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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE LANGUAGE POLICY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN AREAS OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS: THE CASE OF GWERU URBAN.

BY

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A research project submitted to the Department of Educational Foundations and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Degree.

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RELEASE FORM

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I, Zinanga Ndaiziveyi Grace hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. I authorize Midlands State University to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of this scholarly research.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband Farai Zinanga, my in-laws the late Mr and Mrs. Zinanga, my parents Mr. Xaverio Mangoma and the late Mrs. Margret Mangoma, my sister Christine and brother Tawanda not forgetting Ms. Vimbai Benjamin who edited and typed the document with proficiency.

Thank you so much.

God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate challenges facing teachers in implementing the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Gweru urban primary schools which enrol learners from diverse language backgrounds. The objectives of the study were to solicit challenges facing teachers in implementing the mother tongue policy and to find out the measures that have been taken to enhance implementation of the language policy. The research study was confined to Muwunga cluster in Gweru urban, with particular interest to Muwunga, Sandara and Saint Michaels primary schools. Related literature was obtained from the views of different authors pertaining under study. The literature revealed that teachers face several challenges in implementing the mother tongue policy. The researcher used descriptive survey to undertake the investigation. Questionnaires and face to face interviews were used to solicit primary data from the respondents. Findings were presented using tables and explanations discussions were given. Major findings such as lack of manpower conversant in all indigenous languages, shortage of financial resources to support implementation, and obscurity of language policy depicted the challenges facing teachers in implementing the mother tongue policy. The researcher recommended that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education provides financial and material resources to promote effective implementation of the mother tongue policy.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study. The study is on challenges faced by teachers in implementing the Zimbabwe language policy in three primary schools in Gweru urban. The chapter gives the background to the study, statement of the problem, research question (s), significance of the study, delimitations, limitations and a summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

The Zimbabwe's language policy is enshrined in the 1987 Education Act which states that teachers should use the mother tongue as a medium of instruction from the first to the third grade. The mother tongue is the first language that the child is exposed to at home. In urban areas, workers from various parts of the country meet to engage in various employment activities. This scenario brings parents with varying mother tongues to one town and children from such homes have to be enrolled in schools without segregation. Thus urban primary schools are made up of children from diverse language backgrounds. This is different from rural set ups where pupils are drawn from areas that are known to speak a specific dominant language such as Shona for Zaka District in Masvingo Province, Ndebele for Silobela in Midlands Province or Tonga for Binga in Mashonaland West Province. In such situations teachers use these mother tongues as mediums for instruction, but in urban areas one class is made up of pupils from several language backgrounds like Indian, Chewa, Shona, Ndebele, Ndau, Chibarwe, English and many others.

The researcher also overhead some urban Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers complaining that they had Chewa speaking learners in their classes and they could not speak

it. They were worried about how they could overcome such a challenge yet the language policy states that children from the first grade to the third grade be taught in their mother tongue. It is against this background that the researcher wishes to find out the challenges urban teachers face in implementing the mother tongue medium policy in class.

1.2 Statement of the problem

ECE teachers at urban primary schools are facing challenges in implementing the 1987 Education Act, which states that children from 5-8 years should be taught in the mother tongue or the first language, (Education Act 1996 Revised Edition, Part XII.)

In this study, the researcher wishes to investigate challenges in effective implementation of the language policy in the urban set up where pupils come from diverse language backgrounds.

1.3 Research question

What are the challenges faced by teachers in implementing the Zimbabwe language policy at Muwunga, Sandara and St Michaels primary schools?

The Policy Clause; Subsection 2,Education Act of 1987----Prior to the fourth grade, either of the languages referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) of subsection (1) may be used as the medium of instruction, depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils

1.3.1 Sub- research questions

1. What difficulties are faced by teachers in implementing the language policy in urban primary schools?

2. How can these difficulties be addressed?

1.4 Significance of the study

The study, if effectively conducted will benefit a number of people and firstly, the researcher will be fulfilling a requirement of the faculty of education for the award of a degree. It will also enrich her as a professional ECE teacher.

