children in the decision-making process and to give them a sense of control over their “*individuality, autonomy and privacy*”. Adults hold power over children and have to be sensitive to the implications thereof (Morrow & Richards, 1996: 95). Therefore particular attention had to be paid to the children’s body-language and their verbal and non-verbal communication so as to respond positively to their cues (see Video 16 – Emotions).

Both co-researchers (the teachers) and the participants (the parents and children) were guided in understanding that the research was concerned with **how** children learn, their choice of language to support the learning process, and the child’s capabilities and competencies, including their language and communication abilities. The children soon started to understand that the purpose of the research was not to ‘pose’ for photographs and present ‘pretty pictures’ of their smiles; rather, the focus was the learning process itself and their ‘learning dispositions’. Most of the children became increasingly interested in reviewing their photo/video/sound recording with their teacher and enjoyed deciding if they wanted to show it their parent and discuss it with them. The relationship of trust between parents, teachers (as co-researchers) and children was strengthened through the sharing of different perspectives and as discussion developed around the children’s interests and strengths (an asset-based approach).

Interpretations of the data were reviewed with the participants, with the right to privacy and respect for the individual kept in mind both during the research process and at the end of the research when the final research was presented to the

parents and teachers. This was done in a careful, honest and transparent way so that areas of concern could be uncovered and discussed. Parents were able to decide whether a particular photo or video could be used and sign consent.

The responsibility for the whole process rested with the lead researcher, as Principal of the school, mediator of the research process and as a participant-researcher herself.

4.4.4 Trustworthiness

To be trustworthy, a research study should prove itself reliable and valid, avoiding personal bias. Accuracy was achieved through recordings and transcripts of interviews, meetings and focus group discussions where the participants' actual words became part of the data. McTaggart (1994: 327) proposes that validity within action research is established through a variety of methods including "*triangulation of observations and interpretations....participant confirmation and testing the coherence of arguments presented*".

Trustworthiness was established by reviewing the data/the evidence with the collaborators/participants (McTaggart, 2002, cited by Gall, Gall & Borg, 2005: 501) in the review process with the teachers (the action-reflection cycle) and the recording or transcribing of authentic language (the 'voice' of the collaborators/participants). A draft copy of the final research was taken back to the collaborators/participants to validate findings, identify gaps in the data or discuss the need for reinterpretation (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006: 24). All results were "*situated and contextualized*" (Daly, 2007: 256- 257) and constraints were identified. Reflexivity was used (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999: 444) in order to acknowledge the role of the research collaborators/participants in the research process and such data was acknowledged by using personal/possessive pronouns ("I"/"my"/"myself" or "us"/"our" and "we"). At the end of the research the collaborators/participants were able to say if and how they had changed personally or in their practice or if and how the educational environment changed. The research had to prove that it had practical implications in terms of usefulness and effectiveness (Daly, 2007: 257). Auditing was done by a peer reviewer.

4.5 Sample, setting and time frame

Purposive sampling was employed to select a pre-primary school as a 'case study'. There were 80 children enrolled in the school, divided into 5 age-groups (2-3 year olds, 3-4 year olds, 4-5 year olds and 5-6 year olds). There were 38 parents who signed consent for their children to participate in the research and for their data, or their children's data, to be used. At the first Focus Group Discussion there were 16 parents who came to participate, divided into two groups. There were 9 participants in the second Focus Group Discussion, at the conclusion of the research process. Other persons known to experience the concept or attempting to implement the concept/theory (English second-language learning in early childhood education and the 'participation' of the young child) were sourced as information rich-persons (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 320). At each Focus Group Discussion, the speech therapist was included as a parent-participant and an information-rich person, from outside the school environment. Information-rich persons, both from within that school's environment and from the children's home environment were sampled. The relationship between the children, the parents and the teachers formed a 'triangle' of reciprocal interrelationship to the problem statement and the emerging research question(s). It was within these intersecting relationships that data was collected as the participatory action research process unfolded. The time frame was a limited, three month time period within the life of this school, starting in June and ending at the beginning of September.

4.6 Access and permission

Permission was sought from the Senior Education Manager of the school and signed consent was obtained from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education. Signed consent was also given by the School Governing Body (SGB). Permission was sought from adult research collaborators and participants, and signed consent was obtained from parents of individual child participants. Sensitivity and transparency were required when requesting signed consent from the parents for their children to participate and in obtaining signed consent for the use of their data, and that of their children, for research purposes. The aims and

objectives of the research were clarified and a cooperation protocol was agreed to and signed. Children were supported to understand the purpose of the research and verbal and non-verbal assent or consent (permission) was sought from the children – in accordance with the declaration by the Human Ethics Committee (UCT, 2009: 3) that if a minor is capable of understanding, that child can provide consent and is also free to withhold consent (or dissent).

4.7 Data Collection:

All data collected was reviewed in ‘review’ meetings with the teachers as research collaborators, where the “action/reflection” enquiry process unfolded. The data was critically assessed to explore the way knowledge and understanding was “*interactively generated through dialogue, negotiation and multiple interpretations*” (Daley, 2007: 255).

Various means of data collection were used:

4.7.1 Teachers’ reflective journals: observation, reflection, interaction

The primary means of data collection was through observation of the children and their interactions with other children and/or other teachers or with their parents, and their informal conversations (reflection-in-action). This information was recorded in the teachers’ reflective journals (as research collaborators), for ‘reflection-on-action’. This reflective journal encouraged a reflection on self (intra-subjectivity) and inter-subjectivity and on issues of individual identity and group identity. The journal assisted the research leader, as mediator of the research, to reflect on the “skills [that] lie at the heart of transformational research leadership” and helped to develop self awareness and self critique (Pascale & Bertram, 2012: 488). Daley (2007: 188) notes that it is important to examine “*the role that we play in shaping the research outcome through reflexive practice*”. This can consciously facilitate the research process, within the constraints of the conditions found in the context (Daley, 2007: 197).

4.7.2 Documentation of learning

Documentation both assists the teacher to reflect on the child's learning and helps the children to revisit their learning and the skills acquired and claim ownership of the knowledge generated (Kam & Ebbeck, 2010: 162).

Documentation includes reflection-on-action and examines what the children are capable of and how that can be supported; it is therefore a representation of what the child is learning as well as what the teacher is learning from the children, in order to extend learning further. Both the teacher and the children are seen as learners and knowledge-builders (Rinaldi, 2012: 238). Through documentation of experiences as they happen, they can reflect on their perception of the 'motives' of the child (Vygotsky 1962; 1964; Trevarthen, 1982; 1988; Bruner, 1996; Rogoff, 2003; Siraj-Blatchford, 2002, cited by Trevarthen, 2011: 175). This information is further processed through reflection with other adults, which could be parents or teachers who share their perspectives on the learning situation as it is seen to unfold with a view to 'reflection-to-action'.

4.7.3 Learning stories

"Learning stories" as used in New Zealand early childhood education centres by both parents and teachers are a useful method of reflecting on children's learning. They are "*structured narratives that track children's strengths and interests: they emphasize the aim of early childhood to develop children's identities as competent learners in a range of different arenas. They include an analysis of learning (a 'short-term review') and a 'what next?' section. The portfolios or folders in which they are housed invite families to contribute their own stories and comments.*" They are also "*designed to reflect and enhance reciprocal and responsive interactions and to develop and support atmospheres of trust and respect*" (Anning, Cullen & Fler, 2005: 97).

4.7.4 The Mosaic Approach

This involves 'triangulation' using different methods to engage children's participation. Children's 'voice' is understood through 'stepping back' from the immediate environment to generate *meaning-making* through building a 'mosaic' of conversations, photographs, drawings and texts, visual documentation as modes of knowing and means of communication. This process can empower children with self-knowledge but also empowers them by giving value to their expressions and ideas. Clark's longitudinal study found that it was a means of transforming environments in several schools. The Mosaic Approach (Clark, 2011: 328 and Clark, 2007: 3-76) is reflexive – adults are provided with a means of understanding children's actions by seeing their life from their point of view. Children's own viewpoint on their situation is of central importance and is the focus of discussion and reflection between all the role-players. The children become 'active participants' as "*meaning makers, researchers and explorers*" (Clark & Moss, 2005: 5, cited by Clark, 2011: 328). This gives adults a 'window' into the child's unique perspective on their situation, and can both inform and challenge action (reflection-to-action).

4.7.5 The Persona Doll Approach

Persona Dolls are used as a 'tool' for the implementation of anti-bias education and are a means to 'narrate and create' the persona doll's life-story, in dialogue with the children. Each doll has its own 'persona', family history and individual identity. This is seen as a non-threatening way to include issues of language, identity, culture, race, class, and other anti-bias issues. The story of each doll is recorded in their "I.D. Book" which can also be a type of "journal" of the events in that doll's life as it is a record of the dialogue between the doll and the insights of the children. Children's participation (the dialogue between the 'persona doll' and the children) enables the story of the doll's life-situation to unfold in terms of how she/he (the persona doll) reacts and responds to the events in his/her life, with questions, suggestions and advice from the children. Each time he or she visits the children and 'chats' to them, the persona doll gives the children a 'voice' to express their thoughts and fears, hopes and struggles, leading the children from interpersonal awareness to intrapersonal awareness. The doll can become a 'mirror' to reflect the children's life-situation back to them, in order for them to reach a deeper

understanding of their own thoughts and feelings and learn to empathize with the feelings of others, including the persona doll.

4.8 Analysis of the data

Data was reflected on and critically analyzed through regular 'review meetings' with the teachers, through the action/reflection mode of enquiry. Non-structured interviews and focus group discussions with parents, using open-ended questions also occurred, from which data was analyzed and new data generated.

4.8.1 Mode of enquiry: the action/reflection cycle

The Action/Reflection method is one of enquiry – OBSERVATION – “reflection-in-action” through attentiveness to the child’s perspective and interaction within the learning situation or experience – ‘REFLECTION’ (reflection-on-action) in relation to our values (using the ‘lens’ of children’s rights) - and then to plan and engage further ‘ACTION’ (reflection-to-action) through planning interaction with the teachers, children and/or parents in a learning cycle, the spiral of action/reflection (See: “Aspects of praxeological research and change” - Figure 4.3).

4.8.2 Data collection and capturing:

This was achieved through the children’s portfolios of artwork and other means of expression, including journal entries of observations and informal conversations, and tape-recordings of interviews and focus-group discussions. Unobtrusive data (artifacts) were collected, such as children’s enrolment forms, minutes of school meetings, curriculum planning, photos of the educational environment, educational materials and teaching-aids, representational ‘maps’, letters to parents and the child’s message-book that links home and school (Hatch, 1995: 127). Notes, sketches, photos and written transcripts of observations as ‘learning stories’ and video recordings were also used. The portfolios of creative artwork, collected for each child and reviewed with each parent in interviews, were valuable sources of data.

Photographs, recordings and video-taping helped to establish validity and reliability as they recorded the 'authentic voice' of those participating.

4.8.3 Data processing through transcription and further analysis and synthesis

The data were reviewed regularly in relation to the problem statement and the sub-questions, in order to develop an understanding of emergent questions in the action/reflection spiral. The data from the action/reflection meetings were transcribed for further analysis/synthesis.

The data were analyzed and interpreted inductively, in order to place them into certain categories or criteria, according to their levels of significance within the research process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 373). This was undertaken to make sense of the data and achieve new insights and understandings while collecting new data; an on-going cycle of data collection and analysis linked to the action-reflection method (Hatch, 1995: 127). The findings of the research process were synthesized and summarized in order to present them accurately, concisely and dependably (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011: 467). Colour coding of the data, diagrams or graphic/dramatic representation of ideas and information and ideas described through concept mapping, and metaphor as well as narratives representing the 'learning journey' were used as a means of deeper analysis/synthesis with the research collaborators and parent participants.

4.9 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter discussed the research approach, the research design, ethical considerations and data collection and processing methods. It was important to select appropriate tools to ensure coherence between the research questions and the methods employed to collect the data. This design formed the framework for the research process that followed

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS & RESEARCH FINDINGS

“We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need friction. Back to the rough ground!”

(Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, cited by Pilario, 2005: XXV)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research study was conducted at a pre-primary School, situated within the inner-city, surrounded by high-rise flats where most of the children live. The school has a large front playground and a garden at the front entrance to the school, as well as a back kitchen garden. It has four classrooms for five age-groups, with children aged from 18 months to 6 and a half. The children in the oldest age group turn six after 30 June, which is the cut-off date for admission of learners to compulsory state schooling set by the South African government. The academic year ends in December.

The school is situated in a lower socio-economic environment with its attendant social problems including unemployment, homelessness, prostitution, gambling, drug addiction and alcoholism. There are 105 liquor outlets within a three kilometre radius of the school. There is also a ‘floating’ university student population living in flats in the area. Further movement of the population in and out of the area also occurs through immigrants (so-called ‘foreigners’ or ‘refugees’) as well as South African migrants who come to the city in search of employment or business opportunities. Some parents may spend a considerable amount of time away from their family, travelling and/or working, as they have business interests or employment opportunities which take them out of the city although their family is based there. A section of the community represents an emerging ‘black middle class’, consisting of professionals, such as teachers, social workers and nurses or white-collar workers, but there is also a poorer section of the population who are traders or artisans and whose livelihoods are precarious.

Some of the children come from low-income housing with problems of overcrowding, high crime rates and the risk of electricity and water being cut when some tenants default on payment of their levy to the body corporate. There are also three street-shelters for the homeless in the area, a municipal housing project and a non-profit organisation working with 'street children'.

The school caters predominantly for children from the emerging black middle class. All the parents have high aspirations for their children and want them to learn English and to attend English medium primary schools. The language question can therefore also be perceived as a question of equity and access, as mastery of English holds the possibility of academic success and economic empowerment.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 The linguistic context:

Each child has a 'family language map' which the parents fill in on enrolment. This map goes back to the languages spoken by the parents and the grandparents and includes the languages spoken at home by older siblings.

The following information was retrieved from the 'family language maps', filled in by parents on enrolment of their child for 2013:

Home language: Number of children:

Afrikaans:	1
English:	13
isiXhosa:	5
isiZulu:	52
Other:	9

At the time of the research study, there were five female teachers (in South Africa, professional teachers are referred to as educators but this study does not make a distinction between professional and non-professional teachers). There was also one male assistant teacher, three general assistants, a secretary and an aftercare teacher. Three of the teachers (racially classified respectively as 'White', 'Coloured' and 'Indian') were English speaking and two (racially classified 'African') could

speak isiZulu fluently, while one could also speak some isiXhosa and seSotho. The toddler group's teacher (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo) could speak French, Swahili, Lingala and English. The three English speaking teachers of the older age groups could also understand some isiZulu and Afrikaans, and one could also speak some French. There were also three isiZulu speaking General Assistants to help with domestic chores, the garden and security, one of whom could also speak isiXhosa. Both the Secretary and the Aftercare Teacher were English speaking; however the isiZulu speaking Assistant Teacher also helped with Aftercare.

The teachers all saw their work as teaching the children to speak English. Most of the songs and rhymes were in the English language, although a limited number of isiZulu action songs had been incorporated into the repertoire of songs used by the school. The aim of the parents in enrolling their child in the school was to learn English as it is an important means of educational success for the children when they started English medium primary school education from Grade 1. English was also seen as a uniform language that could help the children communicate with one another across the different language groups. The development of the home language was seen by the teachers at the start of this research study as primarily the parents' responsibility. However, by the end of the research, the teachers considered their role and responsibility more carefully. This is in relation to the parents' opinion, as expressed in the second focus group discussion, that the teachers' also play a critical role in encouraging the children to use their home languages "...they respect your authority. The child says: 'Shhh –only speak English!' But the child must get it from your source, the importance of the home language then the child would appreciate it!"

When addressed by the children in their home language, the teachers (particularly the assistant teacher) had tended to respond to them in English, whether or not they could speak the home language. The general assistants tended to speak to the children in isiZulu (or isiXhosa). At the beginning of the research study, one of the English speaking teachers said: "The children are going to grow up in an English speaking world, the parents want us to teach them English". This teacher did not feel that it was a problem if the child was fluent in English but could only

understand and not speak their parents' mother tongue as a home language as she herself been in that situation with regards to Afrikaans. As the research unfolded, the teachers realized that this could reinforce in the child's mind that their home language was somewhat inferior or lacking and that English, as the language of teaching and learning, was a superior language. It became clear in the course of the research that many of the children were 'choosing' English over their home languages and that the parents had various opinions and concerns in relation to this, as seen in the focus group discussions. One aim of the research process was to conscientize the parents and the teachers as to the importance of supporting both languages and affirming both as having equal value (promoting additive bilingualism). This was a slow, on-going process, a wheel that turned slowly in the review cycle (Reflection-IN-Action, Reflection-ON-Action and Reflection-TO-Action). Different means were used.

5.2.2 Research Tools

5.2.2.1 The Mosaic Approach:

The Mosaic Approach was seen as a way of building a composite picture of what the children enjoy about their school and what they do not like about it, in the process, developing attentiveness to the perspective of the child "giving the child a voice". This started in the month of June when the teachers were starting to write the Mid-Year Reports for each child. The lead researcher proposed that the Grade R groups have a new section added to their reports: "My participation at school" using 'learning dispositions' as the key to write descriptive examples showing how a particular child participates in school (see example, Appendix O – Mid-Year Report pg 237). Learning dispositions included whether they showed curiosity; an adventurous spirit; readiness to meet challenges; determination and persistence; focussed attention and powers of observation; the ability to think through strategies in a methodical way and see patterns and links; show independent thought, initiative; ability to reflect ("Why did I do this?" and "How is it going?"); and creative and imaginative thinking. The teachers also looked at flexibility of thought in the use of materials and loose parts: "Where else could I use this?" This included examining the child's ability to work and play co-operatively with others. It was also seen as important for the child to develop empathy for others as well as self-

understanding (an ability to understand and express one's feelings constructively) and be open to feed-back from others. A special section was added to the report 'to give children a voice'. They were asked by their teacher to say what they liked best at school and their actual words were written down, whether it was one word or a sentence, as a way of assessing their expressive ability. The teacher could also add a photograph of what they said they liked to do best at school or to illustrate a 'learning disposition'. This became a way of reflecting on the strengths of the child, rather than their deficits.

When it came to the 3rd Term parent interviews, the parents were told in advance in a newsletter to ask their children "What do you like about school?" and "What do you not like about school?" so that they could talk to their child's teacher about their child's viewpoint in the parents interview and the child's opinions could be taken into consideration within the 'Mosaic' of different pieces of information that could be brought together to inform practice.

Each teacher was also given a disposable camera to give to the children whose parents had signed them into the language research. This was a limited number of children, so that they could dialogue and interact more effectively with their teacher, but the whole group of children could discuss their own thoughts and ideas in group discussions with their teacher, or individually during the course of the day. The teacher could help the children to take a photo of what he or she said they like at the school – and another photo of what they said they did not like, with the teacher writing down the words they used to express these likes and dislikes! The teacher was taken on a 'tour' of the school by the children, during which the children took their photos and those turning six had a 'map' on which they could make marks or draw pictures, to help them in the review process afterwards. The teacher of the five-year olds had charge of the map and wrote down the children's actual words. The question was also asked: "What do you think we can do to improve the school and make it a happy school?" 'Dirkie' wanted to introduce a jungle and a lion – another boy wanted pirates to help us find the treasure he said was buried in the school garden! The final Mosaic of photos, children's words, maps and drawings was discussed at a parents meeting which included the SGB members (parents elected at the AGM). This took place at the conclusion of the research process

(see Video 13 of the Mosaic). As a result, a parent proposed a 'work party' one Saturday, to address some of the children's concerns.

The majority of the Grade R children and some of the Grade 00 children strongly disliked 'Rest Time'! This was written up into the Mosaic. They said they did not like to lie down on a mattress for an hour after lunch and rest, or sleep! Some of the Grade 00 children were insisting on staying with their teacher in her class when the other children went to lie down. They said that if their teacher was in the room where the other children were resting, they would go there too. But since she was in her class, they would stay there with her! They said they did not like the teacher (in the rest room) who shouted at them to lie down. When discussing this situation with the other teachers, the children's class teacher said she would keep them with her, because if she insisted they lie down with the other children, they would ask their parents to take them out of the school! This was reflected on by the teachers and discussed with the parents concerned, in order to ascertain whether or not the parents wanted their children to sleep at school.

5.2.2.2 The Learning Story Books:

This was seen as a way for the parents to chat in their home language to their child and support the learning process, building a 'bridge' between school and home. Very often it was reported that 'English' was associated with school and therefore when talking about school the child 'opted' for English. Pictures that the child had drawn were stuck into the Learning Story book, or photos together with a 'learning story' (there was a set format for this) and the parent would be requested to chat to their child in their home language, ask questions about the story and if possible, write down what their child said (in whichever language they chose to use, but preferably the home language as the aim was to support the development of the mother tongue). It was reported in the teachers review meeting that some parents seem to prefer to use English over their mother tongue. This was also mentioned as a problem in the first focus group discussion by one of the professional parents, who could write very well in English, his second language: "The very questions we are dealing with now are in English and IsiZulu. But I would rather read and answer the English version, where I feel comfortable in doing so." One also observed this father chatting in a group discussion to Grade R learners (5 – 6 year olds) telling

them how he flies a helicopter, preferring to use English (Video 1). With encouragement, he used English and Zulu while sharing his experiences with the Grade 00 class (4 – 5 year olds) as seen in Video 2. One of the reasons given for some of the difficulties was the different varieties of spoken IsiZulu “North Coast and South Coast IsiZulu”. Another reason was the question of ‘pride’ in one’s mastery of English – or pride in one’s child’s mastery of English, resulting in a bias towards the use of English.

The Learning Story Books became a way for the parents to chat to their children about their learning experiences at school and encouraged the parents to build vocabulary in the home language in relation to the English vocabulary their child may have learned at school (see Parent Interview – Appendix L pg 233). It also became a way for parents to communicate with the teachers and this enabled the teachers to build an ‘image of identity’ of the child (see 5.2.5). The ‘voice of the child’ became a means of communication, intersubjective understanding and action.

5.2.2.3 Documentation of Learning:

Documenting the learning process the children were engaging in was a challenge, something totally new for all the teachers, involving a ‘paradigm shift’ into the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the learning process from the perspective of the child. It was easy to ‘take pretty pictures’ of the children engaging in activities. It was not easy for the English speaking teachers to listen to the child in a noisy classroom (with more than one language being used) and write down the one or two words of a child with limited or no expressive proficiency in English **and** provide the words to extend the thought processes and build up vocabulary (receptive proficiency) in English or the mother tongue! The IsiZulu speaking teaching assistant in the one classroom tended to use IsiZulu to regulate behaviour and English to ‘teach’ in the formal sense (see Video 14, “The problem with English”). When another teacher started taking photos of the children in her class, she took photos of them all painting ‘pretty pictures’ one after the other, without capturing the thinking process behind these pictures: *“they are all so serious in the photo”* commented one parent in the second focus group discussion. Stimuli, process and outcome were lost in the single photos of each child, each one painting a picture without any words to tell us about the pictures, not even written onto the painting. Documentation can reveal the

motivation of the learner to *begin* an activity, *continue* a line of thought or *change* direction. It helps the adult (teacher or parent) to follow a 'thread of inquiry' with the children. One photo could look much like the next – without any sign of the child's 'agency' in attempting to express their own thoughts and ideas and develop their own problem-solving skills. When the Yellow Group teacher (isiZulu speaking) used 'Sipho', the Persona Doll, to 'chat' to the children in her class, it was observed that she tended to get a uniform response: "Yes, teacher" (Video 7, The Persona Doll) and the children seemed restricted in their responsiveness. When the father (isiZulu speaking) came to talk to the same class about his experiences learning to fly a helicopter, these children also tended to be more passive and less responsive, except when they had a chance to see and hear the helicopter starting up (Video 2, Talk by parent, Yellow Group). The father also showed that he was less able to connect to the children at their own level (they were a year younger than the children in the Blue Group). In the Blue Group, the most verbal child was the semi-lingual child attempting to engage in conversation at a tangent, talking about Superman flying! The least engaged child was "Manuel", whose focus was on his teacher and who can be seen roaming around, the other children not distracted by him at all as they are used to him (see Video 1, Talk by parent, Blue Group) – see paragraph 5.2.4 "Semi-lingualism".

Documentation of learning was intended as a 'way to make learning visible'. The key was to see the children as an 'agent of their own learning' and protagonists in their learning story, looking at the learning dispositions revealed by their activities. The focus gradually became the actions of the children within a learning experience, with the teacher using a camera to research the learning process. The teachers discovered that when they asked some of children to tell them about what they were seeing, doing or making - or asked them to explain 'why' (to hypothesize) some of the children had difficulty in finding the words and sentences to express themselves and at times used one word that did not seem to make sense - for example, a child drew a red spot as a 'blesda' (or 'blesta') on the back of the car he was designing (the car that was also a bed, a chair and could fly and was a boat). Only when the teacher was driving home did she see a bumper sticker on the back of a car, "I am blessed" and deduced that this is what the child meant by his 'blesda'. She asked him the next day and he confirmed that this was what he had

drawn! The older the child, the more fluent they were in English as the 1st language or in their mother tongue, the more elaborate the sentences used to describe their intentions and meanings and the less need for the teacher to verbalise their intentions and meanings. Time and again the learning experience needed to be investigated or questioned by the teachers in order to verbalize for the child and give the child **words** for the conceptual understanding being developed – often this was in English. One English speaking teacher started asking her children to go home and ask their parents the names of things in their mother tongue (for ‘snail’, for example). These words could then be used as ‘what’ words – to build vocabulary and understanding. This idea was shared with the other teachers in the Review Meeting. One child was reported by his mother as asking the same question in **three Languages** – English, isiZulu and isiXhosa! She had to respond to each question in the relevant language. The development of vocabulary in each of the child’s languages became one of the critical areas to be addressed.

An example of the problem of the ‘silent stage’, which children who are learning English a second language can go through, was seen in the three-year old group in the following example: one of the English speaking four-year olds, “Ricky” constructed an “Alien without a nose. He sleeps in my bed with me. He has no nose, so his house has no smells”. A photo was taken of the finished construction. His isiZulu 1st language friends also constructed an object. His teacher could not tell us about this photo as the child could not describe his symbolic thought behind the construction. A ‘pretty photo’ was taken of this construction, but what did the construction represent? There was no isiZulu speaking teacher in the group at that time for the child to chat to, while building the construction (and possibly at the same time, building a story about the construction). The ‘silent stage’ was also documented in the socio-dramatic play area, where a child is seen silently ‘working’ on an old computer, surrounded by children chatting in Zulu, engaging in active dramatic play, including the beginning of a cultural dance (see Video 17).

While outside in the sensory tray, “Ricky” constructed an imaginary ‘volcano’, by putting a narrow tube inside a larger tube apparently to make a volcanic pipe or conduit for the lava to erupt from, and packing in the damp sand - showing vivid imagination and an amazing general knowledge (see Video 8 “In the sensory

trays”). Next to him, a five-year old constructed a ‘tower’ and some of the girls used the damp sand to make “cup-cakes” in the shorter toilet roll tubes. One child, perhaps through the association of the camera used to take the video, made his own camera from a toilet roll tube.

5.2.3 The Vegetable Garden Project and the “Right to Participation”

When the vegetable garden project was proposed as a school project in June, a volunteer from outside the school decided to make this ‘her’ project. The school gardener’s own expertise was ignored by this volunteer. He had been trained in permaculture, but the volunteer insisted on using her own knowledge of monoculture ‘farming’ (from her home in the rural area). A struggle for ownership of the project occurred between the school gardener and the volunteer, even though it was clear that it was a school project, not owned by any one individual!



Rows of vegetable seedlings were bought at the market by the school gardener, sponsored by one of the children’s fathers (the Chair of the School Committee). The money for these seedlings passed from this parent directly to the gardener and the garden seemed to be “men’s business” (not the women’s concern). These seedlings were planted in rows with the assistance of a volunteer and her friend, and the help of the school gardener who duly helped to water them. When some of the children in the Grade R class were invited by their teacher to help plant the seedlings, one child accidentally trod on a seedling. This resulted in a review meeting, together with the volunteer and the school gardener where the teachers

present were told, in no uncertain terms, that children should NOT plant vegetables as 'it is not according to our culture'. "Children who are still wee-ing, must NOT work in the vegetable garden – nor must women who are menstruating!" Therefore the children were seen as 'too young' (the lead-researcher discussed this with a person from a rural area in the Northern Transvaal who said that on the farms she comes from, they also believe this! It seems to be a wide-spread belief). One teacher was particularly angry at the attitude of the gardener and the volunteer in blocking participation by the children and talked about their beliefs as 'nonsense'. The lead researcher said that maybe this belief was to stop young children or women who may suffer pain or discomfort from the work, from working too hard while they are vulnerable. She was trying to assess if traditionally there was a practical reason behind such a belief.

However, the teachers were all very upset at being blocked by the volunteer and the gardener from using the vegetable garden as a learning experience for their children, with one teacher saying emphatically: "That's just superstition!" They had been looking forward to exposing the children to different kinds of vegetables and how they grow. They saw the need for this kind of experience as most of the children enrolled in the school grow up in high rise apartments (flats). They therefore don't know how plants grow and they have a lack of respect for the plants in the school. Unfortunately the children remained 'blocked' by the gardener and the volunteer from going near 'their' garden. Ironically, the gardener realised that he had also been 'blocked' by the volunteer (who was very forceful and strong-willed) as he was prevented from making a permaculture garden, the method of gardening in which he had received training. However, he made his own permaculture garden quietly, on his own, in the back kitchen garden. The volunteer's garden was by the front entrance, for all to see. The school holidays came, the school closed and there were three weeks during which the vegetable garden could not be watered. The gardener's vegetable garden was still flourishing, whereas the volunteer's garden had mostly died off, except for one or two resilient vegetables, half the size of the gardener's vegetables. A row of her cabbages was invaded by caterpillars that were merrily marching down the row and eating the leaves. One caterpillar was put into a box with cabbage leaves and the

children observed it spin a cocoon as it changed into a pupa to undergo metamorphosis!

The teachers and the children took note of the problems experienced by the volunteer's garden and in the review meeting with the teachers (reflection-to-action) it was decided to bring in 'children's participation' as a 'right' and emphasize the vegetable garden as the children's garden, as a donation of seed had been made for the children to use. It was decided that the children would use this seed and take ownership of the project



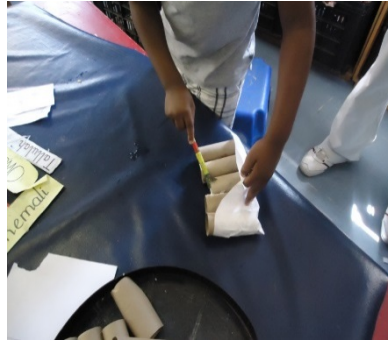
This time, the children would grow the vegetables from seed and plant the seedlings themselves. They could prepare the bed by helping to dig the soil, plant the two litre plastic drink bottles around the edge for containment, and lay down the cardboard boxes, newspapers and dry leaves and grass cuttings and compost, mixed with the soil. They could germinate their own seeds and plant their own seedlings. They could water their vegetables and watch them grow. They could draw representations of the leaves to record how they grew. They could harvest their vegetables and chop up them up to be added to their hot, cooked lunch. They could also sell their vegetables to any parents who wanted to buy them! Extra seedlings could be sold as well, so that they would have money to buy their compost and buy more seeds. It was to be **their** project!