The findings of the study will highlight challenges teachers face in implementing the language policy and give practical solutions to them. The idea is to link theory and practice since the study will be on eye opener for review of teaching and learning methods used in class.

The research will add information to the existing knowledge base in respect of inclusivity and effective incorporation of indigenous languages in education. Government will benefit by improving supervision of implementation of the language policy through follow up workshops and advocacy strategies.

1.5 Delimitation

The study was limited to the challenges faced by ECE teachers at Muwunga, Sandara and St Michaels primary schools in implementing the language policy as stated in the Education Act of 1987 amended in 1996 and 2006. Heads, TICs and teachers took part in the study. The study was carried out in 7 months from December 2016 to August 2017.

1.6 Limitations

The researcher experienced several setbacks during the course of the study. Time availability proved to be a setback since she is a full time classroom practitioner, a mother of three, a student and a researcher. The quad roles at some point manifested into some form of role conflict. A lot of time was needed to travel to schools, interview participants, administer questionnaires, analyse and illustrate findings. Some interviews with heads and TICs were pushed to the afternoon when fatigue was gaining ground in the minds of interviewees.

The researcher also experienced financial constraints in meeting the transport costs to meet the supervisor, visit the three schools, recurring typing and printing costs including disbursing and collection of questionnaires.

The researcher had to sell fruits and sweets to fund project costs and managed to overcome the setbacks hence the research was a success.

1.7 Summary

The chapter has highlighted the background to the study. It introduced the study and outlined the problem under study. The research questions and significance of the study are also components of the chapter. Finally the chapter ends with delimitation and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the background to the study. This chapter reviews related literature. It discusses challenges faced by teachers in implementing the language policy. Possible solutions to the challenges are also suggested.

2.1 Identification of relevant literature

2.1.1 The language policy of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a country that is made up of broadly African and European categories of population. There are smaller groups of people of Asian origin.

Zimbabwe is therefore a multilingual and multicultural nation, Thondlana (2013). It is from this background that schools in urban areas find themselves enrolling pupils from diverse language backgrounds.

Thondlana (2013) also notes that Zimbabwe's language policy is enshrined in the 1987 Education Act amended in 1996 and 2006, it states that;

Subsection 2 , Prior to the fourth grade either of the languages referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) of subsection 1 may be used as the medium of instruction, depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils, (See Attached Education Act Chapter 25.04 page 628).

3. From the fourth grade, English shall be the medium of instruction provided that Shona and Ndebele shall be taught as subjects on an equal time allocation as the English language.

4. In areas where minority languages exist, the minister may authorize the teaching of such languages in primary schools in addition to those specified in (1), (2) and (3).

This study is concerned with subsection 2 which maintains that teachers make use of a language which is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils, such a situation does not prevail in urban set ups because children come from diverse language backgrounds and the use of a common language pauses a challenge to those pupils whose mother tongues are not common. Sub section 4 then authorises the use of minority languages when teachers are not fluent in most of them. For instance Chewa, Nambiya, Chibarwe, Sotho and Khoisan. Subsection 4 also uses the word MAY which brings about the issue of vagueness in the language policy. It then looks as if it is not mandatory to use minority languages, hence some teachers may revert to the three main languages in subsection

1) Resulting in the submersion of pupils from minority language backgrounds. It is from this scenario that the researcher wishes to establish the position of teachers in urban areas where such situations exist.

2.1.2 Challenges faced by teachers in implementing the language policy.

In the context of the Zimbabwe language policy, there is a glaring lack of a policy guide as evidenced by the luke warm approach where education authorities have an option to use any of the three main languages namely Shona, Ndebele or English. This position is expressed by Makanda (2009) who cites this as lack of clarity in the policy. Makanda (2009) goes further to say Education inspectors, heads and teachers find themselves precariously positioned since some of them find it difficult to interpret the language policy.