The children's pride in their project can be seen in the photographs they took for the Mosaic Project, as most of the photos were of their vegetable garden (see Video 15).



The teachers planned to visit the gardener's permaculture garden with the children to show them how it was flourishing. The three most senior groups went to see how the vegetables were growing – unfortunately a tomato plant got broken by one child, to the anger of the school gardener, who wanted to put an end to the children's involvement yet again! The volunteer, who was helping with the youngest age group (the Green Group), actually stopped them from visiting the vegetable garden, still affirming that it was culturally inappropriate for such young children to work in the vegetable garden ("they still wet themselves"). The question the teachers asked in the review meeting was "Whose vegetable garden is it? If the school is the children's, it is the children's garden, it is their own plant which got broken. Children have the right to make mistakes and learn from it!" (This was also reflected on by the children - see photo of drawing). The matter was discussed with the parent who donated the seedlings and whose son was in the youngest age group (the excluded group) as he was Chair of the School Committee and could speak to the gardener and the volunteer. He expressed a wish for his son to learn to plant vegetables and get his hands dirty and talked about his own desire to work voluntarily in the garden on weekends and during the holidays to support his son. Documentation of the "Children's Garden", showed the learning process the children followed in making containers to plant the seeds out of cardboard toilet roll

tubes. The children used strips of paper and glue to wrap them in sets of '6', putting the soil and compost into the tube to the right height (see photo that follows).



They then planted the seeds in the tube, and germinated the seeds by watering them and putting them outside in the sun, with the aim of eventually planting the seedlings in the tube into the ground themselves (each seedling the distance of six cardboard toilet roll tubes from the other). The seedling did not have to be taken out of the tube, but the tubes had to be planted separately. The children learned that cardboard is *biodegradable* (a word we taught them) in comparison to plastic, which is not biodegradable.



“How many seeds? One, two, three, four, five, six!”

The children chatted about what they were doing. Their teacher wrote down what they said and took photos documenting this learning which were included in some of the children's Learning Story Books. Documentation was also included in a power-point presentation for their parents to see at the second focus group discussion. The drawing of a baby saying “Oh, oh” when the flower was broken was included in the final 'Mosaic', displayed by the front entrance of the school (see photo below). This drawing showed awareness by the child (and brought awareness to others) that even a 'baby' can want to protect plants and look after

them – they are not too young! A further question by a teacher was “Why did this child draw his people like that, as these are different from his usual style of drawing?” but when the mother was shown the picture, she explained “They are like Transformers, from ... (a popular fast food outlet)”.



5.2.4 Semi-lingualism or Subtractive Bilingualism:

The ability to communicate feelings through words is critical to emotional and social well-being. A photo was taken of two children, “Andre” and “David” (five years old), standing on the orange chairs by the front entrance (breaking the ‘rules’). These chairs are underneath the display board by the front entrance. The children had climbed up on the chairs because of the words on the poster, which they wanted to get closer to. They spontaneously pointed out the initial letters of their names on this poster: “FOOD GARDENS” (the print was in capital letters). “Andre” pointed out the “A” (first photo) and then “David” pointed out his letter “D” followed by “Andre” pointing out to him a second “D” which he had identified in the words on the poster (showing awareness of environmental print). The two photos went into each of their Learning Story Books, so that their parents could “chat” to them about it, write down what their child said about the photo, as well as write a comment themselves. This brief story illustrates the importance of the child’s name in the child’s life.



It also illustrates the growing competency of these two friends, “Andre” and “David”, in developing their emergent literacy skills. They are both children whose parents had both told the previous year by their teacher to stop speaking the mother tongue to them and only speak English. This teacher had been finding it difficult to communicate with them effectively and had experienced their behaviour as problematic. This particular teacher was not following school policy and has since left the school, so was not part of the research process. Both sets of parents followed her directive to only speak English to their children at home. However, they have very limited proficiency in English. Their mother tongue is Lingala and they also speak French, as an additional language. These languages are still used by the adults to communicate with one another, although the children are now spoken to in English. These children have developed ‘semi-lingualism’ although their English is slowly improving. Initially these two children could not speak in intelligible sentences to make their requests known and were prone to crying loudly or using physical violence when their will was thwarted or denied by adult or other children.

Semi-lingualism was also identified in another child with two parents (one American English and one South African IsiZulu). Each spoke with a different mother tongue and with differing English pronunciation (see second focus group discussion in Appendix Q, pg261), When assessed by a doctor, this child was found to have a hearing problem (fluid in the middle ear).

‘Imaginary words’ tend to be created by these children to ‘fill the linguistic gap’ and because adults responded to them **as if** what they were saying was meaningful. The adults tended to interpret ‘cues’ from the context to ‘interpret’ what the children

were saying, without being able to respond by extending the child's one or two words into a sentence the child could understand. The child then **also** had to interpret from the context of the interaction – often watching the adult's gestures to guess at the meaning.

At times it is a struggle for teachers to make sense of what such children are saying, as they speak in a rambling way with words that seem disconnected from each other, often using 'formulaic speech' (see example of 'Semilingualism' in Appendix K, pg 229 and Video 12, as an example of the problem of 'meaning-making'). When "Andre's" parent brought him to school in the morning, she had to interpret the sense of his words for the teacher, because of the difficulty in understanding the pronunciation of certain words and the limited repertoire of words within the child's vocabulary. The behaviour of such children has had to be strictly controlled through routines and clear visual and verbal directions, as well as the assurance that their teacher will be their advocate and mediator if a problem arises. They can display a tendency to fight physically for what they want and their feelings can become very intense if they find it difficult to communicate verbally.

This was discussed in the review meeting and the link between the development of self-regulation and the role of the teacher in giving the child words for the actions they need to plan to do, was emphasized, affirming Vygotsky's theory (Vygotsky, 1960: 182-223 *in* Wertsch, 1979/81: 157). The teacher's words, together with visual actions to demonstrate what is required, were seen as helping them to 'think' about the next thing they have to do and 'mediate' the learning (for example, "Put your lunch box into your bag"). The teacher also used words to help them plan and predict the consequences of actions. One word (for example, calling out the name of the child) can alert the child that there is a potential problem. It seemed that it was easier for the child to pay attention to a word in the language with which they were more familiar. Certainly one word used in the mother tongue when correcting a Zulu speaking child was often paid more attention (for example, for quietening a noise, "umsindo", said in a warning tone of voice, in IsiZulu) than a command in the English language, "Be quiet!". When the teacher did not have the vocabulary in the mother tongue it proved very difficult to retain the child's attention.

In another incident, “Andre” ripped the pages of a book when he grabbed it from another child who was paging through the pictures after his teacher had read the story to the group. It was decided to have a meeting with the parents to discuss this incident, and establish the cause of this intense emotion (see the photo of the torn book, which follows).



The title of the book was ‘Sad’. In reviewing this incident, the teachers had the perception of “Andre’s” overwhelming identification with the word ‘Sad’. He seemed to want the word ‘Sad’ as his own, to use as a ‘handle’ on his emotions. He was given that word in the form of the story book and he apparently wanted to appropriate the book physically as well as to appropriate the meaning of the word intrasubjectively.

During the parent interview with the mother and father, the mother disclosed that “Andre” (her first born) had always been angry, since he was a baby. She went on to say that when he was two years old, her second child, a baby, died - and she was not able to be there emotionally for him. She believed this was the cause of his problems. This story emphasized the desperate need of this child to identify his emotions and understand them, especially since at the age of two he would not have been able to understand his mother’s grief at the death of the baby and her emotional withdrawal from him. He would also not have been able to understand or put into words his own emotional response – he would have had many, mixed emotions not clearly understood, arising from the death of his sibling (anger and grief). At the age of two, he would have still been learning how to express his feelings in words, in his mother tongue! Unfortunately mother tongue had been

taken away from him by his parents the previous year at four years of age due to his teacher's intervention, because she had thought gaining English as rapidly as possible would help his behavioural problems! He had 'lost' the words to communicate with the 'language of the heart' (his mother tongue), while he did not have the words to express his emotions in the second language! His sense of identity and belonging, linked to the language the parents speak with each other (the home language – Lingala) had been broken and needed to be re-established. In the parent interview the teachers (the Principal and the class teacher) also emphasized that it was important for "Andre" to feel *included* and, for that reason, for the parents to include him in their conversations - especially in the mother tongue as that was the only language in which they could have 'extended, shared discourse' with him, as their own command of the English language was so limited – "broken English" as the mother expressed it.

Children's desperation to learn words that can express their emotions was also clearly visible at other times, when stories and visits by the 'Persona Dolls' gave a child a word, like "angry" or "sad" in English. An example is "Luyanda" whose mother tongue is Xhosa, but who has 'chosen' to speak English in the IsiZulu context he finds himself in (including the linguisticism he has experienced). This was reported by his mother in the first focus group discussion in the Red Room. He used a new word, like 'Angry' or 'Sad' (in English) again and again in different contexts over a number of days, as he tested the sense and meaning of the word and as it rolled on his tongue. He had shown a lot of 'anger' and needed a word to express his feelings, verbally, rather than with inappropriate behaviour. The fascination with emotions is revealed in this video, where a child who struggled to express his emotions in socially acceptable ways plays with faces expressing different emotions (see Video 16 – Emotions)

The importance of affirming the child's emotions in the mother tongue as well as English was seen as a critical way of developing empathy for the feelings of others, with the teacher an important model in using the word to describe the emotion, non-judgmentally. When the child needed to be made aware of misbehaviour, teachers felt that it was wise to speak the mother tongue, to help them state how they felt and how the other party felt or to use a word (give them the word) to affirm how

they felt. Staff members who speak the child's mother tongue were available to discuss the matter reasonably with the child; in a language they understand in order to understand how he or she felt to try and solve the problem with them.

Parents' reaction to the perceived 'naughtiness' of their child is very often to threaten physical punishment or to tell the teacher to use physical punishment, rather than talk about the cause of their child's problems. This problem was discussed in one Review Meeting in relation to the case of "Manuel" – who at the age of five came to the school unable to understand or speak any English at all and with limited abilities to express himself in his mother tongue (his little sister aged three was said by the mother to be more fluent than him). His mother could not express herself in English at all (she had very few words she could use). A translator had to be used in the parent interview with the mother, but not with the father, who could express himself fluently in English.

In contrast, "Pierre's" parents were from the Congo. His mother had chosen to speak French with him as an 'adopted mother tongue' from birth. The mother came to the school as a parent volunteer to help with the toddlers and was able to mediate learning and interpret for her son, to a large extent. When this child initially started attending the school at the age of three and a half, he understood no English. He went through emotional storms because of his difficulty in communicating, but the mother was there with her limited English to be her child's mediator and interpreter. At the time of the study he was four and a half years old and more fluent in English than French; he preferred to speak English, even at home. The mother said when she came to South Africa her husband encouraged her to attend the English service at her church rather than the French service. She said that she is also learning English from her son, and had been learning English over four years (see Parent Interview – Appendix L, pg 230). In this way she developed basic conversation proficiency (BICS) - which she felt is adequate in conversing with her son but she recognized that to study further, she needs to develop her ability to use English in an academic context. Her interpretation of "David's" semi-lingualism (since he has the same language and cultural background as herself) was that he could not listen. However "David's" hearing had been tested by medical doctors at the hospital and no problem was found.

In the case of “Manuel”, his parents thought his lack of attention in class and his inability to draw any representations of people or objects on paper was ‘naughtiness’, the father telling the teacher to ‘beat him’ if he didn’t sit at the table, listen to his teacher and write his alphabet (his understanding of how his son should be ‘taught’ to behave, listen and learn). The mother herself was seen to hit him in order for him to be quiet and behave. They were determined that he should be ready for Grade 1 the next year. They said they had had similar problems with his big sister when she started Grade 1 because of her inability to speak or understand English. The mother eventually admitted that the little sister, who was three years old, had better communication skills than her son in many respects, but she still refused to accept that there was a serious problem that needed assessment. One can observe “Manuel” ‘drifting’ around the Grade R classroom (for 5 – 6 year olds) as the father of one of the boys talks of his experiences flying a helicopter (see Video 1, Talk by parent (Blue Group). He could not understand the parent and his reference point was his class teacher, who was walking around the classroom while the parent was speaking.

With persuasion and the accumulation of evidence of his learning problems and behavioural disturbance, including bringing the mother to school to spend a couple of hours observing him for herself (loud crying and signs of distress and a lack of purpose to his actions and inability to focus on anything for any length of time) the father decided he should be taken for assessment and that the big sister should start teaching him English and (formal) reading and writing at home. The father, a professional educator, was fluent in English but lived away from home as he worked at a school in a rural area. Certain problems started to be identified in the course of the assessment, including a visual problem in one eye. Slowly, improvements started to be observed. He started drawing ‘stick’ people as it seems he was trained to do at home – as well as drawing his own random squiggles and lines. His older sibling started consciously helping him by teaching him English words and ‘how to write’, ‘how to draw’ - together with the words in the mother tongue (Lingala). To our astonishment, being drilled in the alphabet at home as well as being spoken to in English, supported by words in the mother tongue, which the father emphasized as

being very important, seemed to work for him: he started recognising his friends' names and the days of the week as well as the months of the year, on the class board! He also started being able to attract his teacher's help by crying out "Teacher, teacher!" and complain verbally about other children, instead of reacting physically. The withdrawn unhappy, crying child who only wanted to play with the toddler who reminded him of his little sister, changed dramatically between June and August. He saw his teacher as his advocate and friend. The teacher worked hard to help the other children understand his impulsive behaviour and lack of self-regulation, which she had observed (reflecting-IN-action) as similar to that of a two or three year old in many respects. Outside in the playground, instead of sitting by himself, isolated and tense, he could come to his teacher, relax his body against her and his teacher could 'mould' her body to his: they could sway together under the trees in the playground while their arms and hands were interlinked and "Manuel" could rest from his concerns (for example, when he could next get a turn on the swing). Intersubjective awareness of each other developed with one or two emerging words from "Manuel" including the word "teacher" said in 100 different ways. His teacher became his reference point, his way of making sense of his experience, as they bonded with each other. She could also set firm, loving limits to help him regulate his behaviour as he started to understand a few basic commands and directions in English.

5.2.5 The Elusiveness of Language:

Words can sometimes be said, or whispered by children that do not immediately seem to make sense. Two examples follow.

"Phila" is a confident speaker of both Xhosa and English (see her Mid-Year School Progress Report, Appendix O, pg 237 and Video 3, "Phila reading"). She is confident in her own identity and has sung Xhosa songs as well as danced a traditional dance with the yellow cones (see Video 5 "Culture of Childhood"). She can read in English, probably at Grade 2 level as she is self-motivated to do homework each evening with her older brother who is in Grade 2 (see video). She looks forward to her teacher bringing her "Learn Like Lerato", a newspaper supplement that encourages literacy and numeracy skills, up to Grade 3 level. She

takes that home to do with her brother. She reads the words in all the languages on the back page of “Learn Like Lerato” with interest and enjoyment. During Story Time she reads the story book quietly, but simultaneously, with her teacher and then re-reads the story to herself afterwards, pointing to the words as she says them. She is pictured in the first photo below painting an ambulance at the scene of an accident, with her best friend next to her. There is an ‘angel’ figure with a heart, hovering over the scene in the background, visible in the second photo.



In the second photo, we see the completed panel, one of four done collaboratively by our children, to commemorate Nelson Mandela’s 95th Birthday. The children drew the pictures and painted them themselves, with the help of community artists. This was seen as a way to ‘Give children a voice’. The panels would be put up in a public space in the neighbourhood.

It was only four days after this painting was completed that she whispered her news to her teacher, in the midst of noisy play in the classroom: her uncle had been hijacked and shot. He had to wait four hours for treatment at the hospital and had died. Her mother had cried the whole night.

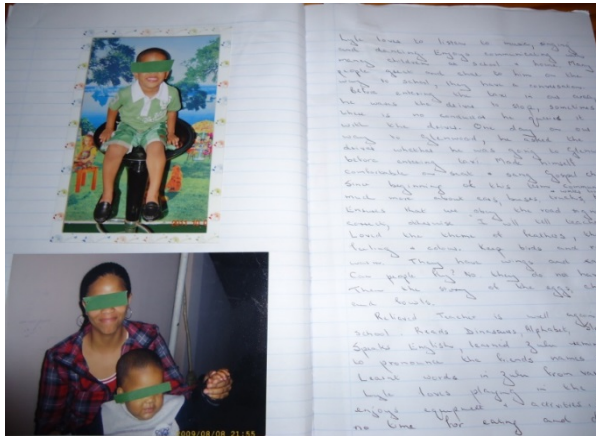
It was six weeks after the funeral that she once again whispered and indicated she had something to show her teacher: the funeral programme, which she had put into her school bag. “I miss my uncle. He used to change our car tyres”.

Two months later she made a paper gun, by folding an A4 piece of paper and gluing on a trigger. Across the barrel of the gun she wrote these words: *a gun for*

“...” (her best friend’s name). “Why did you make a gun? Gun’s kill people!” said the teacher. “Just because,” was her reply.

In a second example of the ‘elusiveness of language’, a four year old child “Laurie”, when coming to put his blanket into his locker after rest-time, was heard by a teacher saying to himself “My mother’s ID – Granny hit my Mom, the ID, the ID...” Fortunately the teacher was listening to these words, which did not seem to make sense. When questioning the grandmother the next day, a story emerged of events the week before the mother had died, nine months previously. There was serious conflict between this mother and the grandmother, because the mother was addicted to alcohol and was in a physically abusive relationship with “Laurie’s” father. The reflection-TO-action, with the grandmother, was for professional counselling for both the grandson and herself, and they were given the name and telephone number of an organisation offering that service.

In a second step, the creation of ‘Memory Boxes’ was discussed with “Laurie’s” grandmother and “Phila’s” mother respectively, as a special box for their children to keep something concrete to remind them of their loved one and to help them talk. “Laurie’s” grandmother was an active participant co-creating “Laurie’s” Learning Story Book, and forming an ‘image of his identity’ within this book. “Laurie” was said to be named by his mother after the mother’s cousin who stays in America in San Diego and his second name was that of another cousin who looks like him, “smiling and friendly”. “Laurie’s” grandmother stuck photos of him and a photo of the baby “Laurie” and his deceased mother, in happier times into the Learning Story Book. She also wrote anecdotes about what “Laurie” said about birds (we were enquiring into birds and flight) and wrote little stories of what he did in different places at different times (for example, singing a Gospel chorus in a taxi!). She wrote that he was learning IsiZulu (as a second language) and reminded his grandmother to pronounce his friends’ names correctly!



5.2.6 The participation of the children in their own learning, as ‘agents’:

- In After-care, there was an incident where the children were perceived as ‘breaking the rules’. The After-care teacher got distressed because the children were ‘sneaking’ into the children’s bathroom to wet tissue paper (making a mess in the bathroom in the process) in order to take it outside to ‘paint’ with it on the blackboard by the steps, going down to the playground. She was shouting at the children, but this wasn’t stopping their behaviour as every afternoon they went into the bathroom for tissues, to wet with water! She was asked by a teacher to ‘take a step back’ and think about what the children were learning by painting with the tissue and what she could give them as an alternative (pots of water and paintbrushes or sponges to paint with). This has now become a regular, happy activity which engages the children productively in painting with water on the blackboard. Instead of shouting at the children in English (and not being listened to) she has met their actions with understanding and support.
- Another time a child (“Thando”) was severely scolded for ‘signing’ on the security registers by the front door, where the parents sign their children in and out of the school. This was reflected on by the teachers and a need was seen for ‘class lists’ in each class, where the child can identify his or her name and ‘sign’ their name. In one grade R group, a child (“Phila”) started writing the word ‘sing’ (sign) before writing her name! Through this, the teachers saw that the children seemed to gain satisfaction from modelling their actions and behaviour on that of adults.

- In the one Grade R class, two or three children lead by “Phila” and her friends were exploring the concept of ‘length’ by slotting yellow cones one into another, from one end of the carpet to the other (see Video 6 “Balancing the yellow cones”). They then collaborated with one another in lifting it up to shoulder height, but when trying to walk while holding it, it would fall apart! This caught their interest and they tried, again and again, to achieve their goal, drawing more and more of their friends into the activity! “Lindo”, who usually found it difficult to play co-operatively was eventually attracted to join the activity. There had been competition over the cones until they realized that in order to achieve their objective, all the cones needed to be used. They balanced the length of cones on their heads, from one end of the room to the other. The children commented noisily and there was much mirth! At the same time, in the foreground of the photo below, one can see a child totally absorbed in his own activity, constructing a ball out of hexagonal shapes.



Balancing the length of cones on their heads!

“Phila” and her group of friends then spontaneously started using the cones as ‘vuvuzelas’ (a noisy activity, comparing the sound when a long vuvuzela is blown into with a short vuvuzela) followed by the creation of a ‘Xhosa’ dance to their song, using the vuvuzelas to dance with (see Video 5 The culture of childhood)!

Another day, while stacking the cones, they started exploring the concept of ‘height’, measuring the height against themselves and their teacher. They then went taller than the teacher’s height and worked out a way of slotting the cones

together so that when they lifted it up, it touched the ceiling! During that week we were discussing 'Air transport' and aeroplanes and helicopters as a 'theme'. One child, "Lindo", took the length of cones and raised it up to turn the ceiling fan around and around - "Like a propeller" the class teacher said, affirming the learning experience and linking it to how helicopters turn their rotor blades (one child's father is learning to fly a helicopter and shared his learning experiences with the children: see Videos 1 and 2). In the process, the neighbouring classroom teacher's attention was drawn, not to the learning taking place, but to 'misbehaviour' and possible 'danger' created by allowing a child to turn the fans with the stacked cones. The teacher walked in not understanding the learning context and was horrified at the perceived 'danger' and abruptly told "Lindo", the child turning the fan, to "Stop that!" However, the child's teacher had taken a photo to 'document the learning' for the "Learning Story Book", and a video, "Turning the fans with the yellow cones" – see Video 4). Reflecting ON the action, the class teacher's perspective was this was appropriate only IF there was a danger (if the ceiling fans were switched on, which they weren't). The question the other teacher posed was "How safe is it?" and "Would another child switch on the fans while the cones are touching them, to see what would happen?" (A hypothetical question) The bigger question was: "How do we affirm the child's learning process?" and "Is this misbehaviour, or a missed learning opportunity, if we stop the learning process?" In the review meeting with the teachers, the concern was that the children should NOT "learn" by acting 'wildly'. It was perceived by the (English speaking) teacher who walked into the classroom that there was a lack of clear boundaries as to acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and a problem in communicating this to this particular child, yet there was a IsiZulu speaking teacher (speaking the home language of the child) and an English speaking teacher, both there to both support the learning and to set verbal boundaries that could be clearly understood - and to help put away the cones when the learning experience was over. The photo of the child turning the fan with the yellow cones was shown to the mother by the class teacher, who showed interest and happiness at her 'clever' son – the immediacy of the perceived 'problem' of 'wild behaviour' was lost to her. In a later "Learning Story" some weeks later (in the 3rd Term, after the holidays) he built his own "helicopter" together with another friend who build his own alongside his. This too, formed part of this child's "Learning Story Book". Note the use of the semi-circular

blocks again! Note: the turning of the fan and the construction of a helicopter with the blocks occurred before the father came to speak about his experiences flying a helicopter (Video 1). It is also important to note that father is also not “Lindo’s” father; therefore the motivation to build the helicopters came from the topic ‘transport’ (see Video 14, “The problem with English”). However, the interest in helicopters and how they fly was sustained throughout the period of the research and into the next school term by “Lindo” and his friends, building their conceptual understanding and vocabulary considerably.



There is a photo of the learning story, in the Learning Story Book (see photo below). The Story: “Lindo” decided to build a helicopter with the blocks (1). Then he decided to make ‘controls’ to fly his helicopter (2). He had a friend “Luyanda” who joined him, building next to him”. What was your child learning? “He was learning geometry and spatial relations. He climbed into his helicopter and used his imagination to ‘fly’!” (Comment by teacher) How can this be extended? “He built a huge aeroplane outside in the playground, using the tunnel, planks and steps and ‘A’ frame” (comment by teacher). In the “Comment by parent” box the parent wrote; “Shows ability to be creative and determinance in seeing the outcome and it encourages him to see that everyone notices”. The parent is articulating her child’s learning dispositions. In the box “What did your child say about the story?” the parent wrote: “He enjoyed building a helicopter”.



“Lindo” later stretched his capabilities further by building an aeroplane using the concrete tunnel as the body of the plane for passengers to sit in (see photo above). He was very angry when stopped by another child from using two planks he had placed at the side of the tunnel (not visible in the photo). The teacher helped him take other planks out of the shed. In the photo above, two of the passengers have discovered that one of the plane’s wings (a wooden beam) is only balanced and could act as a ‘see-saw’, but when they did this, the maker of the plane was not happy! “Lindo” wanted to be in control of his construction and dictate what could and could not be done with it.

Below is a drawing, depicting the helicopter.



The learning (about the concepts of lines and shapes) was further extended in the class by painting over ‘straight lines that meet at an angle’ (sticking down masking tape and painting between the lines, before pulling off the tape to observe the pattern created). They also used the yellow cones to make ‘straight lines that intersect at a central point’, exploring the ‘criss-cross of straight lines’. This lead

spontaneously to the drawing of criss-cross lines in a 'star' pattern, which was then joined together to make the blades on the roof of the helicopter, as seen in the photo (which quite a few children then copied, in different ways). They also explored 'closed angles' using the straight lines of the yellow cones. This led spontaneously to the identification of the concept of a 'triangle' with three friends working collaboratively together to make their triangle (see middle photo). The teachers mostly supported and extended the children's understanding of the concepts involved by questioning the children to help them describe and explain their learning experiences, giving them the words in English and then in IsiZulu or asking one of their friends to explain in the vernacular "It is a path that meets another path" (IsiZulu) - we had been making a 'map' of the road on the carpet with masking tape when we were looking at road transport). "The round tape was pulled out, to make a straight line that *intersected* (English word) with another line" (teacher). "The straight lines make a star" (child, drawing). "The straight lines meet at a centre point" (teacher) – both comments in English, but the child went on to talk about stars in IsiZulu to her friend.

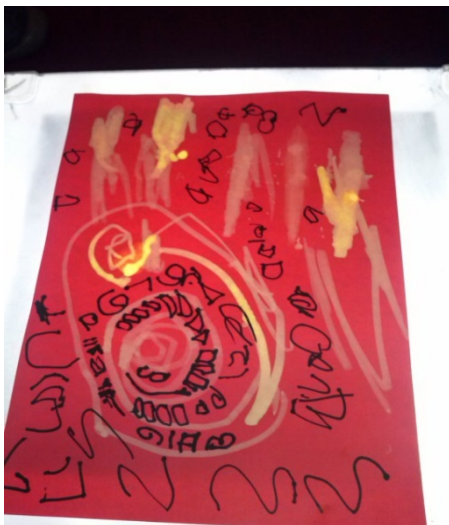


- With the interest in the vegetable garden, snails were found which led to an inquiry into snails and an exploration of the spiral shape.

A salt-dough model of a snail



- In the first photo, “Lindo” counted the shapes he was drawing in the spiral of the snail’s shell he had just completed: “One, two, three, four...” and so on. The spiral was drawn with bleach on red paper and a black indelible marker was then used by “Lindo” to draw the pattern in the spiral. The photo was taken with the picture on the light table, light shining through the bleached lines. The second photo is a Mandala pattern, using empty snails’ shells, which “Katie” found in the vegetable garden and washed, before using.



5.2.5 The “Culture of Childhood”

While exploring the concept of ‘colour’ in the 2nd Term, the children in the senior Grade R group made a rainbow out of their hand-prints, one child having drawn the semi-circular outline for the first colour to be printed against. The teacher had been

reinforcing the concept of a 'semi-circle' as the arc of the rainbow, and quite spontaneously, some of the girls, lead by "Phila" went to the block cupboard and came back with semi-circular shaped blocks to do a 'rainbow dance', under their rainbow, while others helped to tidy up.



The "Rainbow Dance"

It was then 'ring-time' or group time on the carpet, so the teacher suggested they use their semi-circles to make a shape, which put together made the shape of a flower. They loved it so much that the ring-time went on with the flower in the centre.



This construction became more and more elaborate with further birthdays!



Note: the second photo above shows a detail of the flower, now including a papier mache snail placed amongst other animals and interesting objects, which had been made as part of our exploration of ‘Spirals’ and ‘Snails’. This construction of the birthday flower took about an hour of ‘extended, shared thinking’ by a group of three friends, with others joining in as their attention was attracted by the scene of the action, without any conflict or difference of opinion. There was no teacher to accompany them and a teacher threatened to chase them out as they were alone in the classroom, but was stopped by the class teacher who had overheard that teacher’s raised voice from a neighbouring room. This was also very nearly a case of a missed learning opportunity, as they were seen as ‘making a mess’ in the classroom instead of playing outside (it had already been ‘tidy-up time’ and the class had to be ‘ready’, from the teacher’s perspective!) While the children constructed quietly in the classroom, not creating any disturbance from their class teacher’s perspective, they had been chatting to each other in the vernacular and in English (‘code-switching’) on how to decorate their flower and deciding what to put where and why, which they explained in English to their teacher afterwards (she is an English-speaking teacher) as she took photographs of their flower. She also took a video of the flower, as the children sang “Happy Birthday” (see Video 5 “The

Culture of Childhood”). The birthday flower has become a well established ‘tradition’ in that class now, part of their ‘culture of what a birthday means’ and reflects how the ‘culture of childhood’ is a process of creation and re-creation, as one can see by a new birthday song sung by a mother and recorded, for the teacher to learn (see Video 5).

When it was “Dirkie’s” birthday, the teacher proposed the creation of a rainbow around an old bicycle wheel (see the photo at the beginning of Chapter 6). “Dirkie” had already discovered a rainbow on his hand, if he held it by the fishtank so that the sun, as it shone through the water and the glass at a certain angle, refracted light onto his hand – and onto a piece of white paper, that the teacher proposed he hold there.

The teacher proposed that each child whose birthday it was could have a turn to weave a different colour ribbon, starting with white, the colour of a cloud. The children spontaneously created a block flower again, from “rainbow shapes” (semi-circles) as a ‘centre piece’ for “Dirkie’s” birthday ring with “Lindo” taking the lead in organising it. They made the central focus for the birthday cake the middle of the flower on a raised circle shape. As each subsequent birthday occurred, each birthday child would weave another ribbon of a different colour into the ‘rainbow wheel’ of the old bicycle wheel. This wheel also became a ‘steering wheel’ for the “Chair that could Transform” into a...”bed, kitchen, car, boat and plane”, using large cardboard boxes to construct this amazing ‘chair’ (another Learning Story). The rainbow has become a constant theme: in the Mosaic that was built by the children, “Dirkie’s” wish for the school was a rainbow! “But we have a rainbow” said the teacher. “No, a rainbow in the garden,” he said.

The ‘culture of childhood’ is also shown in the children’s ‘vuvuzela dance’ using the yellow cones to make ‘vuvuzelas’, play ‘stick fighting’ (a traditional male sport) with the length of cones or skipping over the line of cones. The ‘culture of childhood’ is also seen in their own creation of action songs and dance, incorporating sounds and words from their mother tongue (see Video 5, “The culture of childhood”) and abrupt ‘commands’ in English (for example “You understand!” and “Don’t move!”).

An example of the children's ability to self-regulate their learning was the exploration of a large puddle of water which had accumulated at the bottom of the playground after the rains. The lead-researcher went out with the children who wanted to go outside as she decided to record the experience, to review it with the teachers afterwards (who had anticipated 'the worst'). They had never been allowed outside by the teachers before because of the perceived problems involved, which actually never materialized. However, no child jumped in the puddles to splash other children, and no child jumped in with shoes on. Even a two year old boy came up to the puddle so that it touched the tips of his shoes, and observed the older children splashing bare-foot and playing with the wet sand and water. "This is the happiest time of my life," said one boy. Of interest was all the different 'languages' the children spoke while they explored the puddle with absorbed attention, using all their senses - 'deep level learning' taking place as a qualitatively different way as they responded to the 'provocation' presented by the puddle (Laevers, 1998: 73). The teacher's role was verbalizing, structuring and mediating the experience using English(see video 9 "Exploring the puddle"). This experience affirmed a deep-seated belief in the teacher that every child should have the opportunity to play in a puddle as an important part of childhood ('the right to play' UNCRC 1989, Article 31) which was reflected on with the other teachers who were hesitant to allow this experience, as they were expecting the children to 'go wild' in the puddle and get saturated with water and dirty with mud! However, from the video the teachers could see the children showing sensibility and concentrated absorption in the learning experience.

Another example is when the children made a home for a spider, found inside a cupboard. An old fish-tank was used to make this home, the teacher worrying: "How safe is it to construct with blocks around a glass tank that is already cracked?" The children regulated the safety of the activity themselves. In the photos, the children are looking through the walls of the glass tank at the spider, hiding in an empty ice-cream box inside the tank. At the end of the day the spider was put back into its habitat, the cupboard where we keep the light box materials! Whenever we catch an 'Incy-wincy spider' we "Let him go again!" (This can be seen as part of our 'culture of childhood' and the 'school culture' - not to hurt any living creature).



The children are looking at the spider in the old fish tank, which they have decorated with construction toys and wooden blocks.

5.2.8 The unique identity of each child, as expressed through their drawings:

After looking at air flight we started looking at bird flight and the habitat of birds while continuing to explore the concept of 'direction' (up, down, left, right, behind, between and so on) . "Lunga" drew a bird with many legs "How many legs does your bird have, "Lunga"?" said the teacher "Nine" said "Lunga" (there were actually eight, when recounted).

"Do birds have so many legs?" asked the teacher.

"My bird is a 'one-only'," said "Lunga".

"Why has it got so many legs?" asked the teacher.

"Because it is a robot!" said "Lunga".

"Lunga" couldn't speak any English when he started school at the beginning of the year when a large-scale 'robot' to show articulation of the human body was made collaboratively by a group of children, including "Lunga". He had enough receptive ability in English at that time so that he understood the word 'robot' as representing an artificial or abnormal construction, a man-made machine, and could reuse this word meaningfully, five months later, when he needed to!



The “one-only bird” half-way up the tree!

In reflecting-ON-action in the teacher’s review meeting, the reflection was on WHY the bird was called a ‘one-only’ bird. The reason was interpreted thus: the children had not known how to draw birds and said “I don’t know how to draw a bird”. The assistant teacher drew them a ‘model’ and soon there were two replicas on the board, “Dirkie” explaining that his had an egg inside it. Inside the egg was a miniature replica! The bird was flying through the air with the chick inside the egg, just as a pregnant mother has her baby in her womb! “Why is the bird doing this, “Dirkie”?” asked the teacher. “Because Daddy penguins look after their baby” was the reply (we had been reading about the Emperor Penguin at the South Pole). It was a daddy bird, not a mother bird! Significantly, this child has no father and the mother is absent. He is brought up by his grandmother, who is caring and nurturing.



“The daddy bird, flying with the baby bird inside the egg”.

The teacher facilitating this activity had said to the assistant teacher “No, do not draw a ‘model’ otherwise every bird will be stereotyped” (as can be seen from the second orange coloured bird, next to “Dirkie’s” bird in the photo of the whole display). “Each child should draw their own picture of a bird, their own way. I want every bird to be different, special – as every child will have their own way of drawing their bird”, said the teacher. It appears that “Lunga” understood these words in his own way!” In order to help the children understand the differing shapes and sizes of the birds a teacher from another class encouraged her children to trace around the outline of the bird before trying to draw the representation of the bird. This was photographed by the teacher to “make the learning visible”. The strategy used by the teacher to encourage the children to draw the unique size and shape of the birds was reflected on in the Review Meeting with the teachers.

Another thread of thinking emerged while the children were preparing the backdrop by painting the blue sky, “Phila” asked “Can we make a map of where the birds are?” The children had already made a map of roads after walking our neighbourhood and as a teacher pointed out in our Review Meeting, we had also been reading pirate stories with treasure maps and a “Dora Explorer” story book with a personified “Map” in it. “Even a TREASURE map” quickly added “Dirkie”. “Lunga” said “I know - gold coins have *chocolate* in them”. The next day, the teacher brought out old, yellowed chart paper and four of the children (two to each

chart) did draw their own 'treasure maps' which they rolled up and hid behind the cupboard, to be 'discovered' at another time all ready to be used to explore for treasure. The three children, with three different 'mother tongues', were all communicating in English with each other as the 'common language'.

5.2.9 The Mother Tongue as 'the language of identification'

Two of the children enrolled in the research are learning a second language as their 'language of identification', besides English as their first language.

"Jemima's" father speaks French, and she has recently started learning it as a 2nd language as well as English, the language her mother speaks at home with the family. "Jemima" is learning French from her cousin, who is newly arrived from the Congo. She dictated a story about a bird in English, which was translated into French and read to her. This was written into her "Learning Story Book" to be read to her to encourage her to learn French. The mother has requested French stories for the father and the cousin to read to "Jemima" at home, which fortunately we have in the school library. Fortunately "Jemima's" teacher can speak basic conversational French, which further motivates her to learn to speak it.

Afrikaans is "Dirkie's" 2nd language, as it is his grandmother's mother tongue (he identifies himself as Afrikaans, although English is his first language). Learning Afrikaans as a second language is being supported at school, as part of the language research at the request of the grandmother. She reports that if there is a word in English which he doesn't know in Afrikaans (such as the word "snails") he is now motivated to ask her! His teacher gave him a knitted cat to take home for a weekend, which could only speak Afrikaans ("Piet die Kat") to motivate him to learn words in Afrikaans. He is also borrowing Afrikaans story books from the school library for his grandmother to read to him. He actively requests photos to be taken of various activities he engages in so that he can review them with his grandmother in his "Learning Story Book" and ask her for the vocabulary in Afrikaans.

The following photo shows “Dirkie” identifying the word “Donderdag” on Thursday, because of the initial letter “D” for “Dirkie”!



5.2.10 Linguicism and the use of the Persona Doll to combat it:

“Lunga” has had to come to terms with a newly enrolled boy (who started in August) who had been brought up by his IsiZulu speaking grandmother on the farm and couldn’t speak any English. “Lunga” started teasing him because he couldn’t speak English, showing ‘linguicism’. This happened although he himself couldn’t speak any English at the beginning of the year and is also brought up by his grandmother, who only speaks IsiZulu and who travels with him each day from an informal township area outside the city and drops him off on her way to work. When told of her grandson’s prejudice against the new boy, she was horrified and said she’d ‘beat him up’ (in IsiZulu)! The teacher, together with her translator – one of the General Assistants – persuaded her that this would not be the answer to the problem! The conflict between the two boys continued the next day when “Lunga” thought it would be fun to smash a ‘ball’ (a sphere constructed out of hexagonal shapes) that the new boy had not been able to construct for himself and which another friend had constructed for him and that he cherished, as he found it too difficult to make himself. After being spoken to in their mother tongue, they resolved the conflict and seemed to come to an understanding, finding a private space in a ‘car’ constructed from a box in which they could pull down the ‘visor’ and

chat privately to one another. They shared the yellow hexagonal shapes and are relaxing (see photo).



This evidence of “linguicism” in the children’s behaviour towards other children or adults who do not speak English, or who speak IsiZulu or Xhosa, was identified at different times in the process of the research, including towards “Luyanda”.

One day, one of the boys started ‘slaughtering’ a cow at the dough table, using a plastic knife and shouting out the traditional terminology for the parts of the cow he was cutting off (the hooves, the head and so on). This caused a lot of excitement and four other boys came to join him, including “Luyanda” (whose family background is Xhosa), whose mother, in the course of a parent interview and in the first focus group discussion, had said that he is now ‘choosing’ to speak English over Xhosa. She expressed some concern about this, particularly with regard to family functions in the township. “Luyanda” came up with Xhosa terminology for slaughtering his cow, which was laughed at by the other boys who were using IsiZulu terminology. He then retreated into his shell, switching off from the ‘celebratory mood’ of the other boys who were slaughtering their cows for the feast.

Various problems with regard to observed prejudice against languages other than English were discussed by the teachers in the Review Meeting. At the beginning of the year, the IsiZulu speaking teachers had reported that some of the children used

to 'laugh' when the teacher used IsiZulu in conversation, which also happened when Afrikaans words were used (for example, teaching the children to greet in Afrikaans in the morning). Some of the IsiZulu speaking staff members had criticised the type of IsiZulu spoken by one staff member.

In the first focus group discussion (in the Blue Group), a parent expressed concern at how his child was learning to express himself in English "*Is English learning the problem, or what? I don't know, as a parent!*" The parents also spoke about the varieties of spoken IsiZulu - "North Coast and South Coast IsiZulu", clearly concerned that the variety creates a problem in teaching a 'standardized IsiZulu' to their children.

Certain children also showed disrespect in the way they initially treated an IsiZulu speaking 'Persona Doll' called "Sipho", pulling down his pants 'accidentally' to see if he was a boy and acting 'roughly' towards him. This Persona Doll visited them several times after that, to chat about his family, his dislike of the sleeping arrangements in his small, one-bed roomed house in a low-income 'township', his grandmother and his school (the issue of 'bullying' and teasing, because he is IsiZulu-speaking and the children at his school only want to speak English). A certain amount of understanding for "Sipho's" situation and empathy for his struggles to be understood was developed amongst the children as "Sipho came to chat about exciting events, such as a traditional wedding he attended (see Video 7, 'the Persona Doll Sipho'), a shopping trip, a visit to the farm and other exciting and positive events where his ability to speak IsiZulu was an asset (and the teacher's ability to speak IsiZulu and 'interpret' for "Sipho" was also an asset).

Linguicism could only be addressed through communicating the 'image of identity' of the IsiZulu speaking Persona Doll in a positive way. Initially the Persona Doll, "Sipho" had been teased. Some children perhaps saw in his circumstances a negative reflection of "Sipho" as a person (he lived in a one-roomed house and didn't speak English). The fact that he spoke IsiZulu seemed to be linked in the children's minds to his family's poverty; this seemed to create a negative association and could have been why "Sipho" was treated disrespectfully. The Persona Doll "Sipho" had to speak about how he was bullied at his own school (he

does not attend the children's school) and request the children's advice as to what he should do, to encourage empathy for his situation.

Teasing (as an imaginary situation) was experienced by another Persona Doll, "Ellie". Her story that she shared with the children was that she had been sent home from her school with nits and lice. She explained to the children how she had been teased when she came back to school with her hair cut short! This story was used as a way to help the children develop empathy for "Ellie's" situation and address the issue of self-consciousness, shyness and bullying, as her situation had been experienced by several children in two of the classes. She also helped the children understand various gender issues in terms of how the boys perceived the girls and the girls perceived the boys. When "Ellie" had long hair, the boys were always pulling her hair and she had to learn to say "No" and tell the teacher. Over time, the children learned to 'chat' to a Persona doll about their own problems as well as give suggestions as to what they thought the Persona Doll could do. Some of the children in the Yellow Group could not do this with "Sipho" when he first visited them (see Video 7) and they chorused "yes" to questions. The Persona Doll approach helped to identify and address issues of bias, prejudice or discrimination as it built the teachers 'knowledge-for-action' (Formosinho & Oliveira Formosinho, 2012: 600).

5.2.11 Concerns of the parents:

"The children must not lose their identity, but cling onto it and carry on with everything else. They must plant that one tree, then grab whatever they can, from everything else!"

(A parent, speaking at the second focus group discussion)

5.2.11.1. The need for culturally acceptable forms of expression:

There was a concern in the first focus group discussion about the need to uphold cultural expressions of 'politeness' and parents' desire that their children be taught respectful ways of speaking. One parent reported that his child had started using very abrupt, rude ways of speaking to his parents "*I was surprised and shocked at his tone. You can't express yourself in that tone. It is so strong. That is the*

problem I have recently experienced. Has he got a problem in expressing himself or what, I don't know! Is English learning the problem, or what? I don't know, as a parent!"

This was reviewed with the teachers and the teachers and staff became more aware of how we can address the children more respectfully and how we can encourage them to be polite and use cultural forms of respect. It was remembered that the one General Assistant who works as a cook, always makes sure the children accept anything she gives them with two hands (a culturally accepted form of respect).

The 'right to a name and an identity' became a focus for action after this first focus group discussion with the parents (Reflection-TO-Action). It was important to teach the children respectful ways to address their family members, (which a parent spoke about in the first focus group discussion in the Blue Group); this was followed up with parents by sticking a page with questions in the Learning Story Book for them to fill in. They were asked to explain why they chose their child's name and to share something about their child's surname and clan name, if they had one, explaining where that name came from. They were also asked for the names they wished their child to use when addressing different family members, from both the mother and the father's sides of the family, and write these down next to a picture their child would draw of the family. Some of the parents responded with beautiful stories, detailing how they chose their child's name and the meaning or history of the name, especially those with indigenous names. An example follows:

"On the 17th January 2008, myself as his mother miscarried and in May 2008 as I was preparing what was going to be mine, focussing on spiritual growth, favour, wisdom, I was reading, I discovered I was pregnant and delivered a healthy boy 30 December 2008. His name (after a book in the Bible) means 'servant of the Lord'. The Lord promised me (that) mercy, peace and love will be multiplied to me (a quote from this book). Therefore, I would like to forward my appreciation as a parent that with all the teachings from the teacher ... (my son) has grown to be best child, bringing warmth and love and even discipline amongst all of us. He hugs us

every day...we are not allowed to use Big Words otherwise he is going to tell (his teacher). Tidy up after breakfast or supper...there is a lot to tell...He started at the school exactly at the period where he was learning to speak so that he could have friends to interact with, there is where he then started focussing in speaking, learning English words. Our first language is Xhosa (home) which is very close to IsiZulu and that is what we use at home”.

Short extracts from other Learning Story Books, give a brief idea of the meaning behind each child’s name, or the history of that name:

-“Way of appreciating and praising the Lord for such gift (child)”

-“Looking at my background as I have a first born baby boy but since I found out I will have a combination of gender which is boy and a girl then I named her (...) which means God choose the best for me”

- “(His name) means we have build a family and our family became stronger with the birth of him. It is a Swazi surname. (His) grandparents had lived in Swaziland and immigrated to South Africa in the early 1920’s. Our clan name is (...)”

- “(His name) is a French name, the meaning is similar to (...) of which is the father’s name. Basically it means “a man of the people”, someone who is full of love and always wants to associate himself with the people”

- “(His name) is a combination of nature and beauty (beauty of nature) and our surname is the name of an induna (headman) of King Shaka’

- “I chose this name (...) before getting pregnant. I was thinking about all the good things that God has done for me and then I said if I get a child I’ll name her/him (...) Everything God gives is good”

- “It is a family name. He’s great grandfather and grandfather has [sic] the same name.”

This mother confided that she had struggled to have a baby for many years:

- “I had that (the name) kept on my mind for many years thinking how happy I could be to have a baby girl. When she was born we were all excited in the family as she is the first born. (Her name) means Happiness. The surname means we like to laugh and encouraging other people not to be shy to smile and show their teeth as they make us beautiful.”

- "(Her name) *means 'the light shines on'*. 'Sunshine' (her son's name) – *he is the first born and (her daughter's) arrival was the continuum of the light (he) brought into my life and the world. She is using my surname (...) as I am not married to her father (...) she enjoys being referred to as (...) the feminine gender of (...).*

Many of the children drew pictures of their family members for the parent to label in their mother tongue, for example: "uTata" or "uBaba" for "Daddy". At this point, some of the Learning Story books went home and failed to return to school, until a child would insist on the book coming back to school, for more 'learning story' photographs! For example, "Luyanda's" book didn't return, although the mother had signed him on for the research and attended the first focus group discussion. His aunt, whom he stays with, explained that because the mother was away, she couldn't fill in the page! Learning stories accumulated which couldn't be stuck into his book, including the photos of the helicopter he constructed together with "Lindo", until he returned it himself, to get his Learning Stories stuck into the book!

A teacher had a particular concern about a child in the Grade 00 class, whom she reported was regularly addressed by his father as the "Little Sh-t" and "The F-up", and who had consistently been fetched late by the father. This parent was a DJ at nightclubs. In the review meeting, the teachers reflected on the way this child's self-identity was developing and how they could encourage a positive sense of individual and group identity with the children, through the use of the Persona Dolls. The class teacher reported back that she had told the child it was wrong for his father to use such language (Big Words) and the child told his father "My teacher says..." The father apologised to the child! In the second focus group discussion, the parents emphasized that teachers have a lot of power over their children; children quote the teacher as the authority and the parents have to listen!

The teachers started reviewing the type of language used by the children, the way they were addressed by the adults in their life and how to encourage polite forms of communication. Two sisters started at the school at the beginning of the 3rd Term. They had been looked after by their grandmother in a 'coloured' township, because their own mother and father had repeatedly been in and out of treatment for drug addiction and the parents were presently living on the streets in the city. The two

sisters came to the school when they came to stay with their other grandmother, who lives in a flat in the area. The one sister, who looked very similar to her sibling, rapidly got called “Middle Finger”, because she tended to use that gesture. The ‘F’ word seemed to spread around the school “like a computer virus”, as one teacher said. When challenged by a teacher as to her use of the ‘F’ word and certain rude actions, the one sister (aged five) said, “But I’m from (name of township)” indicating that she perceived her use of language as tied in with her identity. The “F- word” was heard in our youngest age group, particularly the ‘macho’ boys. Then, one of our two-year old girls who was always silent, never even greeting her teacher in the morning, said “F- you!” as she grabbed back her blanket that another two-year old girl had taken from her! This was the first word the teacher had ever heard her say!

The search for polite forms of communication and the search for ‘sense and meaning’ had an amusing result. One of the IsiZulu speaking teachers tried to model polite forms of speech in English to her children, saying that she was going to the ‘Ladies’ when she excused herself to go to the toilet. This resulted in one of the (English speaking) boys, “Ricky” who had just turned four saying, “If you go to the Ladies, how does Mr “X” (our male teacher) and Uncle “Y” (the school gardener) go to the Ladies? Do they have to sit down?” (Author’s note: there is only one staff toilet inside the school building which both genders use!)

5.2.11.2 The ‘choice’ of the child and the responsibility of the teacher:

The IsiZulu speaking teacher tried to speak English to a few of the IsiZulu speaking three year olds and was ‘put in her place’ by them, in the manner they responded to her, in IsiZulu! “Haw, teacher! Why are you speaking to us in English? We know you, you can speak IsiZulu!” they said in IsiZulu. The one ‘powerful’ three year old boy in this group “Thando”, was said by his father in the second focus group discussion, to ‘choose’ English at home, to their surprise and pride at his ability! Earlier in the year, when he was newly enrolled at school, his teacher (who has since left the school) had written to his parents requesting that they explain to him in their mother tongue that certain behaviour was not acceptable (the teacher could not speak IsiZulu, so she thought the parents’ explanation in their mother tongue

might help him to control his misbehaviour). She got an angry reply in the child's message book from the mother: It was "THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT FOR ANYONE TO USE THEIR CHOICE OF IT!"(i.e. to choose which language is used at home - See Appendix M, pg 234). When the father was questioned about this letter he said that it was written because the mother is "proud of her son". It seems the mother had taken the teacher's request as an insult. When the mother's letter was reviewed by the teachers in the Review Meeting, the action of the teacher was seen as 'not wise' – or 'foolish' - as she could have asked one of the IsiZulu speaking teachers to speak there and then to the child about his misbehaviour, rather than draw in the parents who are not responsible for disciplining their child for misbehaviour at school. That was seen as the teacher's responsibility and therefore the teachers in the Review Meeting interpreted her actions as irresponsible.

It seems that some of the children, in being 'agents of their own learning' in certain circumstances 'choose' which language they want to listen to, or not. This was reported by parents in the second focus Group discussion as their children's use of the 'power of language'. One teacher had to actively tell the children in 'ring-time' to "Switch off Radio Zulu and switch on Radio English" when she wanted them to stop chatting to each other in their mother tongue and focus on a group activity or discussion to be conducted in English. It was also noted that the children create 'white noise' (buzzing, humming or random noise) to block out words when they do not want to listen or they do not understand what is said. This can happen if they are bored in 'ring-time' or 'story-time' and also if they are reprimanded and they do not want to hear what the teacher, or another child, has to say.

It became clear by the second focus group discussion that the child tends to make a *choice* within different contexts, to speak either their first language or the second or additional language. A parent reported: "*I am Xhosa, but "...*" (Name of child) *has **chosen** to speak English at home. It is English all the way, it is her decision. If I try to speak some Xhosa to her, it is "Blah, blah, blah" - I know that she won't even listen to me*". On the bus, on the way to a farm (a school outing) she looked through the window and said "My mother's family live near here". It was pointed out to her by her teacher that her mother's family lived in the Eastern Cape (author's note: a

different Province) and she was asked what language they spoke. She apparently did not know that her mother's family spoke Xhosa. However, it should be remembered that at that time she was orientating herself in a bus travelling on a road. The teacher spoke to the mother about this incident and said: "Unless it was explained to her that your home language was Xhosa, how would she know?" Place, space and time (which are sensed differently by a child, compared with an adult) have an impact on how words and meaning are found and used by a child – as well as how they explore or use their idea of who they are in relation to others. This was discussed a week or two later, in the Review Meeting with the teachers. A teacher said she had tried to speak Sotho to this child, with no response! Her class teacher reported her chatting away to other children in what she thought might be Xhosa (her mother's language). She asked "Phila" if it was Xhosa (as "Phila is fluent in Xhosa) and "Phila" said, "No, it's Zulu!" This is one illustration of the "Choice of the Child" – their agency in the development of their identity and sense of belonging – as they use language in communication with others, in the 'space' created in a relationship for the possibilities of language to be explored!

One parent in the second focus group discussion mentioned how she combated the problem of her child's 'choice' of language in her own home:

The other day, "..." (Name of child) *told us to only speak English. He spoke English to us and I replied in Xhosa. I thought, OK, I will get you. I waited until he really wanted something! It is like that, if he speaks English to you, you must respond in your home language! And if you want to talk in something, especially if it is something he likes, speak in your home language, you will see! Because they come with that attitude: "I don't speak Xhosa!", or "I don't speak Zulu!"*

The second language (English) could easily start overtaking the first language. As one grandmother said in the second focus group discussion:

But now he (author's note: her five-year old grandson who had been attending the school for two years) *is an English speaking someone. He goes to the township, sometimes on the weekend, and he just talks English one-way to the other children, and the other kids, like, it will be like Greek to them and "..."* (Name of child) *talks English one-way, and the other kids will stop playing with him because they don't*

understand him, and they won't play with him and yah, it is in my house, and he will tell them to go home, "I am telling you, go!"

I ask him to speak Zulu and he says, "No, they don't want to listen, Granny!"

For the past two years this child had had a group teacher whose own mother tongue is IsiZulu! However, this teacher did not want to do special IsiZulu lessons with the children in her group because she said it was 'not necessary'. She also reported that when she used some IsiZulu words to 'scaffold' understanding and build vocabulary, she tended to be 'laughed at' by the children. When the teacher was asked about this child, she said that he acted like that in the township to 'show off' as he chatted freely to his friends in IsiZulu at school. Yet this child was reported by the grandmother to be "an English speaking someone". The problem that may result was identified by the Speech Therapist: *"If a child concentrates on one language and we do not take time to cultivate the other language, it can affect them socially in the long term"* (second focus group discussion).

While the teachers, especially those who only spoke English, felt that it was the parents' responsibility to support the mother tongue, the parents saw it as more the responsibility of the teacher, because of the dominance of the teacher's authority. A parent at the second focus group discussion stated: *"The child tells us: "Sh-sh – only speak English!" But the child must get it from your source [that is the teacher], the importance of the home language, then the child would appreciate it"*.

One of the parents' concerns was the different varieties or dialects of the IsiZulu language (North Coast, South Coast); this was cited by an English speaking teacher as the reason why the parents themselves must teach their child how to speak their language (when the first focus group discussion was reviewed by the teachers in the Review Meeting). Parents also described the difficulties of "teaching their children", as they were often tired at the end of a busy day at work.

The teacher's authority was clearly highly respected by the children and some used it to dispute the parents' authority at times! The parents reported this, with some amusement, as the reason why the affirmation of the mother tongue should start with the teachers. If a teacher used English or spoke or behaved in a certain way,

or gave an opinion - she was perceived as a powerful role-model for the child. For example, this is one exchange between a parent and a teacher:

Parent: *“Did you say she could watch DVDs this holidays?”*

Teacher: *“Yes”*

Parent: *“Now she only wants to watch DVDs all day!”*

Some of the parents at the focus group discussions wanted to be able to borrow books from the school library in the mother tongue to read to their children and this had started. Some of the teachers also helped the children to make their own books and some parents were encouraged to write down the translation (not all parents were able to do this or wanted to do so). Another parent wanted to learn the words of the songs his daughter learnt at school and asked if they could be written into the Learning Story Book – but thought he might have to come to school to learn how they were sung! In reflecting on this concern, the teachers thought they could prepare a CD of the songs, with a little booklet, so that the parents could help teach the children the songs (in the mother tongue as well as English (Reflection-TO-Action)).

5.2.12 “The best interests of the child”

The following two children challenged our perceptions of “the best interests of the child” and they both surprised us with their competence.

- When two parents came with their four-year old son, “Sethu” to enrol him at the beginning of the year explaining he had a severe language and communication problem, the Principal questioned their motivation in wanting to enrol him in the school as they lived in a township outside the city and their home language was IsiZulu. Since their child had a severe language disability, she recommended they get him assessed professionally at a Children’s Assessment and Therapy Centre and in the meantime, keep him in a preschool that used the IsiZulu medium of instruction (the results of the assessment was that he is on the Autism spectrum). In June she received a message from the Children’s Assessment and Therapy Centre to ask for her to fill out a form detailing her observations, for assessment purposes. Since “Sethu” was not attending the school, she replied that she was unable to do

this, but said she was willing to accept the child into the school for observation, so that she could help with the assessment. To her surprise, it was the same family she had recommended send their child to anIsiZulu medium preschool! They explained that their son had escaped from the school they had enrolled him in (in the township where they lived). He had been found wandering, lost in the township! Since it was not safe to keep him in that school, they had taken him out and sent him for assessment. They now needed him to be enrolled at our school, where he could be closely observed and his safety monitored.

"Sethu" murmurs meaningless phrases and shows signs of echolalia. At the school he has only been heard to say "NO" and "teacher". He said "NO" very loudly, refusing to sit down after washing his hands in the bathroom, as was the routine, to the surprise of the teacher at this sign of 'agency' – although he was copying the behaviour and echoing the words of another child – "My goodness, see what "Sethu" is learning from you!" He lacked the ability to connect with the other children in any play activities, but would play "catches" with his teacher by running away in a 'teasing' fashion, daring the teacher to try and catch him. In one example when he chose to sit with children who were drawing a representation of a vase and flowers and leaves, he used one pencil to flick another around, repetitively (see photo with "Sethu" in the top left hand corner, below). His language barriers reflected in his difficulty in thinking symbolically and drawing representations of *anything*, even 'scribble' shapes that could mean something to him. He marked his paper with dots or marks in observed spaces, showing interest in the action of 'flicking' the pencil or paintbrush (Video 10 – "Sethu", painting his first picture). This was followed by interest in his *name* when his teacher wrote it in the top left hand corner of his page and emphasized the initial letter of his name, sounding it to him. He looked up and smiled at his teacher as she said his name while writing it and then she folded his drawing and put it into his bag for him to take home.



“Sethu” busy flicking the pen (visible at the top left hand corner).

“Sethu” also tended to circle *around* other children, moving around a table before coming back to his repetitive, chosen action (see Video 10 “Sethu”). He could understand when asked in IsiZulu, if he wanted to urinate, but urinated anywhere, at any time, for example on the slide outside or in the rubbish bin in the classroom. The children in his class learned to ‘read’ his body movements and take him to the toilet as soon as it appeared that he may need the toilet. He also could not feed himself.

He was acutely aware of the time his father was supposed to fetch him. One day his father was held up by traffic and was 15 minutes late. He sobbed silently, the tears streaming down his cheeks. It seemed that he was not just aware of time, but also very aware of his need for his father. This showed strong attachment to a caring parent who could ‘mediate’ life experiences to his child, and some awareness within the child of his dependence and vulnerability. “Phila”, showing concern for his distress, came to sit next to him as he murmured what appeared to her to be a phrase in Zulu, which she interpreted as “I am a stupid”, and she repeated it in English with concern. According to his parents, “Sethu” had developed speech perfectly normally and was able to say one or two words in meaningful context - until the age of two, when according to his mother, he regressed. It seemed unlikely that he would say this phrase – or did he say it, in the stress of the moment - an echo of some memory?

The question the Principal initially asked herself was whether it was wise practice to bring a child with such limited ability in his own mother tongue into

an English speaking environment. It may have been deemed wise to encourage the parents to enrol “Sethu” in an isiZulu speaking environment, but practically, for this child, it was not advisable. The crèche, or preschool was not able to meet his special needs, or ‘special rights’ as they say in Reggio Emilia, as one day he walked out of that preschool and wandered into the streets of the township, lost for some hours.