The second challenge literature identifies is implementation capacity. Fullan (1998:672) considers capacity of the school system and communities as the key to reform. McLaughlin

(1998) views implementation capacity as the availability of and access to resources such as human, financial, material, technological and logistical.

Another challenge literature identifies is the support of clients and outside coalitions, Bryard (2005), explains that the formation of local coalitions of individuals who are affected by the language policy is of paramount importance. In this study, ECE teachers were identified as critical in the implementation process of the mother tongue policy. It is the researcher's assumption that if they collaborate among themselves with the support of the school head, they will be empowered with the capacity to improve language practise at school level (Sergrovanni, 2005:298). In Fullan (1991)'s view, it is crucial to identify both local and outside stakeholders in order to gain their support, examples of such stakeholders are district schools inspectors and local communities. Such schools inspectors responsible for clusters of schools can influence policy implementation since they are government representatives at district level. Local school communities are important stakeholders as they are capable of frustrating the teachers' effort to embrace minority mother tongues in teaching and learning. Thus parents should be seen approving mother tongue usage in a school attended by their children.

Another challenge is need, Jansen (2009) identifies need as an important factor for successful implementation of innovations. Fullan (1991) contends that many innovations are attempted without careful consideration of whether or not they address what is seen as priority need by teachers and other stakeholders, hence leading to implementation failure, for this reason, Rogan and Grayson (2003) advance this argument further when they recommend that no major curriculum reform should be attempted until the need for reform is clearly recognised by those involved in the reform process. With reference to Zimbabwe, the policy on mother tongue usage is the need by the government to raise the status of African languages after the attainment of independence (Jansen, 2009). It would be interesting to find out the extent to

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which the teachers, who are expected to implement the language policy, actually appreciate the need. Communities and teachers in urban set ups should show their position in terms of mother tongue usage because they may be of the opinion that English language is the door to a successful future for the learner.

Complexity of policy is another challenge .Complex of policy refers to the difficulty and the extent of change that is required of those responsible for implementation. When teachers see the task too demanding Jansen (2009:216) argues that they simply do not implement the proposed change. In the context of this study, change will be moving from dominant language use to use of mother tongues of all participating children in class. Thus teachers in an urban set up are faced with a complex set of mixed minority language pupils in need of instruction in their respective mother tongues.

The practicability and quality of the mother tongue use programme is a challenge that implementers can face, Fullan (1991) believes that inadequate quality of policy can result when decisions to adopt it are made on grounds of political necessity, such decisions are frequently made without the follow up or preparation time necessary to develop adequate materials for effective implementation to happen, teachers must view the changes in schools as practical. For this reason, Rogan and Grayson (2003:117) proclaim that all too often the energies of policy makers and politicians are focused on the "what" of desired educational change, neglecting the "how". This implies that the emphasis of policy makers is the adoption of policy rather than focusing on its implementation. The same situation may apply to Zimbabwe. When teachers have doubts on the quality of the proposed policy and no follow up is made, then the implementation of a mother tongue policy becomes difficult.

Language diversity in urban primary schools also brings home a culture and traditions submersion challenge, language plays an important role in people's lives as it is not only a

medium of communication but also a reservoir of culture. Goduka (1998) argues that language is inextricably linked to culture. It is a primary means by which people express their cultural values and the lense through which they view the world. Language is therefore part and parcel of an individual's identity. From this background some pupils lose their cultural identity when teachers are not familiar with their languages. Such is the situation in urban primary schools. It is therefore important for educators and policy makers to make sustained serious efforts to address students' linguistic diversity. Pupils whose mother tongue is not used find themselves neglected and if examples are not drawn from their culture they may become silenced forever.

The second challenge in the first section on challenges discussed capacity of implementation and highlighted availability of instructional materials like text books and charts in other languages in urban classroom set ups as a challenge. This manifests itself when minority language pupils feel that they have been left in the cold when they cannot see a text book in their mother tongue or a chart in their mother tongue. Motivation goes down to a low ebb and respect for such media dwindles. It is therefore necessary for teachers to vary the languages used on the charts to cater for language diversity.

It is applaudable for teachers to adopt classroom pedagogy that draws examples from all students' cultures to achieve a balance in motivation. For instance folk stories from Shona culture, Chewa, Ndebele, Tonga and many other indigenous languages would keep moral high for all the pupils speaking different indigenous languages.

Lastly the success of implementation of the language policy depends on the commitment of teachers to bring about the desired change and the enthusiasm and commitment of teachers, heads of schools and auxiliary workers is often underestimated. This means that teachers' experiences and attitudes need to be investigated to establish further challenges that bedevil

effective mother tongue implementation. Ngara (1977) suggests that it does not matter how good and how ideal a language policy is if teachers are not available to make sure that it is properly implemented, then no amount of planning will yield anything like the results expected by the planners. This statement implies that teachers play a pivotal role in the implementation of the mother tongue language policy at ECE level. Mutasa (2006;97) repeats the some proposition by mentioning that, "people can develop the necessary materials but without the will and right attitude, nothing can be achieved." Everyone knows that no army general can win a war if his soldiers are unwilling to fight. This can be the case for Gweru urban schools, teachers can be likened to soldiers who must fight for the use of the mother tongue to cater for the diverse language backgrounds prevailing in their classes. Government efforts of amending the language policy and making follow up by issuing circulars needs to be supported by teachers. There is need to investigate urban teachers experiences and attitude towards mother tongue use in their classes.

2.2 Possible solutions to address the challenges faced by urban primary school teachers in the implementation of the language policy.

2.2.1The role of central authorities

With regards to the role of policy makers on the success of a policy, Fullan (1991:94) asserts that "whether or not implementation occurs will depend on the congruence between reforms and local needs and how the reforms are introduced and followed through." Thus it is evident from literature that if the policy maker is ignorant of the challenges faced by the local practitioner or vice versa, the reform is bound to fail. In view of the above assertion, it is clear that the quality of the relationship is important between the teachers and the government. Fullan (1991) posits that when the government and teachers share the same vision, the situation will allow support for any change efforts when there is agreement. It is therefore clear that when there is mutual understanding, there will be room for reconciling

problems when conflict threatens policy implementation. Thus within the context of this study, the assessment of such a relationship that exists between the government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) and ECE teachers as policy implementers becomes justified, it would be necessary to find out how the language policy was introduced and whether (MOPSE) makes any follow up activities with regards to the implementation of the mother tongue policy.

Darling – Hammond (2005:215) expressed the same sentiments by stressing that government intervention is crucial hence the assertion that "just as a system cannot change schools by mandate, widespread school change cannot occur by school intervention alone, without support and leadership from the policy system." This clearly demonstrates that governments which are aware of the importance and difficulty of implementation do allocate financial resources for the establishment of implementation units, assess the quality of potential changes, support staff development, monitor implementation process and other relevant factors (Fullan, 1991). It is from this set up that the same situation can prevail in Gweru urban where ECE teachers may not be getting the necessary support to ensure the success of the mother tongue use policy. Bailey (2000) echoes that rather than supporting teachers in their classrooms, bureaucratic change processes try to direct teachers rather than engage them. In this study, Bailey's proposal would be relevant for the success of the mother tongue policy as a curriculum change that policy makers and administrators should work with teachers rather than work on them.

Thus literature suggests that government intervention is critical for the successful implementation of a curriculum innovation. In the context of this study and in line with the above submissions on the role of government, such interventions include support in the form of attending to teacher needs by way of providing staff development of indigenous language

use, allocating more financial resources for printing charts and text books in mother tongues and monitoring the success of mother tongues use as a medium of instruction year after year.

2.2.2 Local factors

Some local factors which can be identified as contributing to successful implementation of change are, the District office, School Development Committees (SDCs), Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs), the school head and the ECE teacher. Commenting on the role of the office, Fullan (1991) submits that the support of the district superintendent is crucial to educational change. In the case of Gweru urban, the District Schools Inspector (DSI) leads the district and an average of four schools inspectors are in charge of about 30 primary schools each. It is of paramount importance to ensure implementation follow up so that teachers view the change as important.