- In another case, “Thembi”, was brought to our school by her desperate mother, at the beginning of the 3rd Term. Her daughter had a severe form of type 1 diabetes and in her previous ‘crèche’ – a preschool by the railway station in the city– this had not been monitored properly. Her daughter had started convulsing when her blood sugar dropped too low and she had not been phoned and informed of this dire, emergency situation. As a new enrolment, “Thembi” had been going through a ‘silent stage’ at school (see Video 17 where even in the ‘language nest’ – the area for socio-dramatic play where she is surrounded by Zulu speaking children, she is silent). At school she was not able to express herself in either English or isiZulu (her mother tongue) even in interacting with her friends or if a Zulu speaking teacher addressed her. However, her receptive abilities in isiZulu were good and gradually her receptive abilities in English showed improvement. A serious example of the consequences of her silence occurred on her first day at the school. She was asked whether she had had porridge at home before coming to school, or not as this would have influenced her blood sugar levels. She could not answer, in either English or isiZulu. When the mother was phoned, the mother said “Yes”, she had had porridge. A notebook was then used to write down the time of her blood sugar readings, the medication given and the food and drink she had consumed, either at school or at home. This child was highly capable (at the age of four) of pricking herself to draw blood, so that the teacher or school secretary could read her blood sugar level on her monitor and write it down. She could also give herself injections if the dose had been set by the adult helping her. Her awareness that she was putting her life into the hands of ‘clumsy’ adults who were not as practised in these matters as her mother or herself, and her previous narrow escape, made her insecure. This was especially visible when her taxi driver came to

fetch her to go home and silent tears would pour down her face. She was praised in IsiZulu by the IsiZulu speaking teachers for her competence with regards to her medical condition – and praised by the school gardener for her competence in planting vegetables! ““Thembi” knows how to plant vegetables!” was his comment! Slowly the smiles came back to her face as she adjusted to the school routine and a home/school partnership for the well-being of this child was forged!

In both these cases, the children’s primary need was survival and protection. Their development and participation were dependent on the first two of the four ‘pillars’ of Children’s Rights: the rights to survival, protection, development and participation. The ‘best interests of the child’ were perceived as the opportunity to attend a school in which the mother tongue was spoken but this had to be balanced against their other primary rights, for survival and protection.

5.3 Analysis:

5.3.1. The ‘Children’s Rights Approach’

Central to the research process was a ‘children’s rights’ approach (see school mission statement in Appendix N, pgs 236-237) and ‘the right to participation’ of the child as a way of critically examining our own beliefs and values in relation to a more respectful relationship with the children (‘phronesis’). The research explored the educational consequences of putting a ‘Children’s Rights Approach’ at the foreground of practice and reflected critically on the challenge this poses to praxis (theory and practice) in terms of ‘wise practice’ or ‘phronesis’.

English was seen as a question of equity, access to higher quality education and ‘the right of freedom of expression’ (one parent expressed it as her Constitutional Right – Appendix M pg 236). The child has the right to have all their talents and abilities developed but sensitivity is needed as language issues are very emotional issues. Action taken within this research revealed some of the ‘contested areas’ and the differing perceptions and attitudes of the role-players (the parents, teachers and children). A way of creating dialogue and a relationship of trust was established

in order to discern the ‘best interests of the child’. One area of contestation emerged: the parents seemed to think that promoting the mother tongue was the teacher’s responsibility, while the teacher seemed to think that it was the responsibility of the parents (as seen in the second focus group discussion!).

It was seen as important to promote additive bilingualism so that the mother tongue would not be lost while the child was learning English as a second language, but how to implement this in practice was the question. Building vocabulary and an understanding of the cultural values behind the words was also seen as important. Ways of affirming culture and identity through language were explored. In supporting IsiZulu vocabulary development in her children, the one IsiXulu speaking teacher was surprised that some did not know the IsiZulu word for “cow” even though cattle play such an important role in IsiZulu culture! The word for “cow” would not be assimilated by osmosis in a city environment! Would the children even understand where their milk came from? Therefore a trip to a farm was planned (Reflection-TO-Action) and undertaken on the last day of school, just before the school holidays began!

‘Silences’ can become barriers; therefore, ways of overcoming these barriers were actively sought by the co-researchers, through the process of reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-to-action, to develop awareness of ‘wise practice’ or ‘phronesis’, learning through our own clumsy and often inadequate ‘little steps’ forward.

5.3.2. The Learning Story Book – a Bridge

The language situation of each child was complex, with each at a different stage of developing competency in a language, or of gradually losing such competency. The Learning Story Book was seen as a way to build a ‘bridge’ between school and home and develop a more trusting relationship between the parent and the teacher. It had been reported by a parent that ‘English’ was associated with school and therefore when talking about school the child ‘opted’ for English. Therefore pictures that the child had drawn or photos of the child were stuck into the Learning Story book, together with a ‘learning story’ – the parent would be requested to chat to

their child in the home language and ask questions about the story. If possible, they could write down what their child said (in whichever language they chose to use, but preferably the home language as the aim was to support the development of the mother tongue). It was reported in the teachers Review Meeting that some parents had said they did not want to write in their mother tongue and this was reflected on in relation to a problem mentioned in the first focus group discussion, in the Blue Group, as parents speak varieties of isiZulu and may hesitate to write it as it is not standard isiZulu (Appendix P pg 264 "*there is a difference even among Zulu speaking people, people in the South Coast speak different Zulu to those on the North Coast and they do not understand each other*").

5.3.3 Play and language choice

The value of play was made visible in the various forms of documentation and was shown to be a means of fulfilling the deep social and emotional connection of the child to others. Play was also emphasised as a means of understanding concepts and 'meaning-making' through different modes and means of expression; for example, the Xhosa song and dance using yellow cones to be 'vuvuzelas'! One of the findings seemed to indicate that if this deep need to connect with others through play was not realizable by the child through **both languages**, the child was seen by the parents as 'making a choice' of English - "*I am just realising, it is a question of choice with the child*" (a parent at the second focus group discussion). The 'choice to speak English' could also lead to problems in social communication -as in the example provided by a parent in the second focus group discussion, when her grandson ended up not being able to communicate with his peers in isiZulu while at home, in the township. This is perceived as a dilemma that the young second-language learner can experience as they move between the home and school social environments.

English could become the 'adopted mother tongue' of the child as it was a common language understood by most of the children at the school and thereby played a unifying role as a common denominator and a means of belonging to their peer group.

However, socio-dramatic play proved to provide a place and space for the nurturing of the mother tongue, a **'language nest'** (see Video 17 "The silent stage").

5.3.4. Semi-lingualism

Problem solving is linked to the ability to understand and use language as a problem solving device. In particular, it requires the ability to communicate with others so that there can be joint attention to solving a problem. The children with 'semi-lingualism' (if the mother tongue had been 'subtracted') exhibited the greatest behavioural problems and seemed to experience difficulty in 'sustained shared thinking' and using symbolic thought as well as drawing representations on paper(see example of "David", five years old - in Video 12; "semi-lingualism"). They seemed to be at a developmentally younger age than their chronological age – and did show signs of difficulty with self-regulation and in playing socially with others. Unless vocabulary in both languages is consciously developed, children could start to prefer one language (the dominant language, English) to another, at school, as finding words to express thoughts and feelings could be a great struggle. Unfortunately some parents thought it was easier to 'opt' for English at home as well, even though they themselves had limited English proficiency (Appendix P). Some parents and grandparents (not the parent interviewed in Appendix P)spoke about using corporal punishment at home, reinforcing a wide-spread cultural practice.

5.3.5. Linguicism and the use of the Persona Doll to combat it

Children seemed get the message from home or school that English was the more valuable language. It could become the one that some enjoyed using the most. However, those with limited English language proficiency could get extremely frustrated and angry. A preference for English was seen to emerge out of the various difficulties a child might experience, while trying to create a balance between the two languages. Both teachers and parents were concerned about children who demonstrated inappropriate behaviour and language, while learning the second language.

Social norms of behaviour are communicated within language and within non-verbal cues as to what language and behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable. Some children started 'testing' this out, to see how the adult would respond. Regulating the child's behaviour and encouraging cooperation was not easy, especially when they were showing defiance (as experienced by a parent -"No, NO!"). Furthermore, some children 'tested the limits' by deliberately blocking out words in a language they did not want to hear with 'white noise' (one parent reported her child as saying "Blah, blah, blah") or showing 'selective hearing'.

5.3.6. A parent-teacher partnership

Parents were actively encouraged to reflect on their child's learning experiences and participate in building a bridge between home and school. Different means were explored to encourage this:

5.3.6.1 The 'Learning Story Book'

The child could take home a 'Learning Story' in a book, for their parent to discuss in the home language with them. This was seen as a way to focus on the competencies of the child and to encourage the parent to understand how their child is learning at school as well as providing an opportunity for the parent to provide the child with words to express the learning experience in the mother tongue while 'chatting' with them about the photo. The aim was to (a) reinforce cultural identity (b) encourage active collaboration by the teachers and parents in promoting the role and status of the mother tongue and (c) to become conscious of how we use language and becoming more attentive to the non-verbal language of the child and cultural norms of expression while supporting the development of the 1st and 2nd language (Cummins, 1992: 64, cited by Robb, 1995: 19). This aimed to develop high competencies in *both* languages. Some parents worked hard to achieve this with their children, sometimes against the children's inclinations. The importance of affirming the individual and group identity of the child within the Learning Story Book was revealed as the parents wrote lovingly of the reasons why they chose their children's names, and the meaning of those names for them, as spoken in their mother tongues.

5.3.6.2 Individual interviews with parents

Individual interviews with parents were of central importance in understanding the child and any language and communication problems they may have developed. It was also a way to understand the family history, possible causes of problems and a way to assist the parents to understand the importance of the child being referred for professional assessment and therapy where necessary.

5.3.6.3 The Mosaic Approach:

The 'Mosaic Approach' affirmed the importance of the children's own opinions and ideas. It was a way for the adults to be attentive to the children's concerns and for the children to show their teachers and parents what they liked best about the school, their favourite activities and what they did not like about their school. The aim was "to give them a voice". This seemed to help the teachers to be more attentive to the children's actions, not just their words, and to discern what the children enjoyed doing or did not enjoy. Reviewing incidents (reflection-IN-action and reflection-ON-action) helped the teachers to understand that what the children were learning through apparent 'misbehaviour' was a 'missed learning opportunity'. The Mosaic Approach also became a way of giving the children a chance to take the photos (instead of the teachers taking photos!). It enabled the teachers and parents to discuss and come to understand *the child's perspective* (for example: on rest-time) and support their requests by advocating for them to have supervised play during that time instead.

5.3.6.4 'Documentation of learning'

This was initiated in the course of the research process as a means for the children, staff and parents to look at, reflect on, discuss and gain a different perspective on the learning process the children were engaged in, for example: the vegetable garden project and the drawing by a child of the baby that said "Oh, oh!" when the flower was broken! The 'elusiveness of language' in particular, revealed the

importance of attentiveness to the silences of the child and their other 'modes and means' of expression, for example: the painting of the ambulance.

The intersubjective awareness between the teacher and the child was seen as being of crucial importance in the process of 'meaning making'. The results of the research on the documentation of learning indicated the importance of the level of verbal support given by teachers to the child's learning. It was important to respond to the child in complete sentences and extend the thought processes, both by giving the children the words to express their thoughts and ideas and extending these ideas further, into a deeper understanding of the concepts. This was because the receptive ability of the child was greater than their expressive ability.

5.3.7 Second Language Learning

To provide the level of support required, the teacher had to be aware of where the child might be in the development of a second language. Of concern was the "silent period"; a related concern which emerged was if the parent stopped speaking the mother tongue or the adopted 'mother tongue' (the home language) and switched to English at home. It seemed as if there was some regression, before the consolidation of the new language. The emotional bond between the teacher and the child became all important in the mediation of learning experiences and there seemed to be a strong need for the teacher or parent (as in the case of "Pierre") to be an advocate and interpreter on behalf of the child when he or she experienced conflict or frustration as a result of communication difficulties. It was not easy to request parents to take their child for professional assessment of perceived language barriers or explain that their child would not be ready for Grade 1 the following year, as parents pride in their child's emerging ability in English appeared to cloud their perceptions. Each and every child could be at a different stage in the development of competency in the second language, or at a different stage with regards to the development of competency in the mother tongue:

- **The silent period** where their receptive abilities are being developed and when they may know a few words, but may not speak;

- **Single words** and early word combinations which follow the silent period, when children may use one word to indicate their wishes and leave out other words, such as auxiliary pronouns, adverbs and verbs and when grammar may reflect the first language (prepositions were a problem for the IsiZulu speaking children).
- **The emergence of simple sentences**, which still reflected grammatical errors or were 'formulaic' and repetitive: "Sit down on floor" (echoing teacher);
- **Social fluency** or basic interpersonal communication skills (**BICS**) would then start to develop - however there may still be large gaps in their understanding and their ability to communicate effectively.
- **Cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP)** in which analytical and critical thinking skills and abilities can be developed and through which hypotheses are constructed and creative problem solving can occur. This required support from the teachers through their 'questioning technique' in particular, open-ended questions (Klein & Chen, 2001: 148-150, citing Tabors, 1997).

Teachers were found to overestimate the child's expressive ability in either language – or underestimate their receptive ability in either language. The teacher had to use his/her judgement in relation to context and non-verbal communication from the child on a constant basis to assess the level of support required by the child when communicating with others and to provide the verbalization the child needed. Problem-solving skills were an area of concern. Most of the children found it difficult to ask or answer questions and build their own hypotheses or problem-solving abilities in English (CALP). As a result the teachers tended to be very directive in their way of teaching and had to impose strict discipline to maintain the children's attention. By starting with a learning moment, the research was able to build another way of questioning such as setting a 'provocation' to stimulate thought (setting up another challenge to extend the learning experience further, into the child's ZPD). The focus on learning moments challenged the teachers to rethink their understanding of misbehavior as perhaps missed learning opportunities – but children at times also appeared confused as to appropriate or inappropriate words and understanding of acceptable cultural norms.

Through reflecting with the child on the photo of their learning experience, the teachers could use a questioning technique and could encourage the development of 'thinking about the thinking' – metacognition. These learning moments could only be captured if the teacher was attentive to the learning process the children were engaged with, and where there was hands-on construction of learning (the use of the '100 languages of childhood' as a way of listening to the child). It was also the responsibility of the teacher to deduce the sense of what the child intended to say about the activity they were engaged in. The teacher could then support the learning by building the child's limited language proficiency with words to express the intention of the child according to the meaning deduced within the learning context, while building the conceptual understanding of the child (CALP), whether in the 1st or 2nd language. It was seen that verbalisation by the teacher could involve paraphrasing the child's words but also extending the sentence to *include* the new, emergent understandings of concepts and the new vocabulary required to develop the child's receptive language proficiency. This, it was hoped, would also be encouraged at home as the parents chatted with their children about their experiences at school, using the Learning Story Book.

5.4 Constraints

It was a challenge to document the learning process the children were engaged in. This was something totally new for all the teachers, involving a 'paradigm shift' into the 'how' and 'why' of the learning process, viewed from the perspective of the child. It might be easy to 'take pretty pictures' of the children engaging in activities. It was not easy for the teachers firstly to listen to the child in a noisy classroom and then to write down the one or two words of a child with limited or no expressive proficiency in English and then verbalise concepts, in order to provide the children with words to extend their thought processes and build vocabulary (receptive proficiency, as referred to above).

Both the English and IsiZulu speaking teachers found this process difficult. For example, the IsiZulu speaking teaching assistant in the one classroom tended to use IsiZulu to regulate behaviour and English to 'teach' (see Video 14 "The problem with English").

Initially a teacher of the four-year old group took a row of photos of her children all painting 'pretty pictures' one after the other, without capturing the thinking process that can reveal the motivation of the learner to *begin* an activity, *continue* a line of thought or *change* direction. The learner's words or remarks that indicate their thought processes tended to be lost – the children then became 'anonymous' – without any sign of their 'agency' in attempting to express their own thoughts and ideas and develop their own problem-solving skills. Stimuli, process and outcome were lost in the single photos of each child. An example of this kind of problem was also seen in the three-year old group. A three-year old English first-language child constructed an "Alien without a nose. He sleeps in my bed with me. He has no nose, so his house has no smells". A photo was taken of the finished construction, but not the process whereby this child came to construct this amazing Alien. One of his IsiZulu 1st language friends also constructed an object, which was photographed. This child could not tell us about his construction; he could not express the symbolic thought behind the construction. While a 'pretty photo' was taken, the teaching/learning moment was lost.

The importance of 'co-construction' of the research came to the fore as these sorts of problems became visible through the Action-Reflection process. The teachers in this school are still developing an idea of the importance of attentiveness to the child, being 'present' to the moment of discovery and 'wonder'. Visual images were seen as particularly important with children who had limited verbal expression as "a picture could tell a thousand words" (one teacher). However, the process of reflection to review practice together required a set time each day for a Review Meeting (for Reflection-ON-Action), which was not always possible although we managed several meetings each week and shared our experiences on a daily basis with each other, especially when there was a 'critical incident' that needed to be reviewed immediately.

Interviews were held with parents but were not recorded (they were written up afterwards) as the presence of a tape-recorder may have inhibited conversation. Informal conversations also occurred as parents brought their child to school or fetched their child, but these were sometimes rushed (see video 5 "The culture of childhood" where a parent is recorded singing a song the teacher wanted to learn,

while fetching her daughter; the researcher assured the parent of anonymity at the end of the recording). It was important to involve the parents more deeply in the process of enquiry and more interviews with parents, over a longer period of time, were required in order to realize the benefits of this research method as a way of creating awareness and acceptance of the problems confronting the children, with a view to changed attitudes and behaviour (among both parents and teachers).

Parents are still being initiated into using the 'Learning Story Book' to communicate in the mother tongue with their child. The parents are only now starting to realize some of the difficulties their children experience in sustaining two languages or learning a second language. They are starting to accept their role in affirming the child's identity and encouraging their child to use the mother tongue; parents in the second focus group discussion requested story books in the mother tongue to read to their children. This was organised for only a few children, as a 'pilot' project.

Learning how to conduct 'documentation of learning' is an on-going process of attentiveness to a thread of inquiry in order to challenge the children into new understandings. This tended to be submerged in many other activities and learning experiences as the teachers faced demands for their attention from many directions. The advantage of modern technology is that each teacher had a cell phone which could take pictures and record videos, for reflection. Unfortunately two cell phones were stolen from a classroom in the middle of the morning and data was lost. Another was broken! Each week of the research process one or other teacher was absent due to illness or injury! Unfortunately one teacher had to be retrenched because of the school's financial problems at the end of August – there was not enough money coming in from the fees for his salary. These events all created tensions and had to be discussed and debated in the Review Meetings with the teachers in order for the research to progress without losing focus or momentum.

The paradigm 'shift' to regarding teaching and learning as a continuum that is embedded in each moment of the day with multiple probabilities to explore, is still in the process of unfolding through the action-reflection cycle. The teachers are still awakening to the value of the different research 'tools' that were explored, within time constraints. The quality of the video recordings varied according to the

technological tools used. The teachers' personal cell phones did not record well (see Video 2 in comparison with Video 1). The research spanned a limited time period – 14 weeks –and therefore can be seen as the beginning of a process. Future research could occur over a longer period, so that the action-reflection cycles could unfold further, and could perhaps foreground the participation of the teachers in their own 'learning story' and any possible 'paradigm shift' as a learning community.

The central importance of the child's *identity* in the process of learning a language and expressing who they are needs to be affirmed on an on-going basis. Appreciation of diversity became increasingly important. At the end of the research process, the teachers started planning an end-of-year concert with songs in many languages and dances to many different kinds of music. This concert was to involve people of many different ages - a group of grandmothers from the Old Age Home who describe themselves as "belly dancing troupe" and some young teenagers dancing 'Hip Hop'!

The value of the Persona Doll requires further exploration, perhaps including the Persona Doll's 'visits' to the children's homes, just as "Piet die Kat" (a knitted cat) managed to visit "Dirkie" to speak to him in Afrikaans! No visits were made to any of the children's homes for the purposes of the research although some of the teachers visited their homes informally.

5.5 Summary

The research study sought to use 'the right to participation' to place the child's engagement with the learning process at the forefront. This had educational consequences, both practically (with the vegetable garden project, for example) and in the sense of a deeper awareness of some of the barriers faced by children who are learning English as a second language. Both parents and teachers came to appreciate some of the '100 languages of children', notably the need to be attentive to the child's 'body language'.

The teachers also reflected on words that were whispered and could have been lost, and moments that could have slipped past. This meant not only listening to the sounds and words the child was using, but looking 'with the eyes of the child' to gain a sense of their point of view. The research process illustrated the strong motivation of the young second language child to learn English – their 'choice' – but this also illustrates the dilemma faced by the child as the use of the second language can create a barrier, unless the mother tongue is also affirmed. Various ways to overcome this problem were explored and parent partnerships in this process were actively sought.

The children's engagement with their learning, as 'agents of their own life' can be seen in the photos, videos and drawings and paintings showing the various activities they engaged in as well as the documentation of their learning processes, which revealed their 'motivating sphere of consciousness' as Vygotsky expressed it (1987: 282, cited by Rogoff, 1990: 9).

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUMMARY

“Language is as a cord of silence with sounds the knots – as nodes in a Peruvian quipu, in which the empty spaces speak. With Confucius we can see language as a wheel. The spokes centralize, but the empty spaces make the wheel.”

(Ivan Illich, *Celebration of Awareness*, 1969/1970: 41)



Weaving a red ribbon in between the spokes of the bicycle tyre, creating a ‘rainbow’ in the wheel

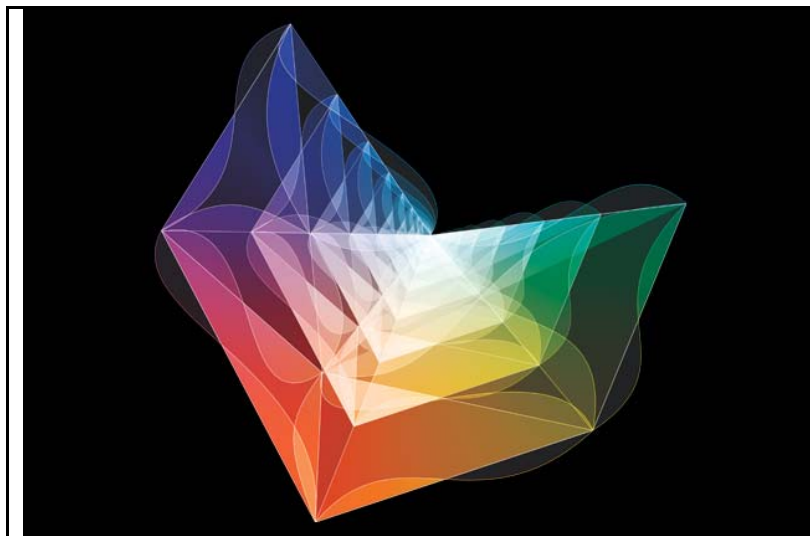


Illustration by Andy Gilmore - Artist’s rendering of the amplituhedron, a newly discovered mathematical object resembling a multifaceted jewel in higher dimensions. Encoded in its volume are the most basic features of reality that can be calculated — **the probabilities of outcomes** of particle interactions.(Quanta Magazine, illuminating science, Simons Foundation – downloaded from <https://www.simonsfoundation.org/quanta/20130917-a-jewel-at-...26/09/2013>)

6.1 Introduction

This research study used the principle of ‘the best interests of the child’ as a ‘moral compass’ and explored the “barriers” confronting children who are learning English as an additional language as well as their mother tongue. It also aimed to identify some of the ‘silences’ inherent in the physical, educational, social and political spaces, that had to be navigated in the course of the research.

In adopting the ‘right to participate’ (UNCRC, 1990, Article 12) as a critical ‘lens’ to examine practice, it was hoped that ways and means of respecting the ‘agency’, or the ‘motives’ of the child would be found, through documenting their learning processes and finding ways of promoting ‘*sustained, shared thought*’ (Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2002: 10). A particular concern was to promote and support the mother-tongue acquisition of the young child who is learning English as a second-language and engage the parents in a dialogue on the problems involved and ways of overcoming these constructively. The research therefore investigated the educational consequences of taking children more seriously, as “*actors in their own lives*”, not merely “*passive recipients of adult care and protection*” (Lansdown, 2004: 5).

6.2 Synopsis of the Literature Review

The literature review provided a critical analysis of Vygotsky’s theory on how thought and language is developed in the young child by examining a wide variety of current theory and research on language acquisition and second-language learning and teaching in early childhood, particularly in relation to the research question. An overview was presented of various theoretical frameworks used in early childhood education internationally in order to establish how the socio-constructivist and critical theoretical frameworks as well as the ‘children’s rights approach’ have created a ‘paradigm shift’ within the international community of practice. The literature review outlined areas of concern which relate to South Africa’s language policy and practice and the urgency of exploring the ‘dilemma of the young second-language learner’ in terms of the South African government’s Language-in-education policy (1997) of ‘additive bilingualism’. International

research clearly states that it is vitally important to maintain the development of the mother-tongue while adding the second or additional language.

6.3 Discussion of the methodology

This was a qualitative case-study, with practitioner-researchers using participatory action research to investigate the research question, with the lead-researcher (the author) facilitating the process. The literature review conducted by the lead-researcher revealed the contradictions between policy and practice, and theory and practice. Acting with the best of intentions, without critical, reflective practice, meant that “the best interests of the child” could become a contested arena, without being open to interrogation, discussion or discernment as to ‘wise practice’ (see Appendix M, pg 236). A praxeological approach, linking theory and practice, in an on-going action-reflection cycle, could lead to informed decision-making and constructive action to address some of the barriers experienced by the young second-language learner. Through the process of the research, conscientization as to the causes of some of the problems was developed as well as ways of affirming the ‘image of identity’ of the child as strong and capable, loved and lovable (Malaguzzi, 1993: 10).

6.4 Discussion of the findings

The research study showed that language is inextricably entwined with cognitive development and also forms a sense of identity and culture. The child’s language development seems to be an inextricable part of their awareness of ‘being’, ‘becoming’ and ‘belonging’, within a social context. The young child learns language as an active participant within that context, testing the ‘probabilities of outcomes’ as he or she interacts and communicates with others – learning through ‘social participation’ (Wenger, 2009: 210 – 211).

Learning was also revealed as access – opportunities to learn which could cross boundaries and barriers. There were physical boundaries between home and

school which the Learning Story book could cross, but also barriers at a deeper, intersubjective level - barriers revealed by various power dynamics.

Wise practice, or 'phronesis', is always the question of how we link our values to our actions. The research study found that the process of linking our values to our actions can be the most practical way of working to improve the social and physical environment for the benefit of all children, not only those with perceived barriers to learning. Participation as 'the right to participation' was placed at the centre of the developmental process and was seen as opening the place (the educational environment), providing space (opportunity) and creating the time for children to participate in their own learning, playing and 'becoming'. This process was facilitated through reflection and action, related to various concrete problems or situations that arose.

The opinions and ideas of both the children and the adults gained new significance and started being appreciated as being of equal value.

A sense of community was created amongst the parents who participated in the focus group discussions and a request was made to continue meeting for mutual support. Awareness was created concerning the impact of adult choices and decisions with regards to the languages the children were learning to speak. The children were also seen as having a 'choice' and making decisions and they needed to develop more critical awareness, and anti-bias education through the 'Persona Doll' approach that was used. Ways were explored for the children to have a say in what they liked or did not like in the school through the 'Mosaic Approach'.

The result of the research seems to have been an increased recognition of the children's strengths and capabilities - particularly in supporting and encouraging one another, despite any perceived barrier, including the language barrier.

6.5 Recommendations

The process of learning a second language is complex and is influenced by many factors, some of which have been examined during the process of this research.

This research study proposes a **socio-cultural perspective** as a pedagogical **frame of reference** as this can lead to greater understanding of the child's engagement with 'meaning-making' and the role of the adult in accompanying the child and supporting his/her language development, while also providing a means for critical reflection on the issues involved. Solutions are not ready made but are embedded in the difficulties faced by the child and can only unfold through a process of discernment of 'the best interests' of the child within that particular situation. A process of Action-Reflection can provide the means for 'wise practice' through listening to the different perspectives involved, while critically reviewing them in terms of 'what next?' principles. Barriers, seen through 'critical incidents', become a means of critical review and therefore, a means of building understanding amongst the role-players and informed, empirical knowledge.

Participation as 'the right to participation' brings to the foreground the importance of inclusive practices. Each child has their own significance, their own image of identity and rich potential to extend their own capabilities. They have enormous strengths and capacity for enjoyment of life. Inclusive practices that can meet the needs of individual children as well as the group, can be challenging - but can enrich the whole school experience for everyone.

A holistic picture of each child needs to be gained if the principle of 'the best interests of the child' is to be followed and sensitivity is needed in acknowledging the differing perceptions of role-players with regards to this area, as the issues involved are open to contestation. Each child is not alone, but is accompanied by peers and adults on their learning journey to develop competency in language or in losing competency, learning culturally acceptable behaviour or challenging what is perceived to be culturally appropriate by adults. Children showed that they are acutely sensitive to cultural cues and are influenced by these cues in how they relate to others. A process to build critical awareness of the

second-language teaching and learning processes and the significance of the participation of the child as 'agent' of their own learning is essential.

Documentation of learning is seen as an important way of affirming the competencies of the child on their learning journey while allowing thinking processes to become visible. There can be a shift from the objective gaze on **what** the child is doing and their limitations or lack of ability, to **how** learning happens and how dialogue between adult and child can build conceptual understanding.

Documentation which focuses on the child affirms:

- **Their identity:** "Who are you?"
- **Their learning dispositions:** "What interests you?"
- **Their competencies:** "What do you already know and what are you ready to learn next?"

Documentation revealed the thread of enquiry followed by the child (their hypothesis, or the schema being built up conceptually) and the relationship between what they are investigating and other activities already accomplished, making it more visible to the parents. Documentation could reveal the opportunity for future challenges which can stretch the potential of the child into their 'zone of proximal development' through what, in the Reggio Approach are called "provocations". In our multilingual classrooms in South Africa, teachers could focus on affirming the competencies and capabilities of the children, and reflect on which 'languages' may be useful in this enquiry process in order to encourage parents to use the mother tongue to support their child's understanding of new concepts.

Documentation of learning was a record of a process of discovery and required the adult to be **present** in that moment – the moment of the wonder of discovery, as experienced by the child. This involves an "*attentive and focused presence of mind*", where the teacher is attentive to where the child is focusing his or her attention, providing "*relational space*" (Bae, 2012: 8), which did not prove easy within a noisy, active environment. It was seen as important to consider 'space' (the environment) as well as place and time in a child's life, as creating that 'motivating sphere of consciousness' as Vygotsky expressed it (1987: 282, cited by Rogoff, 1990: 9).

In becoming more aware of the child's learning processes, the adult was learning to support this practically and verbally, in helping the child to 'think about the thinking' (metacognition) as they reviewed the 'documentation of learning' with the child and through the adult (parent or teacher) providing extended sentence construction – asking questions and encouraging the child to explain and describe while providing more words to build their conceptual understanding (providing vocabulary for the concepts being learned while verbalizing for the child). In verbalizing, the adult can repeat the words used by child in a more elaborate and descriptive way to explain and describe, with vocabulary the child may be searching to find (creating the opportunity for “*sustained shared thinking*” (Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2002: 10). It was seen as important for the parent to continue using the mother tongue in this regard, whether or not the child responds in the same language as this still builds the receptive ability of the child as well as affirming the role of the mother tongue.