In introducing change in schools, district office frequently ignores the SDCs. Fullan (1997) posits that although it is difficult to generalize about the role of communities and SDCs , with regard to implementation, research points out that the support of the community towards the school was positively correlated, it is therefore evident that when the community is supportive of school efforts to bringing change, then major conflicts which sometimes incapacitate schools in bringing about change would not be experienced. If Gweru urban communities are not enlightened on the significance of the mother tongue in teaching and learning, they might not be supportive of the intended implementation of the mother tongue language policy, Quorro (2009).

The other powerful local figure is the school head since he or she is better placed to influence change. The leadership role of the head is important when it comes to the provision of a shared vision on how policy is implemented. Anderson (2002) asserts that the head has to create opportunities for realistically planning change and subsequently monitoring the

implementation process. He or she can achieve this by supporting teachers in a variety of ways that include communicating and collaborating with them. The actions of the head determine whether change will be taken seriously by teachers or not. Fullan (1991) goes on to claim that if the head does not gain understanding of teachers beliefs, teaching behaviour and curriculum materials as dimensions of change then he or she will not be able to provide support for implementation. In the context of this study, it is important to note that teachers might have particular beliefs, which may prevent them from using the mother tongue for teaching and learning.

Implementation failure may also be due to concerns that teachers have with regards to lack of materials and how to teach using the learners' home language. It would be interesting to find out the extent to which heads provide support in relation to the reforms relating to mother tongue use at ECE level.

Research has revealed that the way teachers make progress in implementing change can vary in different schools, regardless of whether they receive the same initial staff development through attending workshops or seminars as qualified teachers to enhance their teaching skills. This argument is advanced by Anderson (1997:336) who contends that this discovery that teachers do not implement policy in the same manner led to the investigation of the role that the head plays in assisting teacher efforts to implement change. Heads who act as initiators were rated as successful implementers of change, Fullan (1991).

Initiator heads work more with staff to clarify and support the use of the mother tongue through consultation and reinforcement. Fullan (1991) further suggests that other intervention strategies for effective heads should include collaboration with deputy heads and TICs , such heads write notes to staff, call for short meetings, hold conversations about progress and "more actions taken to consult with teachers, more direction by the head , more action

taken by teachers and more focus on students, page 117."Similarly the implication is that when the head appears knowledgeable and concerned about the success of a reform, it is then that teachers also focus on achieving the intended objectives. With reference to this investigation, it is worth noting that ECE teachers in Gweru urban may require a lot of support from school heads in order to effectively implement the mother tongue policy. Such support could be the provision of charts in indigenous languages and sessions on how to use them in teaching and learning. TICs can demonstrate the pedagogic in in-service programmes. It is evident from literature that for implementation of change to be successful in schools, the head should support not single handedly but through constant interventions with the assistance of deputy heads and TICs in problem solving, Anderson (2002).

2.2.3 The role of the teacher

Success or failure of mother tongue use generally depends on teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills as well as how they view support offered by relevant administration, Milgram et al (2004) say, school change can only be successfully implemented once teachers are able and willing to implement it in their classes and are confident in their ability to adapt the change to the needs and abilities of their learners. The same view is echoed by Bailey (2000:113) who asserts that "substantive curricular change only occurs when it begins with the teacher and is fundamentally concerned with the needs of children, in a school climate open to problem solving rather than stifled by a hierarchically organised structure." It is clear from the above submissions that teacher knowledge, beliefs and freedom play a fundamental role in the implementation of reforms. In the context of this investigation, it is important to note that implementation failure may be due to unwillingness by teachers to implement the mother tongue policy which they may view as not serving the needs of learners.

With reference to the role of teachers, Collarbone (2009) submits that sustainable change depends on three factors, namely establishing a compelling reason for change, a clear vision

of the future and a coherent plan to reach there. In light of this dispensation, it is clear that teachers' responsiveness and adaptation to change is dependent on their being convinced about the reason for bringing about the change and how to implement the change.

James and Jones (2008) say that successful implementation of policy takes place when teachers collaborate with one another. The same view is brought forward by Fullan (1991) who posits that the power for change lies in collaboration, as it is assumed that improvement in teaching is a collaborative rather than individual enterprise and that analysis, evaluation and experimentation in concert with colleagues are conditions under which teachers improve. As such, it is clear in literature that the more teachers interact concerning either top down or bottom up initiated change, the more they can bring about school improvement such as the implementation of the mother tongue policy, Ndamba (2013). It can be concluded that through intergration and collaboration, teachers get opportunities to receive or give help to one another and to make informed decisions on whether to reject, accept or modify the change in the implementation of the curriculum, with particular reference to the mother tongue policy.

2.2.4 Teachers' self-efficacy

The teacher is regarded as the most important agent in ensuring successful implementation of policy, Ndawi and Maravanyika (2011). Teachers therefore need to develop capacity that enables them to make intelligent decisions in order to handle ambiguous and challenging situations when teaching. This view is also pursued by Eslomi (2008) who argues that it is crucial to understand teachers' beliefs about their own effectiveness, known as teachers' efficacy as it helps to explain many instructional decisions that they make.

The concept of self-efficacy was best explained by Bandura (1986) who defined it as peoples' judgement of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain

designated types of performance. In this study such performances are the implementation of the mother tongue policy, Bandura believes that people initiate, work hard and persist longer at tasks they judge they are good at. This kind of judgement is what is referred to as self-efficacy. To clarify the concept further, Bhatt (2007) stated that in the layman's language, self-efficacy be regarded as self-confidence towards teaching or learning. It can be concluded that self-efficacy beliefs may be pointers towards capability by an individual teacher to accomplish a specific future task. In this investigation the implied task would be implementation of the mother tongue in teaching and learning in urban primary schools. Thus the self-efficacy of Gweru urban ECE teachers needs to be established to examine the extent to which they are implementing mother tongue instruction.

Self-efficacy can also be developed through the various experiences of observing others perform tasks also referred to as modelling effects. Mamwenda (2004) indicates that self-efficacy can be developed when a person observes successful performances and then resolving that he or she can engage in such tasks and also experience similar success. This belief tends to increase the individual's self-efficacy judgement accordingly. Borich and Tambori (2007) further explain that when people observe failure experienced by peers or hear about the difficulty of a task, then their estimates of self-efficacy are lowered. In the context of this study modelling by way of implementation of the mother tongue policy by fellow teachers, my make the task appear easy or difficult thereby enhancing or reducing teacher self-efficacy. The researcher will find out how the performance of other teachers in Gweru urban schools affect the teachers to help to model or destroy the self-efficacy of would be implementers of the mother tongue policy.

2.2.5 Teachers' emotions in curriculum implementation

The last solution towards overcoming challenges is the assessment of teacher emotions. Hargreaves (2005) suggests that the emotional aspect is one of the most fundamental aspects of teaching and how teachers change. Hargreaves (2005) claims that this emotional dimension is often ignored or underplayed by those who initiate, manage and write about educational reforms. In light of the above exposition, consideration of teacher emotions in policy implementation becomes justified. When Hargreaves (2005) conducted a study on the role of emotions, it was established that teachers found work to be technically and emotionally challenging especially when they were inexperienced or felt insufficiently skilled. For this reason, Hargreaves (2005) states that educational change strategies and reform efforts should embrace the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning. " For without attention to the emotions educational reform efforts may ignore and even damage some of the most fundamental aspects of what teachers do" page 286. Thus how teachers feel about a proposed policy change has been found to have a bearing on the implementation aspects. The situation described by Hargreaves may be prevailing in Gweru urban primary schools, where teachers' emotions may affect mother tongue use as a medium of instruction.