Linguicism can become a problem amongst children as they absorb social cues as to the relative value of the respective languages from their friends, family and from within their community. A preference for English can result from the difficulties of creating a balance between the two languages and the dominance of English in society. The role of the parent and teacher in working together to combat this is critical. The home language or mother tongue needs strong advocacy. It can also be seen as a strong tool to mediate the learning of the second language (additive bilingualism). The Persona Doll approach is recommended as a way of developing a more critical awareness of bias, particularly linguicism as it can be used as an effective 'tool' by teachers to help children stand up against such bias, understand and express their feelings verbally, develop empathy for others and overcome perceived language barriers.

6.6 Limitations

As a case study, this research provides its own 'snapshot' of a moment in time in the school's own 'learning journey', but the findings are not generalizable. The results are limited to the context of the school in which the research was conducted and the individual participants and are therefore tentative and open to further exploration, with more questions than answers revealed through the process. The

lead-researcher found very few studies on bilingualism (simultaneous or successive) in early childhood in South Africa, especially in relation to the Anti-bias approach and children's participation. There does not seem to be any research in South Africa on the long-term effects on the child if their parent uses a second-language as the mother tongue (instead of their own mother tongue) when communicating with them - as a baby, toddler, or young child – an area of concern uncovered by the research which needs further investigation.

The results of this research are interpreted through a 'lens' – that of the 'right to participation', using a praxeological research methodology. This was employed to make sense of the data within the participants' own social and cultural framework and to seek for 'wise practice'. This approach was explored through this case study as a way of shifting the perspectives of the participants, and opening up space to question established beliefs and practices. The Review Meetings helped the co-researchers (the teachers) to co-construct the meaning of the findings of the research and interpret their practice in relation to theory. However, data reflecting the identities and capacities of the co-researchers and our shared reflections on cultural reproduction and transformation and any conflicting tensions between tradition and renewal in our discourse, does not form part of the final data. It is clear that the values and beliefs of the parents and the co-researchers (the teachers) were continually challenged and reflexivity was needed when confronted by various barriers. The ideas and research techniques were strange or new to some of the participants and resistance of various kinds, was experienced, which was reviewed with those concerned and their consent/dissent respected, with their data therefore not included. New ways of exploring the research question had to be sought as fresh contradictions were found between what was seen as the ideal and practice, without alienating any participants as the question of the mother tongue was a very sensitive one. Time was needed to thoroughly explore the research question using this methodology and time proved to be a constraint. According to Engeström (2009: 56-57), the action process described in this research can only be interpreted against the background of the entire activity system, including the diverse histories and multiple points of view of the different role-players, their vested interests and the history of the activity system itself, including the history of the theoretical ideas and tools which shape the action process. In the process of the research, areas of

contradiction and contestation emerged. In attempting innovation and change, it is important to follow a “*relatively long cycle of qualitative transformations...A full cycle of expansive transformation may be understood as a collective journey through the zone of proximal development of the activity*”(Engeström, 2009: 57). Despite the limitations experienced by the co-researchers and the lead-researcher, interesting data emerged which proves the value of an on-going action-reflection process in pursuing transformation. In this regard, the role of the teachers as practitioner-researchers could be foregrounded in a future study, in order to document their own ‘learning story’ and any ‘paradigm shift’ they may experience. The practitioner-researchers could become the subjects of the study and be fully involved in all the research decisions (Heron & Reason, 2011: 144). The value of research *with* teachers, rather than *on* teachers around a matter of practical concern within the teaching/learning situation, can develop new and creative ways of understanding and developing teacher *praxis*, through the action-reflection process. “Wise practice” or phronesis, particularly in relation to the values enshrined in the UNCRC and our South African Constitution, could be discerned through the discussions and debates involved in the reflection process (reflection-on-action) and discourse analysis, as the practitioner-researchers as participants in co-operative inquiry seek a synthesis between the reality of the problems, or ‘anti-thesis’ and the ideal of children’s rights, or ‘thesis’, through the action-reflection process.

6.7 Summary

The qualitative method adopted for this research study employed an interpretive and critical/emancipatory enquiry process which could provide insight into the situation confronting the young second language learner (through observation and documentation- Reflection-IN-Action) and insight (through a process of Reflection-ON-Action (Schon, 1987: 26). This involved relating theory to practice and vice-versa – and evaluating practice in relation to cultural norms and values. These were evaluated according to the ethical values we uphold - the ‘lens’ of children’s rights - which can then lead Reflection-TO-Action. The enquiry aimed at *conscientization* - an awareness of one’s own role and responsibility. This sense of responsibility came to the foreground in relation to the causes of problems as analyzed within the

social and historical context faced by the children, teachers and parents. Research conversations were thus co-constructed with the teachers in order to examine shared or divergent perceptions of experiences, with the aim of developing professionalism, inter-personal awareness and intra-personal awareness. Practice was examined in relation to theory, and assumptions were critically examined in terms of the 'best interests' principle ("*the best interests of the child as a primary concern*") and the evolving capacity of the child (UN General Comment No 7 2005: 42). A 'synthesis' was sought between the reality of the problems (anti-thesis) and the ideal of children's rights (thesis), through an action/reflection process. This process of analysis, following a participatory action research cycle, incorporated different methods of enquiry into the situation and different methods of reflection and is seen as an open-ended learning journey with a change process unfolding as each stage of the cycle informs the next.

The work of the research depended on professional cooperation amongst the teachers so that the participation of the children in their own learning could be placed in the foreground. The 'right to participation' became a way of reflecting on the competencies of the children as they negotiated their way in the language landscape. Teachers became more attentive to the non-verbal language of the child and their 'learning dispositions' as they explored '100 ways of listening' to the children. Collaboration between the child, the parent and the educator was the most important link in this process.

The school has been compared to 'an oasis in the desert'. Plants are starting to grow but still desperately need watering. The parents and teachers are still learning to understand how *their* words and how *they* use language in interacting with a child, can give sense, meaning and stability to that child's experiences. The values, intentions and meanings behind these experiences are grounded in the social and cultural context and need to be 'made visible'. Each day reveals a new way to affirm this process.

This research depicts, in a small way, some of the struggles of the teachers, the children and the parents to understand the dilemma of the young second language learner and act constructively to "make a better world for children". A bond of trust

can break through many a perceived language barrier and give the child the freedom to explore; experiment and continue to learn, regardless of how many languages they are able to use or want to use.

This dissertation concludes by affirming the importance of parent and teacher cooperation in providing rich *language experiences* for the young child, in whichever language (including the '100 languages of childhood' of the Reggio Emilia Approach) but particularly in the mother tongue. This will extend the child's positive conception of their identity as well as their understanding of the world around them and their role as members of society.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

Nora Ramsden Saneka [4056485]

for a M Ed study entitled

**Barriers and Bridges: Child participation, second-language learning
and the cognitive development of the young child**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two
years from the date of issue.

Prof CS le Roux
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za

29 May 2013

Reference number: 2013 MAY/4056485/CSLR

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE KWA-ZULU NATAL DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

25-FEB-2013 12:44 From:

To:0058370313374463

P. 1/2



kzn education

Department
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:2/4/8/370

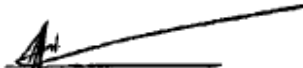
Ms Nora Elizabeth Saneka
33 Waller Crescent
Roseglen
DURBAN
4091

Dear Ms Saneka

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **Barriers and Bridges: Child Participation: Second- Language Learning and the Cognitive Development of the Young Child**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 February 2013 to 31 January 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the Schools and Institutions in the Umhlanga District.


Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

20-02-2013
Date

dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.



APPENDIX C: Request to SGB for permission

7th March 2013

Dear Members of the School Governing Body,

I am currently a UNISA Masters student in Psychology of Education. My research topic is entitled: "Barriers and Bridges: Child Participation; Second-language learning and the Cognitive Development of the Young Child".

Purpose:

The purpose of the research is to enquire into the nature of the participation of the young child who is learning English as a second-language, using the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as a 'critical lens' to examine their 'right to participation'. This research aims to identify factors that impact on the day-to-day involvement of your child in the educational programme and the role of the language used at home, or the mother-tongue, where applicable.

Process:

A participatory action research process will be undertaken with the teachers (a collaborative enquiry process with reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-to-action).

Focus group discussions with parents/caregivers as well as individual interviews with parents/caregivers will be planned. Home visits are also seen as important.

Documentation of learning, persona doll stories and 'learning stories' written with the participation of the parents will all involve '100 ways of listening' to your children. To research the participation of the children we can also use the 'Mosaic Approach' to investigate with them what they like, or do not like, in the school.

APPENDIX C: Request to SGB for permission continued

To do this we will also use photo's and video's to develop in-depth contextual understanding and reflective practice on teaching strategies and approaches, teaching and learning activities and to reflect on our values and beliefs. In this regard, parent participation is vitally important, as the research will look at the role of language as used at home (home language) and the use of the mother-tongue where applicable, and how it can support the learning of English.

Confidentiality:

All participants will be treated fairly and honestly and I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All information will remain confidential and a pseudonym will be used in the coding, analysis and synthesis of the data, as well as the final publication of the data.

Rights of participants:

Participants have the right to voluntary consent or dissent to participation, without sanction or penalty. All participants have the right to withdraw any data they do not want published in the final dissertation.

For further enquiries:

Please feel free to phone me or contact my Supervisor, Professor de Witt. Her e-mail address is prof.de.witt@unsw.edu.au

Yours sincerely,



Nora Saneka
PRINCIPAL

(B.A.; HED Pre-Primary; Higher Education Diploma, Adult Education; BED Honours, ECD)

cell: 0792899857

APPENDIX D: SIGNED CONSENT FORM SGB

CONSENT FORM:

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY,

On behalf of the School Governing Body (SGB) of [REDACTED] Pre-Primary School I hereby agree that that the Principal, Nora Elizabeth Saneka can undertake a research project, as lead-researcher, for her Masters in Educational Psychology with the topic "Barriers and Bridges: Child Participation; Second-Language Learning and the Cognitive Development of the Young Child". We understand that this research project will look at language and communication in the intellectual development of our children and the benefit is for the broader community.

We understand that the learning programmes will not be interrupted and the research process will be incorporated into the work of the teachers, as co-researchers. Meetings and interviews with parents, to encourage parent participation in the research process, will be part of the school programme.

We understand that all participants will be treated equally and fairly and that confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured. All information will be held in confidence and a pseudonym used in the coding, analysis and synthesis as well as the final publication of the data. All data will be held in a secure, locked room for a certain period of time and destroyed by the lead researcher (the Principal) if not used for the final publication of the dissertation, unless the parents want the data of their own child, for their own use.

We understand that participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that any participant can assent or dissent to the use of the data and withdraw from the research, without penalties. In the case of the children who participate, careful observation of verbal and non-verbal queues in communication of their willingness to participate will be an important part of the research process and

APPENDIX D: SIGNED CONSENT FORM SGB contd

discussed with the parents, to confirm our understanding of the child's participation and any barrier that may be involved. Parent consent will be sought before any data of their child/children is used, including signed consent on the back of any photograph and signed consent for any video which will form part of the final published thesis. The identity of any child will be 'masked' with a black indelible pen (on photo's) or obscured and the focus will be on the activity of the child, not their identity.

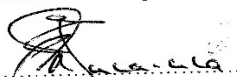
We understand that this consent form will not be linked to the data from the research study and that the identity of the school, the staff, the parents and the children will remain anonymous.

We understand that we can give feedback, and that feedback will be given to us as a School Governing Body as well as other parent participants during the research process. We will also be able to discuss and debate the results of the completed research, before it is published.

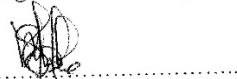
S. MHLACHILA

Name of Chairperson

Date: 11.03.2013



Signature of Chairperson



Signature of witness

APPENDIX E: Parental Consent Form: Ifomu Lemvume

I hereby agree to participate, and for my child to participate, in the research study being held at (Name of School). “Barriers and Bridges: Child Participation; Second-Language Learning and the Cognitive Development of the Young Child”.

Mina ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza, nokuthi ingane yami nayo ngokunjalo, kucwaningo oluzokwenziwa “...”: “Izithikamezo neNdlela yokuqhubekela phambili: Ukubamba iqhaza kwengane, ukufunda ngolimi lwesibili nokukhula komqondo wengane esencane”.

I understand that participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that any participant can assent or dissent to the use of the data and withdraw from the research, without penalties at any time during the research.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi kungentando yam ukuthi ngibambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo; futhi nanoma yimuphi umuntu angavuma noma angavumelani nokuthi kusetshenziswe ulwazi olutholakele, futhi ahoxe ocwaningweni engajeziswanga, ngesikhathi ucwaningo lusaqhubeka.

I understand that any of my own data will require my own signed, voluntary consent: for example if I participate in a focus group discussion I will be free to sign, or not sign, another consent form for that data to be used or not used.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi yinoma yiluphi ulwazi enginalo luzodinga ukuthi ngilusayindele ngokwemvume yami: njengokuthi, uma ngibamba iqhaza esigungwini sokuxoxisana, ngizokhululeka ukuthi ngisayinde, noma cha, noma mhlawumbe elinye ifomu lemvume yalolulwazi lisetshenziswe yini noma cha.

I understand that parental consent will be sought before any data of their child/children is used, including signed consent on the back of any photograph and signed consent for any video which will form part of the final published dissertation.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi kunesidingo semvume yabazali ngaphambi kokuthi imininingwane yengane noma izingane zabo isetshenziswe, kuquka imvume

esayindiwe emhlane wesithombe noma ivideo okungahle kubeyingxenye yombiko wokugcina obhaliwe.

The identity of any child will be anonymous and the face 'masked' with a black indelible pen (on photos) and the focus will be on the activity, not their identity.

Akukho ngane ezoqagulwa ngegama, futhi nesithombe sayo sizofihlwa ngepeni elingacisheki, okusemqoka kuzoba wukuthi ingane yenzani kunoma iwubani.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the data from the research study and that the identity of the school, the staff, the parents and the children will remain anonymous.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi lelifomu lemvume alingeke lihlanganiswe nolwazi locwaningo, futhi ulwazi ngesikole, nabasebenza kusona, abazali nezingane kuzohlala kuyimfihlo.

I understand that feedback will be given to us as parents and to the School Governing Body as well as other parent participants during the research process. We will also be able to discuss and debate the results of the completed research, before it is published. Ngiyaqonda ukuthi sizowuthola umbiko njengabazali futhi unikezwe Isigungu Esilawula Isikole nezinye izigungu zabazali ngesikhathi socwaningo. Sizokwazi futhi ukuthi sibenengxoxo-mpikiswano ngemiphumela yocwaningo uma seluqediwe.

.....
NAME OF CHILD/CHILDREN

.....
DATE

.....
Signature of Parent

APPENDIX F: Consent Form for Focus Groups / Ifomu Lesivumelwano

(First Focus Group Discussion **or** Second Focus Group Discussion)

I hereby agree to participate in this focus group discussion.

Mina ngiyavuma ukuthi ngibambe iqhaza kulesigungu sezingxoxo zokuboniswa.

The research is looking at how our children are using English or their home language (mother tongue) to think and learn.

Lolucwaningo lubhekisisa indlela izingane ezisebenzisa ngayo isiNgisi noma ulimi lasekhaya uma zicabanga noma zifunda.

The purpose of the focus group is to discuss how we talk to our children and how we listen to them and how our children respond.

Inhloso yalesigungu ukuxoxisa ngendlela esikhuluma ngayo nezingane zethu futhi nendlela esizilalela ngayo kanye nendlela eziphendula ngayo.

I understand that I am participating freely, without being forced to do so.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngibamba iqhaza ngokukhululekileyo kungekho kuphoqelelwa ukuthi ngenze njalo.

I understand that I can stop participating at any time if I do not want to continue.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngingayeka yinoma nini uma ngingafisi ukuqhubeka.

I do not have to answer any questions I do not want to answer.

Futhi angiphoqelelekanga ukuphendula nanoma yiyiphi imibuzo uma ngingafuni.

I understand that we will share information within our group *in confidence*.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi esixoxa ngako siyisigungu **kuzobayimfihlo**.

I agree that I will not discuss information shared in this group with anybody who is outside our group.

Ngiyavuma ukuthi angeke ngixoxele umuntu ongaphandle kwalesigungu sethu izingxoxo zethu.

I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ukubamba kwami iqhaza kuzoba yimfihlo.

My name, my child's name, the name of the school and any other information which may identify us, will be removed from the records, to ensure confidentiality.

Igama lami, kanye nelengane yami, igama lesikole nanoma yimuphi umbiko ongahle usikhombe, konke lokho kuzocishwa emarekhodini ukuze kuqinisekiswa ukubaymfihlo kwaloludaba.

I hereby agree to the tape-recording of my participation in the study and to the keeping of notes of what is said in the discussion.

Ngiyavuma ukuthi ukubamba kwami iqhaza kulomsebenzi kuqoshwe emshinini wokuqopha futhi kubhalwe phansi konke engikushoyo ezingxoxweni.

I understand that I can withdraw my information, or that of my child, at any time during the research.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngingawuhoxisa umbiko wami nalowo wengane yami nganoma yisiphi isikhathi salolucwaningo.

I have agreed to the conditions above and have consented to participate in the focus group discussion.

Ngiyivumile imibandela eshiwo ngenhla futhi ngivumile ukubamba iqhaza ezingxoxweni zesigungu.

Name of Parent:.....

Name of child:.....

Date:.....

Statement by researcher/practitioner:

I.....declare that I have explained the contents of the form to the participants and that the information was provided voluntarily.

Signature of researcher, certifying that consent has been given.

Date

APPENDIX G: Permission to use photographs, videos and recordings.

Imvume yokusetshenziswa kwezithombe/ amavideo / nokuqoshwe emshinini

Consent Form / Ifomu Lesivumelwano

I hereby give permission for the research project to use photographs, videos and/or recordings in which my child has participated.

Mina nginikeza imvume yokuthi iprojekthi yocwaningo isebenzise izithombe, amavideo kanye nalokho okuqoshwe emshinini lapho ingane yami ibambe iqhaza khona. I understand that the focus of the research is on what my child is saying, doing and learning and is for the benefit of my child and the common good. Ngiyaqonda ukuthi lolucwaningo lubhekisisa okushiwo yingane, ekwenzayo nekufundayo futhi ingane kanye nomphakathi bazohlomula kulokho.

Confidentiality: Okuyimfihlo: My child's name and all identifying information will be removed by the researcher to ensure confidentiality. Igama lengane yami nayo yonke imibiko yayo izosuswa ngumcwaningi khona kuzoqinisekiswa okuyimfihlo. A black koki will be used to draw a 'mask' across the eyes of my child in any photograph in which the face appears. Kuzodwetshwa ngepeni elimnyama ukumboza amehlo engane yami kulesosithombe evela kusona.

I will also sign consent for use of that photo on the back of the photograph itself. Futhi ngizosayinda imvume yami emhlane wesithombe esizosetshenziswa. I can also withdraw consent for use of the photo/video/recording at any stage of the research process. Futhi ngingayihoxisa yinoma nini ngesikhathi socwaningo imvume yokuthi kusetshenziswe isithombe/ ivideo/ noma lokho okuqoshiwe. I understand that the research will last two months only. Ngiyaqonda ukuthi lolucwaningo luzothatha izinyanga ezimbili nje kuphela. It will start with a General Parents Meeting and conclude with a final parents meeting. Luzoqala ngomhlangano wabo bonke abazali futhi luphethwe ngawo.

I understand that copies of the final published research will be available for use in university libraries and for use by the Department of Basic Education. Nginyaqonda ukuthi amakopi ombiko wokugcina alolucwaningo azotholakala ukuthi asetshenziswe yimitapo yezincwadi ezisemaNyuvesi kanye noMnyango weMfundo eyiSisekelo. It may also be used in educational publications, conferences, seminars or workshops to increase knowledge within the field of early childhood education on the research topic: "Child participation, second-language learning and the cognitive development of the young child."

Futhi ingasetshenziswa emibikweni yezemfundo, ezingqungqutheleni nakweminye imihlangano yezingxoxo zokubonisana ngenhloso yokwandisa ulwazi emkhakheni wemfundo yezingane ezincane ekuyisihloko salolucwaningo: "Ukubamb'iqhaza kwengane, ukufunda ngolimi lesibili kanye nokukhula komqondo wengane esencane".

I understand the above and give my permission: Ngiyakuqonda konke okushiwo ngenhla futhi nginikeza invume yami:

Signature

Printed name of child

Printed name of parent

Signature of

researcher: _____

Date

APPENDIX H: INVITATION TO A PARENTS' MEETING

YOU ARE INVITED to a PARENTS MEETING
to look at **Second-Language learning and teaching**



How does a child learn two languages at the same time?

Why is the home language important ?.....

Should we only speak English at home?

Why is English important ?

Does TV help my child learn English?

How can I best help my child to learn?

Saturday July 20th
12.30 pm

Arrival, registration and refreshments at 12.30pm

Talk by a Guest Speaker on Second-Language learning and teaching at 1.00pm (Thabisile Sishi speech therapist) followed by Focus Group discussions.

CHILDREN WILL HAVE SUPERVISED PLAY OUTSIDE

Note – this meeting is to launch the research process for Nora Saneka's Masters Research in Educational Psychology



APPENDIX I: Letter to parents inviting participation

Letter to parents: Incwadi eqondiswe kubazali

Dear.....

Requesting your participation, and that of your child, in a research study in your school:

Uyacelwa wena nengane yakho ukuthi nibambe iqhaza kucwaningo oluzoba sesikoleni senu:

I, Nora Elizabeth Saneka, Principal of (name of school) am also currently a Master's student in Educational Psychology, studying through UNISA. Mina nginguNora Elizabeth Saneka onguthisha-nhloko wase ■■■, futhi njengamanje ngiyisitshudeni esenza izifundo zeziqo zeMaster's eziphathelene nemfundo yokusebenza kwengqondo yomuntu. Lezizifundo ngizenza eUNISA.

The topic of my research is "Barriers and Bridges: Child participation; <http://www.arx.com/about-cosign-digital-signatures> Second-Language Learning and the Cognitive Development of the Young Child".

Isihloko salolucwaningo simaqondana "neZithikamezo neNdlela yokuqhubekela phambili: Iqhaza elibanjwa yingane; Ukufunda ngolimi lwesibili nokukhula koMqondo wengane eseNcane".

I am writing this letter to request your participation and that of your child, in this research study.

Ngalencwadi ngicela wena nengane yakho ukuthi nibambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo.

Purpose: Inhloso

This research project will look at the nature of language and communication in the intellectual development of the young second-language learner.

Lomsebenzi wocwaningo uzobhekisa isimo solimi nokuxhumana ekukhuleni komqondo womfundi osemncane ofunda ngolimi lwesibili.

We will be investigating ways of working together (parents and teachers) to overcome any possible barriers your child may be experiencing.

Sizobe siphanya ngezindlela zokusebenzisana(abazali nabothisha) ukuze siqobe izithikamezo ekungenzeka ukuthi ingane yakho ihlangabezana nazo.

In the process we could identify some of the difficulties your child may be experiencing in English second-language learning.

Ngemuva kwesikhathi kungenzeka ukuthi sibukhombwe ubunzima ingane yakho ehlangabezana nabo uma ifunda ngolimi lwesibili oluyisiNgisi.

These may have an impact on day-to-day social practices.

Lokhu kungabanomthelela empilweni yakhe yemihla ngemihla yasekuhlaleni.

We can investigate ways of supporting your child's language and communication abilities constructively.

Singaphenya izindlela ezakhayo ezingalekelela ingane yakho ngamakhono okuxhumana.

The direct benefit is for the children in our school, as well as the broader community. Ngalokho kungahlomula izingane zethu esikoleni nengxenye esabalele yomphakathi.

Research procedures: Izingqubo Zocwaningo

The research will be participatory action research with the teachers as co-researchers working together with myself (as lead researcher).

Ucwaningo luzoquka umsebenzi wokubamba iqhaza kwamathishela azobe nawo enza lomsebenzi ebambisene nami (njengomholi walolucwaningo).

The learning programmes will not be interrupted and the research process will be incorporated into the work of the teachers, as co-researchers.

Izinhlelo zokufunda azingeke ziphazamiseke, futhi indlela yocwaningo izohlenganiswa nomsebenzi wothisha njengoba nabo bengabasizi bocwaningo.

In the case of the children who participate, careful observation of verbal and non-verbal queues in communication of their willingness to participate will be an important part of the research process and discussed with the parents.

Uma kwenzeka kubanezingane ezibamba iqhaza, kuzoba nokuqaphela okukhulu ekuthenini kukhona yini abakukhulumayo noma cha ngezinkomba zokuxhumana lapho bezobe bekhombisa ukubanomndlandla ekubambeni iqhaza. Lokhu kuyingxenye esemqoka yenqubo yalolucwaningo, futhi edinga ukuthi kuxoxiswane ngayo nabazali.

This will help to confirm our understanding of the child's participation and any barrier that may be involved.

Lokhu kuzosiza ekuqinisekiseni ulwazi lwethu ngeqhaza elibanjwe yingane nesithikamezo ebhekene naso.

Meetings, focus group discussions and interviews with parents, to encourage parent participation in the research process, will be part of the school programme. Imihlangano, izingxoxo zezigungu nemibuzo-ngqo nabazali, (ekukhuthazeni abazali ukuthi babambe iqhaza ohlelweni locwaningo), konke lokhu kuzoba yingxenye yohlelo lwesikole.

Transparency will be maintained and the findings will be discussed with the parents openly.

Kuzoqhutshwa ngendlela yokuveza konke obala, futhi imiphumela kuzoxoxiswa ngayo nabazali.

Feedback from the parents will be encouraged..

Abazali bayakhuthazwa nabo ukuthi babeke imibono yabo kuloludaba...

Confidentiality: Okuyimfihlo

All participants will be treated equally and fairly and confidentiality will be ensured. Bonke ababambe iqhaza kulomsebenzi bazophathwa ngokulingana nangokufanele. All information will be held in confidence and a pseudonym used in the coding, analysis and synthesis, as well as in the final publication of the data.

Lonke ulwazi olutholakele luzobayimfihlo, futhi kuzosetshenziswa igama – mbumbulu uma kuhlaziywa futhi kuhlelwa imiqondo ngesikhathi kukhishwa umbiko wokugcina.

All data will be held in a secure, locked room for a certain period of time and destroyed by the lead researcher (the Principal) if not used in the final publication of the dissertation, unless the parents want the data of their own child, for their own use. Yonke imininingwane izolondolozwa ekamelweni eliphephile, elikhiyiwe esikhathini esithize, ngemuva kwalokho umholi wocwaningo(uthisha-nhloko) angakushabalalisa uma kungezuketshenziswa ngesikhathi kukhishwa incwadi yokugcina ngaloludaba; noma mhlawumbe abazali bafuna ulwazi oluthize ngengane yabo ngezizathu ezithize.

Rights of Participant: Amalungelo Abahlanganyeli

Your participation and your consent for your child to participate, is entirely voluntary and you have the option to withdraw from the research at any time.

Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza nemvume yakho yokuthi ingane yakho ihlanganyele, kuyintando yakho, futhi ungakhetha ukuhoxa kulolucwaningo nganoma yisiphi isikhathi. You also have the right to withdraw any data you do not want published in the final dissertation.

Futhi unelungelo lokuhoxisa imininingwane ongafisi ukuthi ivezwe ngendaba ethize ekugcineni.

For further enquiries: Uma unemibuzo

Please feel free to contact my supervisor, Prof de Witt at UNISA.

Her e-mail address is

Khululeka, ungathintana nomhloli wami, imininingwane yakhe ibhaliwe ngezansi:

marike.dewitt@gmail.com

**Thanking you for your co-operation,
Ngiyakubonga ukubambisana kwakho nami,
Yimina Ozithobayo,
Yours faithfully,**

NORA SANEKA (Mrs)

Cell: 0792899857

APPENDIX J: Letter to Parents on ‘Learning Story Book’

Dear Parents:

We wish to introduce this ‘**learning story book**’ to you.

It is to encourage us to exchange knowledge of the things your child is interested in, and share knowledge of how he or she is learning, at home or at school.

It travels between home and school. We can write stories of our children’s interests and activities and what they say and do. We (the school or yourself) can include some pictures or drawings done by your child, and also some photos of your child!

Your child is the ‘hero’ of this story book!

From our Parents Meeting on Saturday, the teachers realise we need to be sensitive how we address the children and how the children address us or members of their family.

- 1) We would like you to tell us how you chose your child’s name(s), and why they were chosen.

.....
.....

- 2) Can you also tell us about your child’s surname and clan’s name, if you have one? Where does that name come from?

.....
.....

Names for members of your family:

What name(s) do you want your child to use when speaking to the different members of your family, from the **mother’s** side?

What name(s) from the **father’s** side?

Can **your child** draw a picture on the opposite page of your family members? Can **you** write the name next to each person in that family for your child, so that they can ‘read’ it (say it with you). This will help us to respect your **child’s name and identity** and their sense of **belonging!**

Activities of the Week:

Transport and road safety: we are looking at makes of cars, number plates, road signs and their shape, colour and size. We are counting wheels on vehicles (up to number 6 – on a truck). We are looking at tracks made by the various treads on tyres and how the circle, when it rolls makes a straight line. We made straight lines using black and white for the zebra crossing. We are exploring 'maps' and 'mapping' and have painted roads that curve and intersect and also constructed roads with our wooden blocks. We made a big road on the floor! We are using a robot, stop sign and a yield sign on our cycle track outside! We are also looking at intersecting lines and curved lines, as well as how the spiral shape is formed.

Note: Your child has a right to a name and an identity (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

APPENDIX K: an example of ‘semilingualism’, ‘formulaic speech’ and the problem of ‘meaning-making’ (transcribed verbatim). See video 12 for further examples.

“DAVID” – 5 years old.

Author’s note: English is now the only language spoken to “David” at home as the previous year the parents stopped speaking the mother tongue to him, after advice from the teacher. The parents themselves are not able to express themselves adequately in English.

The context in which he spoke these words is on arrival, early in the morning. As he arrives, he is supposed to put his lunch in the basket and his message book in another container. He is chatting to his teacher as he arrives in the following manner:

“I put my basket in my lunch.”

“The lunch is in his basket in his home, my mommy is gimme a book. They write a paper, they say they don’t care. We put our basket now because I wanted to put my basket now in my home, but I come here my books, my mother will come and my mother go to the church, now goes onto my mother is swimming in the water.”

APPENDIX L: Interview with a Parent who works at the school

P = Parent

R = Researcher

This parent came into the school as a volunteer a year ago when her son was enrolled in the school at the age of 3 years. She is now employed to help with the 18 month – 2 ½ year olds. She is from the Congo originally and is bilingual in Lingala (her mother tongue) and French. The interview was conducted in English, which she has been learning since she arrived in South Africa 4 ½ years ago. In this interview the semilingualism of “David” (see Appendix F) is also discussed as “David”’s family is from the same social and linguistic background and she is aware of “David”’s struggles in ‘meaning-making’. The interview was recorded and is transcribed verbatim.

R – Thank you for offering to do this interview with me for the research into how your child is developing his language abilities and participating at school. Your child joined our school when he was 3 ½ years old and he did not know any English. Now he is 4 ½ years old, which language does he prefer to use?

P – He started to use French at home but now, he speaks English. At home we speak French, but at school English. Now, he understand French but he prefer to speak English, because of the school.

R- Does he speak English at home as well now?

P- Yes

R- If you and your husband talk in French, does he understand what you say?

P- Yes, he prefers English because he is born in South Africa, ja. Now we prefer English.

R- But isn't it an advantage if he can grow up speaking two languages?

P- No

R- You don't think that it would be an advantage for him to grow up speaking two languages? Why?

P- We were observing my sisters child. The problem is when she went to school. They are speaking English, and she is understanding French. But we want our son to understand French, when we speak French.

R- But you want English to be his main language?

P- Yes.

R- So, from when he was born, which language did you speak to him?

P- French

R- How did you talk to him, as a baby in French, what words did you use? Do you remember how you chatted to him in French? When he started using words, what words did you use?

P- Can I speak French? (author's note: permission requested by the parent to speak French words) "Attention", "viens dormier"!

R- Do you remember when he first came here to the school and he started learning English? Do you remember that he used to cry quite a lot and get very emotional –

P- Yes

R- but it was lucky that you were here to support him, because he used to get very upset? You were here for him – did you have to interpret for him a lot?

P- Yes, but you know children, they learn quick. I was surprised when (name of her child) was talking English to us at home, even the father. After 3 or 4 months.

R- How is your English coming along?

P- I learn with my friends at school, here. It was difficult for me, to go anywhere, ask for something. I ask my husband if I want something. If it is something wrong, (name of her child) says don't say it like that, Mummy, it is like that – Mummy.

R- So you are learning English from your child. But how do you explain something to your child, if a problem crops up, what language do you use? How do you explain a complicated situation?

P- Last year if we have something to explain to (name of child) – French. But this year, we observe (name of child) learn quick English. Now, if the father wants to explain something to him – English (author's note: the father is more fluent in English than the mother). He understands too quickly, ja.

R- It is possible to keep up both languages?

P- Sometimes at home "Donnez l'eau" – "Give me water"

R- What will happen when you need to talk to your child, to help him think more deeply – how are you going to do that in English? How can you solve deeper problems in English, especially when he starts thinking “Why is this happening?”

P- Children’s questions are short: “Teacher, please can you do this for me”

R- There are deeper questions that need more language, which maybe you could answer in French but you might find difficult to answer in English. How do you explain, in English about pregnancy, birth – I see you are pregnant. Can you explain these things to your child in English? Is it possible?

P- Yes, hey – I learn. Even my husband say, “I can see”.

P- Sometimes I talk in French to the children, I speak to “F” and she just speak to me in French, even (mentioned the names of other children).

R – “F” says she has two names! She pronounced her name with a French accent, then she pronounced her name with an English accent!

R- What do you think about “David” and his language ability?

P- “David” is difficult, you need to speak to the parent. When you call his name, you need to call three times. Maybe something wrong with his ears. You can see his father, speak to him.

R- I have spoken to the mother and she takes him to the hospital, there is something wrong with one eye, but there is nothing the matter with his hearing – it is something else. I have spoken to the mother and she says they stopped speaking the home language to him last year when his teacher spoke to them. Now English is his main language, except for a few words in French. English is now his language. Do you think the problem is caused by taking away the mother tongue? You don’t think so? You think there is a deeper problem?

P- This Tuesday we were sitting in the Blue Group and he was asking one question, but you could see – something when you talk to him, he talks about other things.

R- His thought processes jump from this thing to that thing.

P- Yes

R- Do you think that this is because he can’t find the words, because he can’t say it in his mother tongue any more and now in English, the words are not there?

P- I am not sure, the thing is you need to talk to the parent again. Maybe you can speak to his father, because he is here (author’s note: the father works away most of the time) because he is around again – talk to him again. But, “David” when you ask a question, he respond with a question, it is difficult for (name of child). But I

am happy about my son, every day new words. He knows everything and when you learn something, the father take the book you write what is happening and ask the child “What is this?” and he can say everything in English.

R- But you could use the book to chat about what is happening in French too – to give him the French words – to give him the vocabulary in both languages.

P- He knows his colours in French, Mummy, Mummy – rouge is red, bleu is blue...If they learn in English (rainbow) at school we can say in French “Arc en Ciel”

R – Rainbow – but the scientific conception of how light splits to make different colours, it may be easier to explain in French, you child may ask “where does a rainbow come from”, then you can use both languages to discuss together. This is the idea of the Learning Story Book, so that the photo can go further, discuss these things further, discuss what is happening in the photo – at home. Chat in the home language, French.

P- I have a French story book for (name of son) brought back from France by (husband’s bosses sister). When we talk children French language it will be difficult for (name of her child).

R- When did you start to learn French, as a child?

P- Very small, my mother and father spoke French – and Lingala. I talk Lingala, I know how to write Lingala. In school I learned in French. When I came here it was difficult for me, but in my church, I learn English in my church sometimes. We have two service, French and English. My husband say he prefer for me to go to the English service so I can learn English.

R- So how many years have you been learning English?

P- Four and a half years now.

R- And do you want to study further in South Africa?

P- When I finished my Matric in Congo I studied (French word for Accounting)

R- Maybe you can help (name of secretary) with the books! But if you want to study further, you will need to improve your English. They also have English lessons at (name of local Primary School) on Saturday morning and afternoon.

P- Next year when I am sitting at home on maternity leave, I will want to go.

R- And you will continue to learn English from (name of her child), as he progresses through school! Thank you for the interview (end of interview).

APPENDIX M: letter from a parent concerning the choice of language as a constitutional right

28/2/2013

Dear Parents,

Yesterday "X"... bit one of his friends. I spoke to him and he said he was sorry. Today he bit another child. I have spoken to him again. I am sure it is not going to happen again.

Initials of teacher

NB Please explain in your home language that we do not bite our friends

Initials of teacher

28/2/2013

I did talk to him and he told me that the other child was hitting him with sand. He said he won't do it again.

Please he is still a child and need to be taught by me with the help also of his teachers.

He can't act or think like an adult. I hope we will work together. And apologies on his behalf.

AS FOR THE LANGUAGE, I'M THE LANGUAGE EXPERT AND I KNOW (BY PROFESSION)WHICH LANGUAGE I PREFER & IT IS THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT FOR ANYONE TO USE THEIR CHOICE OF IT (Note by author: the mother is a translator by profession).

Signed by mother

Initials of teacher

4/03

Our sincere apologies for any offence, we need to discuss your choice of home language to understand your perspective and work together for the good of your child.

Hope to see you Saturday.

Kind regards

Nora Saneka

Signature of mother (in acknowledgement).

APPENDIX N: Old and New Mission Statements

Mission Statement (Old)

(“NAME OF SCHOOL”) is a not-for-profit institution
committed to providing
a quality early childhood education programme
that is based on the rights of the child
and meets the needs of the whole child.

We encourage the all-round development of each child
helping them to gain a good start in life
in particular we teach school readiness skills
and sound values that will help them to become competent,
caring and responsible adults one day.

We provide support and help families
by providing a safe environment for their children
with caring and committed staff,
and we work with these families to provide a better future for each
child.

WE PUT CHILDREN'S NEEDS FIRST!

Our vision
is an early childhood development center
that is supported by parents and the community
where the needs of staff are respected
where all concerned work together in a spirit of *UBUNTU*
and children can grow and blossom.

Mission Statement (revised)

("NAME OF SCHOOL") is a not-for-profit institution
committed to providing
a quality early childhood education programme
that is based on the rights of the child
and meets the needs of the whole child.

We encourage the all-round development of each child
so that they can gain a good start in life.
We see children as rich in potential, with strong capabilities
and the capacity to enjoy life to the full.

We provide support and help families
by providing a safe environment for their children
with caring and committed staff
and we work with these families to provide a better future for each
child.
In particular we seek to uphold the values of a democratic society.

WE PUT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS FIRST!

Our Vision
is an early childhood development center
that is supported by parents and the community
where the needs of staff are respected
and all concerned work together in a spirit of *UBUNTU*
for a "better world for children!"

APPENDIX O: Example of Mid-Year Progress Report

NAME OF SCHOOL

ADDRESS OF SCHOOL

YEAR: 2013

TERM: 2nd Term

Name of learner:Grade R Class: Red Group

Date of birth:

Height:

Weight:

LANGUAGE:

“Phila” is capable of expressing her ideas well in English and has good receptive and expressive language abilities. She has good reading skills and can sit and read a story book to her friends fairly fluently, pausing only occasionally when she needs help with a more difficult word (such as the Dr Seuss book “I am Sam” and “The story of a seed”). She can also read the words of a story dictated by a friend and written down on that child’s picture by the teacher. She recognizes and reads any words she encounters, including long names -for example: (the name of a block of flats in the neighborhood) She copies names and words onto paper and also remembers how to write them without a model to copy.

MATHEMATICS and SCIENCE DISCOVERY:

She is showing increasing understanding of number concepts and can estimate number and then verify the exact quantity of objects. She is learning ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd), and can add and subtract concrete objects, up to the number 30 with ease. She has also been learning about geometric shapes, 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional, how they are formed and how she can use them to form patterns. She has also been developing a sense of length, and comparison of size.

LIFESKILLS:

She is strong willed and is confident of her abilities. She can express how she feels and what she likes and doesn’t like with ease. She is socially responsible and conscientious and always willing to help her teacher.

She has a strong sense of her own individual identity as “Phila” and also a strong sense of her IsiXhosa identity, as can be seen when she sang anIsiXhosa song and danced to it. She is a perceptive child and is alert to all that is happening around

her and wants to take the lead in the learning and teaching situation, such as a science discovery or problem solving activity. She has taken the initiative to organize over 20 children into a circle, to play a “duck, duck, goose” without the teacher to help her. She had the cooperation of all the children in this group and they listened to her.

How does your child participate at school?

(a) Outdoor Play

“Phila” enjoys outdoor play with her friends, including playing ‘touch’ and racing games with her friends to see who can run the fastest. She is fast and agile. She has a good sense of balance and enjoys hanging upside down on the jungle-gym while holding on with her knees and then swinging herself upright again, or doing a complete somersault and jumping off. She has also been experimenting in doing cartwheels, together with her friends.

She has also been showing some of the boys how to form a pulley system with a rope attached to a bucket, slung over a branch and hanging down by the sandpit. She explores and experiments with materials. For example, she explored the way a piece of pink cellophane (which she had taken from the art area) could be buried in sand, but when lifted up can cast a “pink shadow” on the sand if the sun shines through it. She discovered that when we look through it against different coloured objects, their colour is changed.



(b) Creative Handiwork Activities

She can make good use of loose materials for creative art activities

She draws detailed pictures of her family and princesses, and can ‘tell a story’ through her art, reading back her words when the teacher writes them down for her. She also enjoys making a story collaboratively while painting with a friend

(c) Fantasy Play (Socio-dramatic Play)

She enjoys playing imaginatively with her friends, particularly with the construction toys and when playing in the fantasy play area. She took the lead in organizing a game in that area with a friend, who told me that “30 people are coming as visitors” – so the need to set the table with plates and cups for all the visitors – involving a lot of counting.

(d) Music and Movement

She participates actively in action songs and games. She enjoys the fun of clapping her hands and moving rhythmically to the beat of the music. She moves with exuberance and delight to the music and encourages her friends to dance with her.

(e) Educational Toys, Books and Stories

She listens attentively at story-time and enjoys reading the story book together with her teacher as well as afterwards, and is easily able to recognize and read words. She enjoys doing complex puzzles and playing word games, matching and sorting cards.

(f) Social and Emotional Development

(See life skills).

What do I like to do at school?

“I like to play on the jungle-gym”.

School closes on 21st June 2013 and re-opens on 15th July 2013

Signatures

Date

APPENDIX P: The First Focus Group Discussions

The Speech Therapist (ST) in her talk before the First Focus Group Discussion asked the parents present to estimate their child's receptive abilities and expressive abilities at different ages, from the first year to the age of six years. They all underestimated the number of words their child could understand and speak at those ages by a large margin. This could be because of the limited competency of their child in ONE language – and the parents and teachers needed to create a total figure of all the words the child was able to understand and use in BOTH languages. They were perhaps looking at the 'tip of the iceberg' rather than the total language competency of the child, including the receptive ability which would be far greater than the expressive.

The Speech Therapist (ST) attended the Second Focus Group Discussion as one of the parents and could say "We black parents", including herself. This became a non-threatening way to address some of the problems as she shared her own concerns with regards to her own son and her 'battle' to encourage her son to use both languages.

The Researcher is (R) and if a teacher spoke, they are written as "Teacher".

The parent is (P) and the child is referred to as (p)

QUESTIONS FOR FIRST FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Why do you think it is important for your child to learn English? Explain.
Kungani ucabanga ukuthi kusemqoka ukuthi ingane yakho ifunde isiNgisi na? Chaza.
2. Do you think it is important for your child to understand and speak your mother tongue? Why?
Ucabanga ukuthi kusemqoka yini ukuthi ingane yakho iluqonde futhi ilukhulume ulimi lasekhaya na? Chaza.
3. Would you like to share some examples of different situations when you use your mother-tongue to communicate with your child?
Ungakhe usichazele ngezibonelo zezimo ezihlukene lapho usebenzisa ulimi lasekhaya uma uxhumana nengane yakho.
4. Can you share some examples when you use English to communicate with your child?
Sixoxele ngezibonelo lapho usebenzisa isiNgisi uma uxhumana nengane yakho.
5. What language(s) do our children use when chatting to us? **Yiluphi ulimi noma izilimi ezisetshenziswa yizingane zethu uma zixoxa nathi?** Why do we think they use that/those languages? **Sicabanga ukuthi kungani zisebenzisa lezozilimi?**
6. Which language do *you* use with your child to discuss ideas, solve problems or explain questions? **Yiluphi ulimi olusebenzisayo uma ubonisana ngemibono, nixazulula izinkinga noma uchaza imibuzo enganeni yakho?**
7. Which language does *your child* use when he or she wants to discuss ideas, solve problems or ask questions? **Yiluphi ulimi olusetshenziswa yingane yakho uma inemibono ethize, ifuna ukuxazulula izinkinga noma ibuza imibuzo?**
8. Is it sometimes difficult to communicate with our children or for our children to communicate with us? **Kubakhona yini isikhathi lapho kubalukhuni ukuxhumana nezingane zethu noma kuzona ekuxhumaneni nathi?** What problems are caused by this difficulty? **Yiziphi izinkinga ezidalwa yilobunzima?** What do we do when faced with this difficulty? **Yikuphi esikwenzayo uma sihlangabezana nalobunzima?**

9. Are there some things that could put our children at risk of losing their ability to use their home language? **Zikhona yini izinto ezingabeka izingane zethu engcupheni yokulahlekelwa wulwazi lolimi lasekhaya?** What do we think these things are? **Kungabe yiziphi lezozinto?**
10. Is it important to help our children develop literacy in more than one language? **Kusemqoka yini ukuthi izingane zethu zithuthuke ekufundeni ngokufunda ngezi limi ezingaphezu kolimi olulodwa?** If so, why do we think this? **Uma kunjalo, yini eyenza ukuthi sicabange ngaleyondlela?**

FIRST FOCUS GROUP:

Group A – Grade R parents (in RED GROUP classroom)

1. Why do you think it is important for your child to learn English? Can you explain?

Kungani ucabanga ukuthikusemqoka ukuthi ingane yakho ifunde isiNgisi na? Chaza.

(A) - Communication - It is important because there are many languages, Zulu, IsiXhosa, you know, if somebody doesn't understand you, but if you use English it is better.

(F) - Another important point is that you know English is International, wherever you go you can communicate, it is an international language, it is making life easier.

2. Do you think it is important for your child to understand and speak your mother tongue? If so, why?

Ucabanga ukuthi kusemqoka yini ukuthi ingane yakho iluqonde futhi ilukhulume ulimi lasekhaya na? Chaza.

(L) - Yes, because when he goes to the location, many people there don't know how to speak English there, so he has to speak the mother's tongue and even, for us blacks, we have culture too much, so all people do not understand English.

(Y) - I think the mother tongue connects the child to the roots, to the mother that is why we want them to speak IsiXhosa or Zulu. And also, it helps to be multilingual, it helps because you can go anywhere with that.

(L) - I think it is important for them to know their mother tongue because they mustn't forget where they come from

(R) - And in your family situation, what about the other language used?

(L) Well, there is always English is always used, my mother does come from an Afrikaans background but English always dominated... always.

(R) - Yes - and you are in the same sort of situation, isn't that so, with Afrikaans (referring to D's Gran) but you want D to learn Afrikaans, (Gran nods, "Afrikaans too ja" she affirms) AND English ("and English, ja") so how do you (referring to L's mom) feel about that?

(L) - Well it was always difficult for us when we were children, because our grandparents they only spoke Afrikaans to us, even if we answered in English, they answered to us in Afrikaans but the children now they don't have a problem because it's not like that, but we only understand, because it was like that, we only understand Afrikaans. We could never speak it because we never spoke it, they only spoke Afrikaans to us, we could never speak it.

(L) - Ja, you never spoke Afrikaans, but you could understand it.

We understood it but we could never speak it. That's the relationship we had, they would speak and we would understand.

(R) - And, what do you think about that (F)?

(F) - The mother tongue is very important, very, very important. You see, personally, my family is not here. So, if it happened that I have to go home, my children's (should be) able to communicate with my parent, (or) other family member. They can only speak English because I am not coming from my English country, it is French country, so they must be able to speak my mother tongue, you see mother tongue is also very important because it is culture, skipping culture is disaster, culture is reminding you where you are coming from, because if it is neglected the child will not know where you are coming from.

It is all about pride, pride where you are coming from (to be) proud of that certain culture, your language. It is good to speak you own language, not only English. They will label you if you do not speak your mother tongue, it's like you are a 'coconut' – they call you a 'coconut' or a 'danone' so..

(R) - A danone?

(Teacher) Yes, labelled a coconut

A label for that, yes, so we make sure that, so we make sure we teach our child the mother tongue so that they can communicate with other children that they don't have the money to go to white schools or whatsoever, so there is no isolation there because they get isolated if they don't speak the language because more of them they speak the mother tongue, yes.

(R) - Is there anything anyone else would like to say on that? No?

So how many languages is (L) learning at the moment?

(L) - So you see when we close schools I take him to Umtata to play with other children who does'nt speak English because I want him to learn my language but he is speaking English too much, more than my language,

(R) - More than your language – and are you concerned about that?

(L) - Mmm – because I want him to speak two languages, IsiXhosa and English

(R) - And English, so is this a concern for you?

(L) - Yes, mm – because you see, when he goes to the location, and I am not alive, so at home he has to go to the meeting in the location, how is he going to speak to other people there? He was speaking English. He can't – they will take him as a foreigner! Yes.

3. Would you like to share some examples of different situations when you use your mother-tongue to communicate with your child?

Ungakhe usichazele ngezibonelo zezimo ezihlukene lapho usebenzisa ulimi lasekhaya uma uxhumana nengane yakho.

(F) - I had a serious problem in my house when 12 years (M) came into my house, it was very hard with my children with communication, he is only speaking French. Now F and her younger brother are only speaking English. I used to go to them and there were only complaints “No, no – no! This man is doing this!” – complaining too much. I just did not know what to do! But I just found out that this problem was sorting out itself. F is coming to me to ask “Hey, Daddy, what is this in French?” mm “OK, it is like that”, cause “OK, I will tell him”. Then he (i.e. M) is also coming to me, “What is this in English?” so I tell him, so there is communication in French and English

(R) - So they are communicating now in both languages.

(F) - Yes, they are communicating nicely now, not even long time, just short time, they are communicating and F speaks French and er, he also speaks English – they are getting on well now!

(Teacher to Y's mom) – Would you like to comment on the languages that Y speaks?

(Y) - Yes, Zulu, Sotho and Xhosa. But he doesn't understand much Sotho, only us, we understand Sotho but we don't speak much Sotho, it was our grandmother who spoke Sotho. He tries, with us it is Zulu and Xhosa, he tries, he mixes because school holidays it is Xhosa but here it is Zulu and English. But by the house, it is Xhosa, yes, so he tries, it is nice. Because when he visits his daddy's house by Empangeni, it is fine, because he can speak Zulu. Even in (the) Eastern Cape, he can speak Xhosa, yah, it is like that.

(F) - He is a strong one!

(Y) - Yes, he is! Even if you are speaking to him, it is like a Zulu speaking person, talking to him. And I also, like a Xhosa speaking! And if you ask him a question, he will answer you in Zulu, and he will answer you in Xhosa.

(R) - Ah! That is interesting!

(Y) - Yes, that is how it is, because if he is going home and he is only speaking English they will say "Uyaphapha" yah, it is like, uyaphapha. And even us, when we were schooling, there were these children who used to study at (O) College, where there are whites there, and we'll tell them to "Cry in English", we were bullying them "OK, now you think you know too much, or whatever, now let's see, cry in English!" We didn't understand why their parents are taking them to a school where there is English, and we couldn't go there, so we don't mean to think they are better. So children don't understand at the early stage, why I can't go to, here, why I go to (K). We find they're bullying other children, they think they have money and all that other stuff

(R) - Yes – Let's move onto question 3. We have started to share some examples of where we use the mother tongue.

4. Would you like to share some examples of different situations when you use your mother-tongue to communicate with your child?

Ungakhe usichazele ngezibonelo zezimo ezihlukene lapho usebenzisa ulimi lasekhaya uma uxhumana nengane yakho.

(Y) Yes, we like to share. We use the mother tongue everyday, It is our mother tongue. We are Zulu's. English - not so much.

(R) - Are you happy with how your child is progressing?

(NP) - Yes, we are very much, she is trying hard to catch up with the English – she is very good with English.

(R) - Can you share some examples?

(Y) - He is not so good in English – last year, when we were talking to him in English, he was shy to answer you in English. He would only speak English to (X) and his brother, when you talk to him as an adult person, he wouldn't answer only

with his friends and then, only this year he came home to say “Don’t ever speak Xhosa or Zulu, only English”.

(R) When did he say that?

(Y) This year. Being at school, with his friends, because there are few of them who are Zulus, So, I think he got motivated in the Blue Group, because he saw he lacked, other children speak English perfectly, he got motivated that is why he did not want us to speak Xhosa or Zulu.

(R) - Examples from question no 4 – would you like to share some examples where we use English to communicate with your child?

(F) - Now you see - We do speak English at home, there is no example, we speak English one way but about the Mother-in-law, she sends food and they call it this and that - it is coming from home, so they need to know, the name is this, the food is this, and that (R) – Special names

(F) - Yah, special names. (Mentions the name of a food) it is not in English, it is not in French, so it is in my mother tongue. So I show them, this is called this – so when they speak English, they put that word inside. I didn’t eat this, I didn’t eat that!

(R) - This is interesting, this seems to be what (ST) was talking about, she was talking about when words can go from one language into another language so that when you are speaking English, then suddenly you can put the word of another language, French, Xhosa, Zulu - into English.

(Y) - Yes, it like those words, like when in my language we say icabishe, ispinashe. For “y”, he, for now, doesn’t - there is a word in Xhosa, imfuno but even myself, I don’t use those, those Xhosa, Xhosa - deep Xhosa words, I only use ‘ispinashe’ so it is like that. It is also our fault, because mix words, we do mix words, we do mix English and Xhosa, without even knowing it. And when we speak with someone who doesn’t understand English, it is not easy because they want the real, Xhosa names. It is like that.

(F) - What she is saying, sometimes our mother language, doesn’t have all the words, so to make life easy, so we mix words, to make life easy for communication, that is what the people did.

(ST) - Can I jump in here? Code-switching is a very specific thing, code-switching is when - it does not apply to practical words like icabishe or ispinashe – those are very ...it is when I am trying to acquire a second language...the intention of the child is to speak a grammatical English sentence but because he has not acquired all the

words that are appropriate in the second language he will put in words from the first language, for example “I want to go and wee” he will say “I want to go and chama”, for example, that’s code-switching or he will say it in Zulu and finish off in English or starting a sentence in English and finishing off in Zulu. That is code-switching. Starting a sentence in Zulu, and finishing off in English. Those words are common words in Zulu or English.

(R) - Thank you. Are there any other comments about using...there are lots of Afrikaans words for example that we have adopted into English, like ‘wors’ and ‘braai’ – these words might be very foreign to you (to (F)’s father who said: “Ja, ja”) coming in from outside South Africa – but they become South African words!

(F) - Oh, ja! We do adopted ourselves like that, wors and braai. When you find a culture somewhere there, you do go yourself inside it.

5. Can you share some examples when you use English to communicate with your child?

Sixoxele ngezibonelo lapho usebenzisa isiNgesi uma uxhumana nengane yakho.

(R) - So question No 5 is what languages do our children use when chatting to us? What languages do they feel more comfortable in, in other words?

(L) - English

(Y) - Zulu and Xhosa

(R) - And by the way, when coming to this point, I would like to just share, and we will look at it more in the research - I have 3 Xhosa speaking children in the group, besides “I”, they don’t, but they do not speak Xhosa to each other at all, even though one is fully bilingual Xhosa and English

(L) - They speak English.

It is not that Xhosa is difficult. Just don’t like to speak Xhosa.

(F) - He is not motivated to speak. He is doing that at home now. And he is speaking English at home. That is one of the points (ST) was making.

(R) - He is now speaking English at home

(L) - I am speaking English at home, because when I speak to him in Xhosa, he answers me in English.

(R) - Ah, but one of the important things is what (ST) was saying about the receptive ability and the expressive ability. So he might be going through a silent period in Xhosa, where he needs the words in Xhosa and he is absorbing them in a silent way but speaking in English, so as long as there is communication, it's alright but don't stop speaking the Xhosa - that is the danger. Don't stop speaking French either, or don't stop speaking the Zulu, if they start needing to listen to the language but find it easier to answer in the second language – but then, what we were talking about earlier on might happen too, where grandparents were speaking Afrikaans but the children were only responding in English. So, you can understand Afrikaans, but you can't speak it – you were sharing about that (turning to L's mom) earlier on. So this is one of the things we have to be careful of. So, how do we motivate our children to continue using the mother tongue? Because we saw earlier on in the questions, it is important for cultural reasons, their identity, their sense of who they are, their roots. So...let's go on...to question number 5

(R) - Why do you think, – if your child is using that language, the one language only (turns to L's mom). Why do you think he (L) is only using English, for example? Would you like to share? (Turns to L's mom).

(L) - I don't think that he is only using that language because when I speak my language, he understands, when I say to him..”Tata(take something to the kitchen) he is going to take it, without pointing, he is going to take it to the kitchen, so he understands

(R) - OK, so he does understand,

(L) - He doesn't like to speak it

(R) - He doesn't like to speak it?

(Y) - I think it is because of maybe because, maybe the environment here at school, the TV, because at the moment he thinks that English is the only language because his friends they speak, they speak English, yes - and the motivation, if you keep on speaking Xhosa, even if he is in English, and you keep on Xhosa, Xhosa, I think he somehow, he will answer in Xhosa but for now, he thinks that English is the only language. And also the Grannies, sometimes I blame the Grannies because they didn't have the money to send us to those schools now our children they speak English to them - Grannies, I am telling you they play a big role, I don't know whether they have doubts that they couldn't send us to white schools because now our children they speak with them English.

(R) - Is there anything you would like to say?

(NP) - I'd say she enjoys speaking English a lot and think why she uses that language, she is feeling more comfortable.

(R) - It is what she is more comfortable with at school?

(NP) - Yes, it is what she is more comfortable with at school and I try at home, I try my best to speak that language with her. I would say she feels comfortable in the language.

(R) - And how is she with the mother tongue then?

(NP) - She's good.

(R) - She's good?

(NP) - Yeh, she's good

(Granny) - We talk with English, with Zulu, she talk English. She don't want to talk Zulu.

(R) She is feeling more comfortable in English? She doesn't want to reply? (in Zulu?)

(G) - Not all the time

(Teacher) - They converse a lot with each other, in Zulu, most of the time. It's fine.

(F) - Myself, I had a problem, I did not make my place nicely on one culture, it was two, different cultures. My wife comes from Zambia, I am coming from Congo, it is French and English (meaning his wife speaks only English and he speaks only French). And so to get her, I need to know English, I didn't know English!

(R) - You didn't know English?

(F) - I didn't know English, I didn't know any words, so I tried and tried with a little bit of words and I convinced her, and I married her! So inside the house she was teaching me English, so we go one time, I dropped my language, we start now speaking English one way. But inside the house, we are speaking English. So the time the children come, they find English and they are now speaking English. But I also tried to take over – French! French! French! She can speak French, she can do talk in French, she can do everything in French!

(R) - This is your wife?

(F) - Yeh, my wife! She taught me also English!

(R) - She taught you English, you taught her French! OK.

6 What language(s) do our children use when chatting to us?

Yiluphi ulimi noma izilimi ezisetshenziswa yizingane zethu uma zixoxa nathi?

Why do we think they use that/those languages?

Sicabanga ukuthi kungani zisebenzisa lezozilimi?

(R) - Can you please share, which language do you use?

(Granny) - Zulu,

(R) - So you use your mother tongue? OK

(Mom) Zulu so that she can understand

(R) - So she can understand clearly

(F) - When you are cross, you go one time to your mother language!

(R) - For discipline, as well! (laughter, sounds of agreement) And then we are dealing with the difficulties of communication, sometimes. Alright – sorry you have to excuse yourself ...– (parent and Granny prepare to leave) Where are you going? (Back home... etc).

Can you share, what language do you use, when you are solving a problem or discussing ideas with your children?

(Various names of languages given)

(R) - OK. Let's get into this question.

7. Which language do *you* use with your child to discuss ideas, solve problems or explain questions?

Yiluphi ulimi olusebenzisayo uma ubonisana ngemibono, nixazulula izinkinga noma uchaza imibuzo enganeni yakho?

I think we have already discussed a lot about this question. Is there anything anyone would like to add? No? Let's move on to the next question:

8. Is it sometimes difficult to communicate with our children or for our children to communicate with us?

Kubakhona yini isikhathi lapho kubalukhuni ukuxhumana nezingane zethu noma kuzona ekuxhumaneni nathi?

What problems are caused by this difficulty?

Yiziphi izinkinga ezidalwa yilobunzima?

What do we do when faced with this difficulty?

Yikuphi esikwenzayo uma sihlangabezana nalobunzima?

(Y) - I think our children ask too much.

(R) - Your children ask too many questions?

(Y) - Yo, a lot, a lot

(R) - And which language do you use?

(Y) - Um, for now, he is more interested in English, ja.

(R) - Does he ask lots of questions?

(Y) - Ja, he will ask me a lot of questions. If he asks something, if he asks in Xhosa, I will have to explain in Xhosa. Then I will have to - he will ask it in English, and I will have to explain it in English, then he will ask it in Zulu. He is like that. He will like to know all the languages.

(R) - Oh, that is interesting! So it is helping him to have a balance, a balance in his languages! And with yourself, it is only English! (to L's mom).

(L) - Only English

(R) - And yourself? Turning to (F) –

(F) - English as well.

(R) - Do you have problems communicating with Fatuma sometimes?

Mm ... I don't think so, because language, because it is all of us speaking one language within the house and there is no problem with communication between us, we communicate nicely within the house. Sometimes she can do a mistake and you can ask "Why you are doing that?" and she is keeping quiet, because it is a mistake. There is no problem of communication within the house.

Good

And (L) – do you have a problem communicating with "I" sometimes? No, and when you are correcting does he keep quiet, or does he talk?

(L) - He keeps quiet (author's note: he is a quiet child in the class too)

(R) - And are there some problems caused by this - are there some problems which come from that?

(F) - It is a mistake, so he is keeping quiet because he is guilty

(R) - He doesn't want to say anything, he doesn't want to explain

(F) - For example: "I have told you many times not to do this, why did you do it?" –

(R) - And they can't answer,

(F) - And it is only when you raise the voice – “Oh, sorry daddy, sorry daddy!”

9. Are there some things that could put our children at risk of losing their ability to use their home language?

Zikhona yini izinto ezingabeka izingane zethu engcupheni yokulahlekelwa wulwazi lolimi lasekhaya?

What do we think these things are?

Kungabe yiziphi lezozinto?

We have identified some of them.

(Y) - Like being bullied by others,

(R) - Being bullied by others?

(Y) - Yes, and labelled,

(F) - They find themselves alone

(Y) - Isolation – oh, ja, it's true.

(R) - Isolation is a problem, if they are the only ones speaking French, or Zulu, or Xhosa – if that is the only language, maybe it isolates them

(Y) - Yes

Is there something you would like to say, L?

(L) - No

10. Is it important to help our children develop literacy in more than one language?

Kusemqoka yini ukuthi izingane zethu zithuthuke ekufundeni ngokufunda ngezi limi ezingaphezu kolimi olulodwa?

If so, why do we think this?

Uma kunjalo, yini eyenza ukuthi sicabange ngaleyondlela?

(F) - Yes, I think it is very important – the first point is that I need to communicate. Communication is very important in life because Africa has many languages. You might find that there are 3 or 4 languages in a place, which the people need to speak in order to communicate. Speaking, reading and writing more than one language is very, very important for developmental whatever – so there are many points

They speak French as a language of communication all the way down West Africa and all the way into Central Africa, it is French that is the main language, isn't it?

Yes, but they do have their mother tongue, definitely, definitely - so French is a European language, French is more spoken even than English – but even deep, deep in the bush, they talk French. But they still have their mother tongue. Why they speak French, because it can help them to communicate easily. I can go anywhere, if I speak French in the deep bush there, they will understand – but French...

(R) - So do you think it is important to have their mother tongue written, to have books in the mother tongue? In the Pre-Primary School, do you think it is important that we have Xhosa books? To see a book in Xhosa or Zulu, not just English? Or in French? Or in Afrikaans?

(Y) - For me it is useless to only speak a language - you must also write it, and read it. What if you have to write something in Xhosa, you will also have to translate it, you have to do it in writing because writing it helps, if you are communicating with someone who only uses sign language, you only write. Yes, so it helps there to know the language in all ways, by reading, writing, talking.

(R) - So we are just discussing whether it is important to have the literacy in more than one language. So besides a story book in English, to borrow a story book in Afrikaans, or in Xhosa from the library? We do have story books in those languages in our school. And some in Zulu, some in English. And we have words for the days of the week and the weather in Zulu, Afrikaans and English.

(Y) - Cause for me, I love Sevende Laan but now, I can't, I do not understand Afrikaans, I have to read the sub-titles. There are stories, Afrikaans stories and I love them

(F) - Very strange,

(Y) - but I can't ... I can't ...I can't even...some they do not have the sub-titles. So I'm just, I can't read, in Afrikaans, they write in Afrikaans, they speak Afrikaans, but I can't, but for my son, I want him to know Afrikaans, Sotho – everything, because it helps.

(R) - There is an interesting story, is it called Muvhanga, in Venda

(Y) - Ja, in Venda, yes

(R) - That is such an interesting story but we don't understand Venda!

(Y) - Exactly,

(R) - But it's fascinating...

(Y) - so, it is like that, and like, the past weeks I was at hospital. So, we would, in the dining area, we would sit like this and we would speak English and there would come maybe somebody who doesn't understand English and they would speak with me in Zulu, and the Afrikaans speaking people would get bored because they don't understand Zulu. They would speak Afrikaans, and they would laugh. I was talking to them, and now, I'm ... I'm just.... they are talking alone, they are laughing, I would want to laugh with them, I would want to share with them whatever they are talking about, but now I find somebody who doesn't understand Afrikaans, who doesn't understand Zulu – I have to talk to her. So, it is like that. If we are only all of us would understand at least one language... it helps...

(R) - It helps to have one common language

(Y) - Yes

(F) - It is this point which I did find, you see, when we been going to school they teach us in French, you see. Now it's, they raised this question, OK "Is it teaching going to be done in our mother tongue or not?" so they start now to settle that. What they found out that French had a ...was complete, the word, you get all the word, even scientific words, even technic words, everything. But my mother tongue, they could not find all the words, it was not complete, like in French. So, technical words translating, it was very hard for them, they could not translate all the word, and then they get discouraged. So, they could not teach the people in the mother tongue, because some word was not there. They could not say, teach in my mother tongue and take in the word, the technical word, for example and just mix it, because the people could not understand. So they just decide, French is complete in that way, because (of this) all the country, they use French in that way. So you will find in our mother tongue, it doesn't have some words, for example if you study medicine or whatever. So, there is too many technical words that if you say, OK put it in your mother tongue, you find out that you won't get it, you won't get it. So this is another point also, but our mother tongue must be maintained so that we can know where we are coming from.

(R) - Yes. Well, a lot of the technical words and the scientific words in English were borrowed from the Latin. You know that in the 16th Century you weren't educated unless you could speak Latin! You had to learn in Latin because they thought those

words would never be used in the English language. And the same with French, in those days.

(F) - I remember, it was not long time, I was too small, small, the priest was coming (those times I used to be a Catholic) they were coming, they were just speaking in Latin and finish and go. Nobody was not getting anything, and it was finish and finish! Even the song, the answering it was in Latin – until at least they changed it in French! It was like the preaching! They were preaching to you and you could not understand. They put it strictly so that everyone could understand.

[The inter-leading door opens]

(R) Are you finished then?

(The end of the Session as the other focus group came through to the room)

Thank you everyone for your participation.

First Focus Group: Group B – Grade 000 and Grade 00 parents **(in BLUE GROUP classroom)**

1. Why do you think it is important for your child to learn English? Can you explain?

Kungani ucabanga ukuthi kusemqoka ukuthi ingane yakho ifunde isiNgesi na? Chaza.

(C) - I think that the first point is important for the child to learn English – to learn English as a communication language.

(A) - I'm thinking about the future, where is he/she going to work? For example, when they go to tertiary, they won't be learning in Zulu so that they will have no choice.

(B) - Not necessarily that there is no choice. The fact of the matter is that English is the most spoken language in S.A. It depends on the area or Province in which you are based, for example: in Cape Town it is common practice for a child to speak in Afrikaans, in the Free State the same story. Having said that I must admit that English is a universal language that is spoken all over the world.

(G) - It is a universal language, for easy communication throughout the world.

(D) - The children can learn in English for Grade 1 at school but should also have to learn Zulu.

2. Do you think it is important for your child to understand and speak your mother tongue? If so, why?

Ucabanga ukuthi kusemqoka yini ukuthi ingane yakho iluqonde futhi ilukhulume ulimi lasekhaya na? Chaza.

(E) - It is important because in our families we have old people, for example my mother or grandmother who don't understand or speak English. So my child has to speak to my mother or grandmother in Zulu, so that they understand each other.

(C) - What I can say to what she has said is that mother tongue is part of culture for example: when we have a family gathering you are expected to speak in isiZulu as everybody speaks isiZulu and therefore the conversation will be conducted in isiZulu. But if my child is not able to speak isiZulu and maybe some of the family members are model C products they won't have a problem with that. But some children of the family haven't been to Model C schools and they would have a problem if my child speaks English. You can therefore see the division this will cause with other members speaking English and others speaking isiZulu. So mother language is part of the culture.

Teacher: How do we encourage our children to speak the home language at home? (B) When they're at home they express themselves in isiZulu but if you as a parent explain something in Zulu if they have learnt something in English and they don't understand as a parent we put certain words in (author's note: in English) because they learn it at school. Children may use English wanting the parent to explain something but in most cases, OK, we use the African language at home.

(D) - If children are going to model C schools they feel comfortable speaking English with their peers, more than their own language, they feel comfortable.

(H) - Also, certain things can be explained better in the mother tongue. Words in isiZulu are not the same as in English. So for the child to understand better, things should be explained in the mother tongue. If something is happening at home, you take your child through the steps and you explain it in your mother tongue, because

your child will understand it much better than in English. Words in English are not the same as the mother tongue.

(G) - Just to add something there - the mother tongue is where the basis comes from (author's note: the base of the language) - a parent can do the above as long as this doesn't make the child think that the mother tongue is better than English - that is where the difficulty is. Explain to the kid the steps. The child must know that both languages are important, and then there should be no problem.

(B) - The parents must make sure that there is a balance in the use of both languages, otherwise I can see a difficulty for the child, for example: when a parent emphasizes one language over the other, the child will think that the language mostly used by the parent is better than the other less used.

(C) - In other words, all the languages must be treated equally.

Teacher: If there is something that needs to be explained in the home language (at school) I assist with that sometimes, this side and that side, sometimes - and there is a teacher who can help translate in Afrikaans or French, when needed.

3. Would you like to share some examples of different situations when you use your mother-tongue to communicate with your child?

Ungakhe usichazele ngezibonelo zezimo ezihlukene lapho usebenzisa ulimi lasekhaya uma uxhumana nengane yakho.

Teacher: For example, on a cultural day a parent should explain things to the kid, that is: why or how this or that is done in the mother tongue. (They were all agreed)

4. Can you share some examples when you use English to communicate with your child?

Sixoxele ngezibonelo lapho usebenzisa isiNgisi uma uxhumana nengane yakho.

(B) - I do that with my girl (daughter) for example: when she comes back from school and tell me anything that arrived from school, I continue with that, for example she speaks of colours and shapes then I explain more colours, more shapes in English.

(No further comments)

5. What language(s) do our children use when chatting to us?

Yiluphi ulimi noma izilimi ezisetshenziswa yizingane zethu uma zixoxa nathi?

Why do we think they use that/those languages?

Sicabanga ukuthi kungani zisebenzisa lezozilimi?

(C) - Basically we communicate in isiZulu but sometimes we will initiate the conversation in English, sometimes we are watching TV and then he starts expressing himself in English because that is the language he is learning at school, at the same time he is being exposed to these languages, when he is sitting down watching TV. So when he is watching TV and English is the language used, automatically he speaks in English to me when he remarks. This is so because most of the time he learns in English at school.

6. Which language do *you* use with your child to discuss ideas, solve problems or explain questions?

Yiluphi ulimi olusebenzisayo uma ubonisana ngemibono, nixazulula izinkinga noma uchaza imibuzo enganeni yakho?

(B) - I use the mother tongue (others were in agreement).

7. Which language does *your child* use when he or she wants to discuss ideas, solve problems or ask questions?

Yiluphi ulimi olusetshenziswa yingane yakho uma inemibono ethize, ifunaukuxazulula izinkinga noma ibuza imibuzo?

(H) - At home we use both, for example: when the child comes home with a problem (the child speaks) in English. We solve it using the mother tongue. It depends what language the child uses when approaching the parent(s), if she learned it in English, she wants to solve it in English, but basically we both end up using the mother tongue to solve an issue. It depends on how you as a parent push that child, approach that child. What he (the previous speaker) says, I was going to say.

8. Is it sometimes difficult to communicate with our children or for our children to communicate with us?

Kubakhona yini isikhathi lapho kubalukhuni ukuxhumana nezingane zethu noma kuzona ekuxhumaneni nathi?

What problems are caused by this difficulty?

Yiziphi izinkinga ezidalwa yilobunzima?

What do we do when faced with this difficulty?

Yikuphi esikwenzayo uma sihlangebuzana nalobunzima?

(B) -In the end, we do not have difficulty in communicating with our children but sometimes they become frustrated (this was agreed to by many parents in the group)

(C) - Sometimes I have a problem in the manner in which my child expresses himself. For example: He was saying in English, my son was getting out of the bath and I took a towel to wipe him with and he said: "Don't touch me!" in a rough tone, the tone was very strong – that was the problem, the tone, between our language and English, the tone. The manner in which he expressed himself – sho! It was strong. I was surprised and shocked at his tone, "What is he doing?" You can't express yourself in that tone, in our language – that is the problem, the manner in which he expresses himself, it is difficult. I am not sure why this is happening. It is so strong. That is the problem I have recently experienced. Has he got a problem in expressing himself or what, I don't know! Is English learning the problem, or what? I don't know, as a parent!

(B) - My daughter recently kept on saying to me: "Move Mummy, move! Move Mummy, move!"

(C) - Sometimes you say something and his answer is "No! No! NO!"

I think the cause is how their peers express themselves. They say "NO! Don't do that". As a result they learn from them and practise that tone at home as well.

(B) - What if there was a visitor at home and your child used that strong tone? "Move Mummy" - it would be embarrassing!

(F) - Now my grandchild has started saying "No, no" – it seems they have been learning 'no'this week - I think it's whatever transpires at school that gets translated

at home. My grandchild was using a swear word and I asked him. “Where did you get that from?” - in the meantime it’s that morning when someone in the street said that word and he stated that same word. But I advised him not to use that word, because it is not a nice one to use.

(G) - Sometimes the problem lies with the parent and the way we communicate with them. For example: don’t shout at the child when he does something wrong (speak gently, or nicely) because if you shout the child will learn your way as a parent. Once a parent shouts at a child, the child will stop communicating with the parent because he will be scared of being shouted at. We must also look at that, because it counts a lot.

(B) - As a parent, we want our children to learn in English but at the same time we fail to teach them isiZulu. For example, my sister’s daughter, what is this? She fails to understand isiZulu when I ask her to explain something – saying: “What’s this?” She is scared (author’s note: fails) to understand isiZulu, yes, she uses English instead.

(C) - It is the language you practice with them, yes. When I was at varsity, notices were written in English and everybody read them, but if they were written in Zulu, nobody would read them. It seems that notice was never there. The language used in the message, how it is being practiced and the language we are taught, how important we see it.... When I was at high school, I was more Afrikaans than Zulu, but now I can’t even communicate – when I got to varsity, there was no Afrikaans. Today I can’t utter a few words of Afrikaans. Mind you, I studied Afrikaans from Grade 1 up to Grade 12. But look at what happened thereafter, during my stay at varsity. I can’t speak it, let alone constructing a sentence and write it. With Zulu, it’s like, it’s the easiest language which you can learn. For example, look here in Durban. People from other parts of Africa, most of these people can express themselves in isiZulu. Why? Because it is the easiest language.

(F) - Easiest? I’ve got a problem learning isiZulu, for a long time I have had this problem.

(C) - Maybe it’s because of your age?

(F) – I have studied isiZulu and I can greet. When someone asks me something else, I can’t communicate. I am so disappointed!

Teacher - I have the same problem, I can understand what someone is saying in isiZulu, but I can’t speak it, that’s another story (author’s note: she is of Indian

ethnic origin). My boyfriend is a Zulu, we visit his family and relatives. I pick up on what is said, I understand them when they speak in isiZulu, but to speak it is another story. (Advice was given from K “Äs long as you don’t speak Fanakalo” – laughter) Yes, if you don’t know it, they will say it!

(F) - It is the pronunciation of the word, in French or another language, it is difficult. My son’s pronunciation is excellent – I am not near that, I am trying too.

(C) - One way of learning Zulu in your case, use English and put in a few words of Zulu that you know, in-between. But please, don’t use ‘Fanakalo’. In other words, you must be able to read and write the language you are learning. For example: with democracy, most children from black townships are attending school in towns, they speak English well because they are taught in English. They also speak Zulu fluently, but can’t read or write it, so there is that balance (needed) in language. What do you say to that person (author’s note: call that person)? Is it a Zulu speaking person, or an English speaking person? Speaks, reads, writes English but can’t speak, read or write isiZulu! This is a difficulty for me. When we were kids, we were taught not to look in the face of an adult when speaking to them, because that showed disrespect. Today, that is different. Modern day children do the opposite of that, in our time we were taught not to say “No” to an adult. Another example, the very questions we are dealing with now are in English and Zulu. But I would rather read and answer the English version, where I feel comfortable in doing so. Also, because it saves time.

Teacher - As a teacher I want to know from you as a parent, is sending your child to an English medium school an advantage to mother tongue, or a disadvantage? (there were many voices speaking at this point – not clearly heard). How do we get our children to address us in an appropriate tone, even though they may be speaking a second language? The question is, is it conflicting?

(C) - What is said in the meeting there - we were not taught to say “No” to an adult, we were not supposed to look at an adult in the face - that is the problem.

(G) - There something conflicting here (author’s note: in relation to the question), there is a difference even among Zulu speaking people, people in the South Coast speak different Zulu to those on the North Coast and they do not understand each other

9. Are there some things that could put our children at risk of losing their ability to use their home language?

Zikhona yini izinto ezingabeka izingane zethu engcupheni yokulahlekelwa wulwazi lolimi lasekhaya?

What do we think these things are?

Kungabe yiziphi lezozinto?

(B) – Undermining the mother tongue - Using too much English at home instead of mother tongue could result in the child losing touch with the mother tongue, that it's a useless language. At home I always turn on the TV for the English news, not that I hate mother tongue, but I do this automatically.

(A) - That means that your child is also watching English channels.

(C) - Already at school the child is using English, for a change, to strike a balance, the child should use isiZulu at home. As a parent you cannot continue to speak English at home, otherwise there is a danger of English dominating isiZulu.

(G) - Even with us parents at home, for example, it's for the parents to turn to Zulu channels whenever possible, if they have the interest of their children at heart. By so doing they are helping their children to learn the mother tongue. But I prefer the English channels to the isiZulu channels.

(B) - But if we want our children not to lose their language, we have to think about that, I understand we speak English at work and we watch English channels but we want our children to grow up with our language and understand it all the time. The TV is causing a problem, so half an hour, then back again.

Teacher: The Speech Therapist was urging us to buy books for our children and read to them. The question is, do we think it will enhance the home language if we can buy books in the home language and read to them? Part of the helping tools to help them?

(A) - For me, I do not have the books

(C) - I always buy myself books, but all of them are in English. I have never bought myself a book in isiZulu, and that is a problem.

(E) - It is parent's duty to look for isiZulu books and buy them for the sake of their children. Where there are English books at home, help read them while translating them into isiZulu for the sake of our children. This will help strengthen the knowledge of home language in our children.

(F) - I am always looking for an easier one, there are books in Zulu for our children.

Teacher: we need to find the necessary resources, to prioritize the home language and find the helping tools. It is a matter of us rechanneling our mind and reprioritizing.

(C)- One of the things, at home we have a brother who is deaf who uses sign language – most of the time he writes down messages. For example, his sentence construction is not like that one, it will go as follows, if he wants to go home: “Home going” instead of “I’m going home”. What I want to know, does this situation not affect my child? Another point, for the child growing up in the city, he doesn’t know much about mother’s language, but a child on the farm - rural child can tell – “This is a cow” - “This is a goat” – a city child doesn’t know the difference between a goat and a sheep, so that is the situation also.

10. Is it important to help our children develop literacy in more than one language?

Kusemqoka yini ukuthi izingane zethu zithuthuke ekufundeni ngokufunda ngezi limi ezingaphezu kolimi olulodwa?

If so, why do we think this?

Uma kunjalo, yini eyenza ukuthi sicabange ngaleyondlela?

(F) - Yes, it is important so that later in life a child can communicate better with other people, in other words there wouldn’t be any need for translation or interpretation.

(E) - Question number ten is the same as question number nine (author’s note: they had already started answering this question through their discussion).

There are situations where there is a need for interpretation from isiZulu to English. It’s important to know more than one language. This would help them understand when communicating with other people, without needing any interpreter.

APPENDIX Q: Second Focus Group Discussion

September 21st 2013

Questions for Second Focus Group Discussion

1. How have our children been able to communicate with us?
Njengamanje zixhumana njani nathi izingane zethu? Which languages have they used? Yiziphi izilimi ezizisebenzisayo?
2. Has it helped us to understand our children's joys and sorrows, difficulties and concerns?
Kungabe lokho kuzisizile yini ekuqondeni izingane zethu ngokuzijabulisayo noma okuzizwisa ubuhlungu, ubunzima ezihlangabezana nabo kanye nalokho okungaziphethe kahle?
3. Has this research helped us to listen and be attentive to our children?
Kungabe lolucwaningo luszisizile yini ekulaleleni nasekuzwiseni izingane zethu na?
4. Which languages do we use? (English/Afrikaans/Zulu/Xhosa/Sotho/Lingala)
Yiziphi izilimi esizisebenzisayo na?
(English/Afrikaans/Zulu/Xhosa/Sotho/Lingala)
5. Has this helped our children to listen and be more attentive to us?
Kungabe lokho kuzisizile yini izingane zethu ekuthenini zisilalele futhi zisizwisise na?
6. Has the research helped your child to ask questions and solve problems?
Kungabe lolucwaningo luyisizile yini ingane yakho ukuthi ibuze imibuzo futhi ixazulule izinkinga?
7. Has the research helped your child's understanding of English and ability to communicate in English?
Kungabe lolucwaningo luyisizile yini ingane yakho ekuthenini iqonde isiNgisi futhi ikwazi ukuxhumana ngalo ulimi lesiNgisi?
8. Has the research helped your child's understanding of your mother-tongue and ability to communicate in your mother-tongue?
Kungabe lolucwaningo luyisizile yini ingane yakho ekuqondeni ulimi lasekhaya nokukwazi ukuxhumana ngalo ulimi lasekhaya?
9. Why do you think *your* participation in the research was important?

Kungani ucabanga ukuthi ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kulolucwaningo bekusemqoka?

10. Why do you think *your child's* participation in the research was important?

Kungani ucabanga ukuthi ukubamba iqhaza kwengane yakho kulolucwaningo bekusemqoka?

11. What would you like to see happening for your child in his or her future education at school?

Yikuphi ongafisa kwenzeke ngekusasa lemfundo yengane yakho esikoleni?

Why would you like to see this? Kungani na ufisa ukubona lokhu?

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION:

The 'right to participation' as a 'lens' to examine the cognitive development of the young children in our school was illustrated through a power-point presentation before the Focus Group discussion took place. Various photographs taken of the children by the teachers were shown to the parents, with a commentary. Some of these photos had been used in the "Learning Story Books". 'Participation' was presented as the key to the process of learning, engagement with play activities and the emotional and social well-being of the children. Barriers to participation as they unfolded in the process of the research were briefly discussed. Actions undertaken to overcome some of these barriers were outlined. The photographs illustrated 'visible learning' and 'language as meaning-making' (with the children learning through doing). The photos were explained as a way of showing respect for the child's motives or intentions and a way for the adult to extend their conceptual understanding as the photo was reviewed by the teacher and parent with the child afterwards (with the aim of developing metacognitive awareness – thinking about the thinking).

1. How have our children been able to communicate with us?

Njengamanje zixhumana njani nathi izingane zethu?

(H) - My name is "H" (a father) my child is "h". He is only two, he doesn't talk much yet, we can't understand much yet but last Monday he said "How are you?" at least, that is what we thought he said, he doesn't have many words, you know if he is hungry he just goes to the fridge and helps himself to a yoghurt, I mean, to me, that means he wants to have a yoghurt, so we have to think what he wants, basically, from what he does, and he can scream for food, basically that is how he communicates, you know.

(R) - That is good, he is communicating non-verbally but he is starting with some few vocalizations which you are interpreting and you are trying to interpret meaning in what he is saying, which is a good thing - "h" is doing well at school and particularly enjoys playing outside, you saw the photo of him on the climbing apparatus earlier on, and playing with water, he loves to play with water. Yesterday he was at the water trough and his shoes got quite wet! So we try and encourage

the children to take their shoes off before they go outside, but he's learning...he's learning (author's note: he is still new at school having started in the past month).

2. Which languages have they used?

Yiziphi izilimi ezizisebenzisayo?

(ST) - My name is "ST" and it has been a very fascinating journey for me, because my husband is a 1st language Zulu speaker and I am a 1st language Zulu speaker, and I have battled linguistically with my son, I have battled since he was quite young, but one of the things I have had an up-hill battle with, is introducing the second language, particularly when they have been very serious in crèche, when he has been learning new concepts in English, he will come home and say – "Mum, don't speak any English, I don't want to speak any English, my head is sore from English!" But it is coming to the point now where cognitively he is ready, he is coming to me now and he will point at this and say "What is this in Zulu?" and then say "What is this in English?" so he is interested in both languages now.

(B) - Now with me, my name is "B" my son is "b" and he is 3 years old, going to be turning 4 by November. So far he is a first year student in this school, so far I have seen so much development of his language at this school. The home language is isiZulu – but what I have noticed is that, he is able to tell us what is happening and what he is learning at school, he can greet us in English. But he prefers to speak to us in English at home. Usually he likes us to talk in English, that is the problem. Another thing is that when I turn on the TV, everything is in English. How do I stop him (author's note: from watching) everything is in English, but we are at home now, it is supposed to be isiZulu. That is the problem, how do we manage in that situation?

(R) - One of the things you can do, is if he speaks to you in English about something he is learning at school – for example: planting the seeds, you can repeat what he has said in isiZulu

(B) - Yes, especially (when he talks about) what he has done at school, he will do it at home, that is what is important. He talked about where the plant came from. But he was explaining to me in English! I was shocked, shocked! (author's note: surprised at his son's ability in English). And he was telling his mother to go on the stage and make a speech about Mandela, and so I was shocked even more!

(laughter from all)

(R) - Maybe he is thinking of Mandela's birthday celebrations! (We celebrated Mandela's birthday as a school) – S.T., you want to say something?

(ST) One of the things and we talked about last time we were here is that we are all aspirational and we all want what is best for our children, and one of the things I do for my son – although I am not particularly traditional either – but I have had to teach him to enjoy Zulu rituals where he really enjoys them. One of the things we do is go to a traditional Zulu wedding. And from a cultural perspective I know from my white colleagues, children only go to weddings when they are much older, but in our culture, children go even when they are a baby and I am finding that my son is loving weddings, especially traditional weddings and he will want to sit in the front and he will lean forward and say “Mummy, I can't see!”. Those kind of cultural activities, where there is not much English being spoken, when the MC is Zulu speaking, when everything that happens is very much part of that ritual and he is happy as anything! He enjoys it! He loves it! Personally, I don't enjoy that sort of thing too much, but he loves it! And I am using the weddings as leverage, if he's been naughty, he knows he will not go to the wedding, so he'll be good for the next two days, because he is going to the wedding. So I find I am using positive rituals within the culture that the child likes, where there is a lot of exposure to the mother tongue, it always helps, I find.

(R) - We were talking about this in the first focus group discussion, that it is important culturally and traditionally to bring the child into these things. Well, at the dough table, they started slaughtering the cow! There was something very interesting which happened here in this classroom at the dough table, when some boys started 'slaughtering' their cow, where the dough was the cow and they used plastic knives to cut off the hooves, cut off the head, skin the animal and so on – they used all the cultural terminology for the slaughtering of the cow! It started with one child and a friend came to join him – soon there were five boys at the table, all shouting out the traditional terminology with great excitement, at the same time! And “N” (a teacher present) can bear me out! When we have our end of the year concert and we incorporate the traditional Zulu songs and dance, the parents get so excited they rise up out of their seats and they are ululating! They are so excited at this affirmation of their culture and heritage! Last year we had some sharks dancing, boys with Zulu shields shaped like a shark. The noise and excitement

when these 'sharks' started marching across the stage to the sound of Johnny Clegg's song "Impi" while the boys did a traditional Zulu dance the parents loved it! It was amazing! It just shows how exciting it can get in the school as well, not just at weddings and places like that.

(F) - My name is "F" and my daughter is "F". My husband and I come from two different countries (with two different languages) and English was the communicatory language, this is where we found the common words. This was the language with which we could communicate, with which we were arguing, we were fighting so, "OK, he got the message" and "OK, she got the message" so English became the dominant language. So our children became English – when she was inside, it was English – when she was born, it was English. So now, there has been this trouble and the loss of her heritage language as her father is from a French speaking country, so this should be her heritage. So I am appreciative of the language research, which is helping her. Since the introduction of the language research has been instituted here, it has helped us to 'wake-up' and remind us that we should re-introduce her to her heritage language. What I wanted to talk about was her book, the "Learning Story Book" where she told us her "Little bird story" – she drew and then you asked us to ask her to explain to us what the story was about in English (written down by the parents) and we translated it into French (written down by the parents) – Writing in BOTH languages, and this helped her very much, she wants us to re-read it and re-read it to her. It is more beneficial for her, for us especially, because she is six years old and she has lost all these years, she knows nothing about her heritage language. So, I don't know, any help we can get, any expertise is appreciated.

(R) - It seems the main thing is to use both languages with her. Well, the main thing is not to have one language seen as better than another language, I think. They both need to be regarded with the same sense of importance. For their own sense of self-esteem as a person, they need to be able to appreciate both parents and where their parents are coming from, as in your case, you know.

(C) - It is interesting for her, it is encouraging and she is speaking her broken words and, (even if) she doesn't know that it is a swear word, she is using it, but Oh! She is expressing herself.

(R) - As for the swear words, we have been looking at that ourselves as teachers and trying to address it (author's note: the problem of swearing in the school).

3. Has it helped us to understand our children's joys and sorrows, difficulties and concerns?

Kungabe lokho kususizile yini ekuqondeni izingane zethu ngokuzijabulisayo noma okuzizwisa ubuhlungu, ubunzima ezihlangabezana nabo kanye nalokho okungaziphethe kahle?

(ST) - With my son, the teacher wrote a few days ago that he had been very, very naughty. When I was running him down, switching from Zulu to English I said "Hold on!" Just to make sure, I would reprimand him, the whole utterance in Zulu then reprimand him again, the whole utterance in English again!

(R) - Double trouble!

(ST) - Exactly, but not just to give those key words, but to put the words into a complete sentence so that he can learn to communicate in a complete sentence. The whole sentence has to be solidly in that language, to consolidate the message.

(D) - My name is "D" and my grandson is "d". The thing is, he is very, very talkative, it is non-stop talking now, it's non-stop. As soon as I pick him up, he talks continuously (laughter from others). He changes the topic from this, to that, from this to that – I don't know, how you get them to keep quiet at school. I don't know, at home I'm getting a bit tired, there are so many questions, he is so aware of so many things, he's been learning about the trees and the flowers. And he is so forceful: oh he says "My teacher says this!" So we have to do it this way! Oh, I think, we'd better go forward, because the teacher says this, but oh, my perhaps I'm tired at the end of the day, but he speaks about a lot of things (in Afrikaans) he is now greeting in Afrikaans. And he is also saying Mandela's speech, he says "And Never, Ever Again! – And Never, Ever Again!" (general laughter) and then he starts again: "Never, Ever Again!" Anybody listening outside would think – something is wrong with this child! But there is lots of activity with this child, he is listening to music, playing with his cars, but he gets bored quickly too, then drawing again. He runs around a lot. The children like a party, I was looking at the photo of the party, but I don't know why they become so serious all of a sudden, have you seen them when they took photos of them. You see them, they sing "Happy Birthday" then

there is the cake and then they are so serious all of a sudden (in the photo). But if we ignore him, then he gets back to his normal self (talking about how serious her grandson can appear). I know he has learned a lot.

(R) - When they are very, very serious one can always ask: "What are they thinking of?"

(D) - Because children or people are laughing at him, children are laughing at him, he is sensitive.

**4. Has this research helped us to listen and be attentive to our children?
Kungabe lolucwaningo lusingizile yini ekulaleleni nasekuzwiseni izingane
zethu na?**

(E) - My name is "E" and my daughter is "e". We have just moved in here to Durban, in August, I got a job here from Jo'burg. So, we are new here. One thing I realized that my daughter used to be quiet for the first two weeks (she is a recent enrolment in the last month). Now she is talkative and happy and hyper-active as well. I can relate to what "D" is saying. I have just started a new job, I still have to prove myself, I am working long hours at the office and you can imagine, I am tired. So when I am home, I am exhausted. So she will go on talking about Mandela again, the dolphins, learning about trees, the garden, the names of the children in the school, She'll say "You know mommy about "Dawie" so it will be the story about "Dawie" today and I must listen! I am Xhosa, but "e" has chosen to speak English at home. It is English all the way, it is her decision. If I try to speak some Xhosa to her, it is "Blah, blah, blah" I know that she won't even listen to me.

(author's note: on the bus to the farm it was discovered by the teacher that this child did not know that her mother's family were from the Eastern Cape and that they were Xhosa speaking).

(E) - And what the teacher says, I must listen to as well – if the teacher says she must finish her food! I know the principle I am giving her, I must listen to myself! I must implement it. If I say, she must finish her food, I must do it myself. So what teacher says, I must do it too! I would rather dish a little bit, because "teacher says!" so I can finish it myself. So the things they do at school, they really want to implement it at home and you can never say the teacher is wrong. It is one thing

that I have realized, is that the teacher is always right! It is what she has learned at school, I can never argue with it.

(R) - So the teacher has a very important role then, to emphasize the role of the mother tongue, together with English. They are coming here to learn English, but we have to overcome the sense of a barrier that your daughter has now, against Xhosa. And the funny part is that there are at least, three – no, four, Xhosa speaking friends in her group that she could speak Xhosa to! But she does not speak Xhosa to them. But they do not speak Xhosa to her. So there is still this barrier, the research process must continue, again and again, to overcome any barriers that may emerge. She is still new in the class. Her two good friends speak Xhosa fluently and they could speak to her “e” is coming in as a third, and it is a question of how they adjust to a third person coming into their friendship circle. Its approachability, and cooperation. Just as we affirm French with “c” we can affirm Xhosa with “e”. I can affirm Xhosa, because if the teacher doesn’t do it, the children won’t do it – it seems. They would need Xhosa story books. We could send some Xhosa story books home with the children. The teachers are hesitating, because we are worried that the books they might not come back to school. We have to have the co-operation of the parents. But we are trying it with “f” and it is helping him enormously, I think! He likes hearing Afrikaans in the printed form, with pictures!

(D) - Ja, “d” loves it.

(R) - Then they may start to realize that this is an important language for learning, it is not just a home language.

(D) - “d” loves to speak Afrikaans, he ask me for the words, what it a chair, what is a car, he loves to ask me and I must give him the words. He loves to read a book too.

(R) - He is building up a vocabulary in Afrikaans.

(D) - Especially the books, he loves to read the books.

(F) - If it is coming from the school, this side of the source, they realize it is an important language for learning, not just a home language.

(Y) - Especially the story-tell book (learning story book), it helped me with “y”. With “y”, he loves to tell a story, it can help him. I tell him ‘intsomi’ (old grannies stories – traditional tales).

(R) - And “y” is a boy, that if he asks a question, he likes to ask it in English, Zulu and Xhosa. He asks the question in each language and he expects a reply in each

language! So, if you think you are tired at the end of the day, you are not just answering the question once, in one language, you are answering it three times in three different languages! Because he wants to learn the words in all three languages!

(Y) - And he won't stop, until you answer! Even yesterday, he told me he is going to the farm. He did not want to go to the farm, but yesterday, when he came home he said "Mum, please, I want to go to the farm to see the Principal's grandmother. We are going to eat chips, sweets, cakes!" In Xhosa, we say if we are going to the farm, "siya emafama – siya eKhaya" so since we are going to the farm, there must be a grandmother there! (author's note: the school was planning an outing to the farm) So he says, he will see the Principal's grandmother there! Even if I tell him (that it is not your farm) he will not listen to that, it IS your grandmother's farm! That is why he is so excited to go there!

5. Has this helped our children to listen and be more attentive to us? Kungabe lokho kuzisizile yini izingane zethu ekuthenini zisilalele futhi zisizwise na?

(R) - Sometimes when we are speaking one language, if a child doesn't want to listen to us, they can block their ears, or make a 'white noise'!

(N) - My name is "N" and my grandson is "n". He has changed so much and wants to speak English one way. He does not want to speak Zulu. For instance it will happen that he will call me "Gogo, gogo, gogo" and maybe I am busy doing something. Then he will say, "This Gogo!" Then he will say "Granny, granny, granny!" Then I will say "Ya?" then he will say, OK, and say whatever he wants to say. For instance, these days in the morning, these days he is just talking about this Farm thing, and he is telling me "Just phone the teacher!" So every morning I have to phone the teacher "Granny, please phone the teacher and ask her where to sign, because there is his yellow book where we communicate, and he will say "Granny, there is something in the book where you have to sign, because I will not go to the farm" (if you do not sign)! And one of the mornings, I had to speak to the teacher, "Please, just help me out, show me the form in there, where is the form?" And the teacher said, "No, there is supposed to be a form, but I do not see it in the book" and I had to write a long story in the message book "There is a tour to the

farm, “h” told me, I do not see it, but I give consent” and signed it because the form (to sign) was not in the book, I had to write to say that I did not see the form, but I do give permission for him to go on the farm trip. And he was jumping up and down, but I said, I signed! Because of the form thing, because I did sign in the message book! He kept saying, “Is it Granny? Thank you Granny”. When the teacher says, this and this and this and that. And when we get home he will say: “The teacher, the teacher, please phone the teacher!” And I say, “I don’t have the number, you’re kidding me”. And he will say “The teacher is your friend, I used to see you talking to the teacher, phone the teacher, there is the number on your cell!” (author’s note: this teacher uses her cell to keep in communication with her parents and has sent them photo’s of what their child was doing as an ‘mms’ – another way of showing the parent what their child is learning at school).

(R) - So you see how strong willed our children are!

(H) - I am so grateful to this school, because when he came here he couldn’t speak English.

(R) - Does he also speak Zulu?

(H) - But now he is an English speaking someone. He goes to the township, sometimes on the weekend, and he just talks English one-way to the other children, and the other kids, like, it will be like Greek to them and “h” talks English one-way, and the other kids will stop playing with him because they don’t understand him, and they won’t play with him and yah, it is in my house, and he will tell them to go home, “I am telling you, go!”

I ask him to speak Zulu and he says, “No, they don’t want to listen, Granny!”

(R) - So do you see that as a barrier?

(H) - Yah

(R) - So one of the concerns, is to try and maintain the mother tongue.

(ST) - We had a long discussion the last time we were here about how we as parents, because we cannot always blame the child, how we should value our language and our culture. Sometimes, we are so set on going up in the world and learning the language ourselves, because some of us did not learn the second language very well, that we forget it is important for us to ensure our children have a positive regard of the first language and the second language equally as they are growing up.

(R) - So you see it is not easy for the child to keep both languages going, one wheel of the bicycle may be bigger than the other one, but as long as the wheels keep turning, the bicycle is still moving forward using both wheels, even if one wheel is big (like a penny farthing bicycle, a big one in the front) and one small one at the back. Hopefully we can support the development of the mother tongue and keep it going, as well as the second language. At the first focus group discussion there were concerns expressed about children being called 'oreos' or 'coconuts' if they couldn't speak their home language.

(ST) - There is the case of a child at my school, which is a school for children with learning disabilities, one of the parents of a child who is now twelve years old approached me in distress. The mother is Sotho, the father is Zulu and they were from outside the Province when the children were younger, but they came back. The child has learning disabilities but he has always been educated in English, but now they are attending family functions and the child is in some distress, most of the people in the family do not speak English very well and she approached me: "Look, I need help! I absolutely need help! This child is crying, in distress, because he doesn't speak Zulu very well! It is coming to the point where he is always in tears and he is refusing to go to these functions! He has some neighbours who speak Zulu, but he shoves them aside because he cannot understand them. He is alienated, he cannot understand what they are saying, he cannot understand what they are doing, and he is crying, he won't visit them. And mum was most distressed! Of course, a child is twelve, obviously they can pick up, but it is more difficult for him because he is in a school for children with learning disabilities! It is one of the situations you might find yourself in. A lot of the children are bilingual, they cope so well. Of course, if a child is younger, they can pick up both languages and become bilingual, but as your child grows older, if a child concentrates on one language and we do not take time to cultivate the other language, it can affect them socially in the long term.

(Y) - I can speak Zulu and English, even here, but when I get home, it is Xhosa. If you speak Zulu at home, we will just laugh at you "uyaphapha", so it is something like that. The other day, 'y' told us to only speak English. He spoke English to us and I replied in Xhosa. I thought, OK, I will get you. I waited until he really wanted something! It is like that, if he speaks English to you, you must respond in your home language! And if you want to talk in something, especially if it is something

he likes, speak in your home language, you will see! Because they come with that attitude: “I don’t speak Xhosa!”, or “I don’t speak Zulu!”

(R) - Hmm, now he has a teacher who only speaks English to him! (author’s note: the previous year he had a teacher who could speak Zulu or Xhosa to him). But, it doesn’t mean he is stuck in that group, with that teacher, because we have 4 staff members who can speak home languages and they can go to any staff member in free play time, when there is free choice of activities. One of our teachers speaks Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho and English. They can choose which staff member to go to, to talk to, which is why it is so important that our staff work together as a team. One of the concerns of the parents is that teachers speak the correct form of the language, because it important that we speak the correct form of the language, with the correct pronunciation, including the pronunciation of the name of your child (example given of a name). Otherwise the children will go home and tell their parents “Teacher says it like this! Don’t say it like that!”

(F) - Most of the concerns all point to the way the children so much respect the teacher’s authority, so much respect your authority... it should also come from you. So it is important for the teacher to also ask the child about what (Xhosa) they learned from home, what French words did you learn at home, what new words... because they respect your authority. The child says: “Shhh –only speak English!” But the child must get it from your source, the importance of the home language, then the child would appreciate it.

6. Has the research helped your child to ask questions and solve problems?

Kungabe lolucwaningo luyisizile yini ingane yakho ukuthi ibuze imibuzo futhi ixazulule izinkinga?

(G) - They like story telling a lot, they do, they like story telling a lot.

(F) - It must come from you, the teachers. I was amazed how my daughter, at her thinking capacity – did you go through her story? About her life, our lives, our spirituality, she mentioned how certain people get arrested, but she doesn’t know how these things happen, there were so many things – but a teacher is an important tool, a very important tool...

(R) - Yes, it was a long story, written in both languages.

(F) - I want to give support. We appreciate the support, keep working hard, we really appreciate it! Even once a week, twice a week, to help enforce the home languages.

(R) - There has to be an emphasis on the importance of the mother tongue, we must even try to draw in outside people...a French speaking person to come...

(F) My daughter comes, I am a bit jealous about this, there is so much she can learn, each day she comes home to tell me new things and she goes around my home and says "Gaya mabele, gayamabele" but she knows nothing of my home language!

(D) I didn't know what this 'gaya mabele' was, but the teacher explained to me! What this was! She showed me the actions!

(R) Normally children have the neural flexibility to learn two languages and it is possible for a child to become fully bilingual, as long as both languages are supported and developed. That is our responsibility as teachers and parents. It is of concern if a child is not speaking any words at all by the age of 2. By the way, one of the teachers who attended the first focus group discussion took her little 2 year old daughter to have her hearing tested as the pronunciation wasn't too clear, and discovered there was a slight hearing loss! She has since taken the daughter's tonsils and adenoids out (on the advice of the pediatrician).

(F) My daughter is not an arguing person, she will ask once, twice then she gives up easily, so I have learned to pay attention to her, even if I am busy

(B) The manner in which my child uses language, there is a difference in how he uses language, he is now able to ask politely in English.

(R) Does he ask in Zulu?

(B) No, normally he will ask in English. And when I reprimand him in Zulu, he will pay no attention to me. And when I reprimand him in English, that does help.

(R) And with a new boy, who doesn't speak English in the Red Group, when I have to reprimand him, I have to call in someone who speaks Zulu because he will pay no attention to me. So you see, it is very difficult with children, because if they don't want to listen to one language, they won't. Because it is about power, and children love power.

(B) – Language is power

(R) - Yes, it is all about power.

7. Has the research helped your child's understanding of English and ability to communicate in English?

Kungabe lolucwaningo luyisizile yini ingane yakho ekuthenini iqonde isiNgesi futhi ikwazi ukuxhumana ngalo ulimi lesiNgesi?

(D) - My grandson can give me the whole story about the trip to the farm, the t-shirt they must wear and so on, so the teacher is teaching them to listen.

(R) - Yes, we are teaching them to listen.

One of the concerns which has come up through the research, came up in the individual interviews with some parents. It turned out that there was a teacher in the school, who was here last year (she has since left) who told some parents to stop speaking the mother tongue to the children at home – and these are parents have minimum English skills, who have basic conversation who speak broken English – she thought it would be easier, because of difficulties she had controlling the children's behaviour, if they spoke English at home as she thought it would help them learn English more quickly! So the children, within their home, were excluded from conversations in the Mother Tongue. If adults were, for example, planning to go shopping and chatting to each other about that, it would be over their child's head because the child was to be excluded from understanding as it was not in English. And at school, we have found that the behavioural problems have not gone away.

(ST) - I work in a school, where an issue arose, I don't know what the story was, but a parent had to go to the principal and complain, because a teacher said to a child, "You came to this school to learn English! If you want to speak the mother tongue, you should have gone to a mother tongue school!" The principal had to tell the teacher, which I thought she should have known, that it is illegal to advocate one language over another, we have so many official languages and that, and it is actually illegal, people can take you to court, the equality court or whatever.

(R) - It also goes against the language policy of this school. Here, we affirm all the home languages of the children! I think the teacher did this out of desperation, without consulting with me. The child in this situation can become excluded from family conversations and plans.

(ST) - In our school, with children who are language learning disabled, our children have an uphill battle in learning and in learning language anyway, to consolidate

one language, but you can never say “You cannot do this at home!” as it is essential to know multiple languages! But some of our children have serious barriers to learning.

(F) - One thing I realize, with the battle to be understood. It is the non-verbal language which the child understands, which is important. One of the things I have picked up is “the language of choice” they *choose* which language to speak, but also the non-verbal communication is very important. I would rather express myself in a non-verbal way. They watch our body language. I would rather express myself in a non-verbal way if I want to tell her, Mummy doesn’t like what you are doing now, that is naughty. In that way, it is a language that she, as a child can better understand. When she is not happy or sad about something, she can start with the ‘pleeeze mommy’ and the begging part of it, the non-verbal expression!

Anybody else would like to say something about the non-verbal expression?

(Y) - Well, I can see that when I say “Listen”, he touches his ears, it is non-verbal expression, he touches his ears!

(F) - I have seen that with “f” she has a little brother, and when he jumps up and climbs up and down on the couch, and he will make noise, she will tell him “Shhh....” and show him(with the hands). She is like, whispering it, and she is trying for him to get sign language to get him to understand what she speaks. They are learning sign language.

8. Has the research helped your child’s understanding of your mother-tongue and ability to communicate in your mother-tongue?

Kungabe lolucwaningo luyisizile yini ingane yakho ekuqondeni ulimi lasekhaya nokukwazi ukuxhumana ngalo ulimi lasekhaya?

(C) - I listen to my child. There are many questions that he asks and says “Look Granny!” “Hawh, it is this, this and that!” He is telling me to focus “Look, Granny!” OK, I’m focusing driving and he is telling me “OK, focus Granny” then, two seconds and then “Look, Granny, look there!”

(ST) - The inquisitiveness is important, they are asking many questions. They want to know ‘why’ – that is a normal part of their development, “Why does it happen like that?” “Why do we have to go here?” and “Why do I have to bath?”

(Y) - Ah, questions. Last week he asked why my sister's stomach was so big, and I said she has been eating too much, he said "No" he knows there is a baby inside! That day, later on, my sister, she went to hospital and she gave birth to a baby girl! And I took a pic and showed everyone the pic, and he said: "How come he is wearing a jacket? When the baby came out of the stomach, she was naked!" And I was, like, OK and we just ignored him. And then later, when my sister came home and when it came to bath time, he said "the baby doesn't have to bath, she was already bathed in her mother's stomach!" And he's like that!

(D) - I think these children have already discussed this baby business! They have discussed the whole matter at school and they know it already, that when it is in the stomach, it is nought years old! "It is already nought in the mother's stomach!" He says, "but it will be one sometime!" The grandmother says, you need to take him out of that school, so he doesn't need to know all these things, you need to take him out now, he is learning too much!

(F) - You can tell they are learning all these things at school! You need to make notes, sometime!

(C) - My grandson says "You mustn't watch Generations!" The teacher says you mustn't watch Generations. Actually, I am not a Generation fan. But I said, "Why?" "There is all this adult kissing!" And I was so shocked to discover the other day that he knew what 'cheating' is, from Generations! He is concerned that Dineo mustn't find out. The other day I heard him say: "Oh no, Dineo mustn't find out!" So the teacher says, "We mustn't watch Generations". When it starts, weh – weh he turns his back! And he sleeps! And he knows what cheating is! So he says: "teacher says we mustn't watch Generations – hey, Granny, I just don't want to watch this!"

(Teacher) - At news time, it is "My mummy bought me this" and "My mummy bought me this" so now, I wanted them to watch news. And so now, it is so interesting. So on Thursday, there was this story about the Grade R teacher who forced the child to eat number two. So now, one child stood up and say, and told us the whole story! And I was shocked – I was shocked! It is an interesting thing but the children say, "What happened, that was a bad teacher! Must go to jail! Teacher, you can't do that! That teacher is not kind"

(C) - He says, "Granny, we must watch the news!" So I say: "Open the news for me!" Then I ask him, what are they saying? And he will tell some of the stories. He knows, he says "Teacher says we must watch the news! The teacher says we

must watch the news because we have to tell others what happened, not Generations!" I ask "What were they saying?" and he will tell some of the news, some he will tell here and there. But he knows, teacher said he must watch the news! So he can tell others – not Generations!

(R) - Are they watching the news in English or Zulu?

(C) - e-TV

(R) - Oh, e-TV, so it's in English. They are choosing to watch the English programmes? They don't want the home language programmes? Or do they sometimes choose the home language programmes?

(C) - It depends, most of the programmes are in English – the Kitty cats? the Cool cats, yes.

(R) - Is Sesame Street in English or home languages?

(C) - Both. All the languages.

(R) - Most of the people in SA speak Zulu as a language, so Zulu should be a dominant language like English, (general laughter comment "We only like other people to speak Zulu to us!") so why is it difficult for our children to learn the mother tongue? It seems there are huge obstacles to affirm what comes naturally the mother tongue should come naturally? So I think perhaps we are still at the beginning, in helping to affirm the mother tongue.

9. Why do you think your child's participation in the research was important?

Kungani ucabanga ukuthi ukubamba iqhaza kwengane yakho kulolucwaningo bekusemqoka

(B) - They need to learn isiZulu, isiZulu starts with the vowels a-e-i-o-u. It starts with the vowels, the words start with the vowels and ends with the vowels. He was able to say the vowels, a-e-i-o-u in a sequence manner. Now 'b' can't say the vowels, there is a shift, now – unlike before. I am not sure what is the problem...

(R) - Like uMama, it starts with a vowel.

(B) - And ends in the vowels. Because you need the vowels, our children should learn the a-e-i-o-u, as most of the Zulu words start with the vowels. He used to sequence them at the beginning of the year, and I don't know what happened. That would help him. If you can't start a word with a vowel in Zulu, it doesn't make a meaning. That is the problem.

(R) – The affirmation of the mother tongue through songs is also important, here. So we must discuss these points back with the teachers again. You know, what we discuss here, we will take back to the review meeting with teachers, to see how we can push the research on, even further.

10. Why do you think your child's participation in the research was important?

Kungani ucabanga ukuthi ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kulolucwaningo bekusemqoka?

(K) - Like for us, with "k", she's obviously.... because me being English I try to speak a little Zulu but obviously, we communicate at home in English. She picked up English, but obviously, my accent is different from your accent (author's note: father is a 'white' from the USA) English to English over here is two different types of English. So there's like So I think it has taken her longer to catch onto, her accent in English is different. So for her there are these different English's I think it is taking her longer, because there are all these different English's. So she's asking questions, like she will throw in a whole lot of pretend words and then she will say a real word at the beginning and the end, and we are trying to figure out, do we start pushing isiZulu harder, because now, everyone around her is only speaking isiZulu, so but now, because of her complexion, even if they only speak a little English, they will try to speak a little English with her, cause they think is she a 'white' child, is she only speaking English or something? We do not want her to lose the opportunity of learning more than one language, but shouldn't she get one language down? Is it best to do them both at the same time? Or get one before the other? What is the best way to work on this? What do you suggest? I can't even hear the words she sings from the songs she learns at school, to get her pronunciation. Maybe I should come to school and learn them in class with her!

(Author's note: after the Focus Group discussion an appointment was made for a parent interview with this father. He was given the name of a doctor to take his child to for a hearing assessment and he made an appointment with the speech therapist. It was found that she had hearing loss due to fluid in the middle ear).

(R) - I once taught a little girl called Promise, who could speak city English and township English, and was fluent in Zulu. Her parents were both Zulu speaking. There should not be a problem if you speak your own language consistently and the

mother speaks her language consistently, but you say she is throwing in her own imaginary words – yes, I have found that this can happen.

(ST) - There is no perfect formula as such – some say they speak one language from this time to that time, or English only at school and the mother tongue language in the home environment, start the morning with English, use the home language in the evening. Learning a language is hard work, there will be tensions, whichever way you teach them, but you have to be consistent, understand that it takes dedication and hard work, some parents are not consistent and fall by the way over time. We start the year with good intentions, but this falls away. It is important to use the correct sentence structure, the correct grammar in each language. And it is important to make the language learning positive, they need to value the English culture, the child needs to value the home culture or Xhosa culture equally. You need to find a consistent way to do it, and stick to it. It is very hard to teach a child to be fluent in a language, unless you are fluent yourself. This is one of the other points which is very important, which came up in our last discussion. A child is not able to learn a language fluently unless the parent is also fluent, unless the time comes when the child is very bright and then they will surpass the parents' knowledge. So you need to find a nice formula for yourself, and stick to it.

(E) – On what Sisi is just asking, I am not Tswana speaking myself, but when we were in Jo'burg, she (my daughter) was fluent in Tswana. I am just realizing, it is a question of choice with the child. "e" was fluent in Tswana, so it was easy for her to speak Sotho, Pedi. With me, we were in Jo'burg and she was speaking Tswana and Sotho – she can mix Tswana, Pedi and Sotho in one sentence, but she was fluent in Tswana, because our neighbours were speaking those languages, and her friends at school. But when we came to a Zulu speaking environment, she chose to only speak English. Although I am pushing, she has no interest in my language. In Jo'burg she didn't speak my language, so I decided not to push it, she has more interest in other languages than mine. It is a question of choice with the child. Because there, our neighbours were speaking Tswana and they were switching Tswana, Pedi and Sotho and English, when they were playing outside. It is a question of choice sometimes, I have come to realize my child will never speak Xhosa anytime soon. She has no interest in my language. When we are here, it is English only.

(ST) - One of the things about school is that you are so immersed in a language. So, immersion in a language is important, in order to acquire a language, so, in the house, it is what is inside the house which is important, (for example) to talk about going up and down the steps and so on...so if you go to Jo'burg, you will be so immersed with children who are speaking the language that in three months, she will be speaking Tswana again, it is hard for an adult, but for a child, they pick up languages, like that! Children are amazing resilient with languages, one thing with neural plasticity, they are like little sponges, you know, for us it is hard for us to pick up a language, if we go to France for example, but for my son, for our children, they pick it up like that! So immersion is a contributing factor.

(R) - The other question is, do you want her to lose the Twana, or Sotho? Because they can also lose it easily...

(E) - No, no -

(R) - Because she learned it easily, but she can lose it as easily too. She will lose it, just like that, unless it is maintained.

(L) - In South Africa, we have all different Provinces. Whatever Province you live in, they have their own accent.

(Y) - The Xhosa people speak English differently from the Zulu's. You can hear a Xhosa person, it is not the same. You can tell a Xhosa, like that. We speak English differently from the Zulu's.

(R) - In Cape Town they speak Capetonian English!

(F) - In our church in our meetings, we meet with Swahili children, South African children and Indian children. So you see, with my daughter, she speak English to Indian children and like, 'tune' into their accent, she gets exposed to those children at our church meeting and she 'tunes' in! The accent changes. When she speaks with her father, she will pronounce the 'th' like her father, when she is addressing him!

(R) - So she comes up with a French accent!

(F) - Ja, she speaks with a French accent! I agree with what she says about consistency, consistency is important. The second language, they know, is a communicatory language. My daughter can speak Zulu from school, but she will know it as a communicatory language, they are able to adapt, ja.

(ST) - They pick up on the intonations, the patterns, like that! (This) community accent (that) community accent! I find it so fascinating! They are doing it

unconsciously, because kids, they pick up on these accents so easily, they adjust!
And the intonation, the pattern automatically!

(F) - She only responds to these children once every three months, at these meetings, she will 'tune' these Indian kids! You can't even tell from the colours! She speaks a different English, the accent changes.

(ST) - Your accent can change with your family, I tell my colleague, you do not speak like this with me (at work)!

(F) - When she is speaking with her father, she comes up with a French accent! Even the 'th' changes! It really sounds like – woh! French!

(L) - With my grandson, he also needs the correct pronunciation, he will correct me and say "That is not how the word is". "Not like that, like that – the CORRECT pronunciation, the CORRECT pronunciation"! He will repeat it again, because I am not saying it correctly – he wants the CORRECT pronunciation!

11. What would you like to see happening for your child in his or her future education at school?

**Yikuphi ongafisa kwenzeke ngekusasa lemfundo yengane yakho esikoleni?
Why would you like to see this? Kungani na ufisa ukubona lokhu?**

(F) - I think, it is important because the main person we are focusing on is the child, to help this child to form an identity, a community that is a very important factor for their development, as far as I am concerned and to work together to build that individual identity based on their heritage, their culture. For me, this is the main, main important thing why this research is so, so important for us. It is very, very important for a child to speak more than one language, bilingual, maybe multilingual, for their – mostly for their development, to have a broader picture as everything else is concerned. So this is an important research, which must grow, and grow and grow and help our children! I am coming from Zambia, since Zambia got independence in 1964, English is such a dominant language you will find that the mama's at the market place, sell their things in English in the market with such good grammar, but they cannot read, they cannot write in English, but they speak it, with such good grammar! The children must not lose their identity, but cling onto it and carry on with everything else. They must plant that one tree, then grab whatever they can, from everything else!

(ST) – One of the things that fascinates me, I see children for therapy, but we as black parents don't think that we must reinforce the concepts the children are learning at school, at home. Most black parents don't do it. They assume it will happen automatically, but it won't happen automatically. We have to tell parents, buy books for your child, buy educational toys! One of the things which fascinates me, when I see parents for therapy, is that parents take their child to school and think that their child is 'sorted, sorted' – They don't think that they have a responsibility! They buy designer clothes for their child, levi's from head to toe, but do not buy educational toys for their child, they do not buy books for their child. One of the things I have to do is have a library of books, and I buy books whenever I can and parents have to borrow a book for the week, and the parent assumes it is the teachers job and they are saying, "OK? I have to do that?" So, I ask the parents, "What is your child's favourite toy? What books do they like to read?" The parents don't know! They think it is the teacher's job. And the parents look blank blank! The parents seem to think that they will pick up language automatically – they are speaking to their children every day, yet their children have problems at school? They think that their child will be sorted at school! What is important is to understand that as the child is learning the concepts in school, we need to build up the concepts in the home language at home as well – give them the building blocks in both languages. I find it quite fascinating.

(R) - As ST is saying, they need to build the concepts in the second language as well as the first language. They need to think, debate, question IN BOTH LANGUAGES, for both languages to exercise the brain properly so they can develop academic proficiency. Build up the concepts in the second language as well. If they are learning about 'insects' at school, they need to learn that word at home as well and debate and discuss and hypothesize – for example, "Why does the baby need clothes – it came out naked?" They can question the concept, the idea, in the mother tongue. Otherwise they won't have an understanding of the concepts in the second language, they may have conversation proficiency in the language (BICS) but not intellectual and academic proficiency (CALP). The danger is subtractive bilingualism, when they are not proficient in either language – it is like putting two chairs (*researcher puts two plastic chairs out as an example*), the English chair and the Zulu chair – and the child falls between the two chairs! The child doesn't develop proficiency in either language. Neither language can then

support the development of the intellectual capacity of the child. This is why perhaps we have such a high failure rate at high school and why some of our children can do quite well until Grade 3 or 4 when suddenly the intellectual capacity of their language (note: their ability to use language academically) starts failing them. Perhaps it is only picked up then and the child gets taken to the Speech Therapist, when the child has not learned to read or write by Grade 3, and it is far too late already! Or maybe they come to her even younger than that, now...

(ST) - Most of the children come to me, from the age of 5 years.

(R) - That's good, because the younger the child when these problems gets picked up, the better.

As we have seen from the power point presentation earlier on, the intellectual development of the child is not just through pencil and paper tasks, it is through concrete physical experiences at a young age, together with the development of language, to put the building blocks in place for later academic success at high school.

I think we will close the focus group discussion now. Thank you everyone for your participation, you have given us a lot of food for thought.