2.3 Summary

The chapter looked at the review of literature. It was divided into two sections, challenges faced by teachers in implementing the mother tongue policy and secondly the organization of reviewed literature, linking it with research questions. The next chapter will deal with the methodology used in the research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter gives an outline of the methodology used by the researcher in the study. The researcher delineates the population, sampling procedures and the instruments used to collect data on the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of the language policy in Early Childhood Education (ECE) classes in Gweru urban primary schools include central focus of the policy. The language policy advocates the use of indigenous mother tongues as languages of instruction from the first to the third grade. The data collection procedures and data analysis plan are also looked at. Finally a summary closes the chapter.

3.1 Research design

The research design chosen for this study is the descriptive survey. The design involves essentially fact finding procedures with an interpretation of how facts are related to the problem under investigation. It is a method of research which describes what we see. Chiromo (2006) asserts that a survey entails a study of a limited number of cases with a view of drawing up conclusions that cover the generality of the whole group under review. In this study the whole group is all urban ECE primary schools. In other words a survey involves drawing conclusions about a population based on a sample. However, due to lack of strict control, the descriptive survey can result in lowered internal validity. This problem was overcome by involving different respondents like teachers, TICs and heads. Also varied information sourcing techniques will be used, these are questionnaires and interviews.

3.2 Population and sample

Cohen, (1977) defines population as a particular universe of persons, objects or events which the researcher is interested in. It is the total number of individuals or elements who are going to have an equal chance in taking part in the study. The population for this study were all teachers of ECE grades at all schools in Gweru urban. Approximately ninety (90) ECE teachers are in Gweru urban. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education uses clusters to run administrative programmes. Gweru urban primary schools are divided into clusters. A cluster is a group of schools that are geographically close to each other. The researcher selected Muwunga cluster in Gweru urban as the sample for study.

3.3Instrumentation

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Research instruments are tools the researcher would use for collecting information and data needed to find solutions to the problem under investigation. According to Denzil and Lincoln (1994) the term research instrument refers to any plan of action that helps the researcher in gathering information or relevant data. The instruments used to get information on mother tongue use from the three urban primary schools were the questionnaires and the interviews.

Haralambos and Holborn (2000) define a questionnaire as a document of present questions send or given to the respondents to solicit appropriate responses about a given phenomenon. Schumacher (1993)   also defines a questionnaire as a written set of questions or statements that assess attitudes, opinions, beliefs and biological information. In this study questionnaires were only restricted to teachers and they were handed directly and physically to ECD teachers at the 3 primary schools. Questionnaires are anonymous, hence they promote openness and confidence to reveal the truth. The 27 teachers will freely divulge their teaching

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styles with regards to mother tongue use as a medium of instruction. The ECE teachers in the study were given ample time to respond and confidentiality was maintained.

However, questionnaires are time consuming to distribute and collect. The researcher took 2 days to distribute them physically to the teachers at the three schools. The respondents did not answer at one time. Completion of each depended on the free time obtained by the teachers on their time tables. This meant that collection of completed questionnaires would not be done swiftly.

There is also a possibility of misinterpretation of questions where the intelligence of the respondents varies. Effort was made to simplify questions so as to obtain direct answers, for instance, how many indigenous languages are spoken by learners in your class? Another danger is the possibility that respondents may misplace, deface or damage questionnaires before or during completion. The researcher had to give respondents a spare copy to use in case of such emergencies. To reduce or avoid misinterpretation, the researcher used clear and simple language in the questionnaire. Technical terms were avoided such as phonology, linguistics and semantics. Questionnaires were limited to teachers, while interviews were conducted with heads and TICs. Jebovits and Hapedon (1991) define an interview as a situation in which answers are directly drawn by the interviewer and usually recorded. It is a face talk between the researcher and the respondent concerning the problem under study. In this study the heads and TICs were asked questions on their knowledge of the language policy and their views with regards to the extent of its implementation and the challenges that they face as administrators.

3.3.2 Interviews

Chiromo (2006) says interviews may be useful as follow up to certain responses to questionnaires. In this study the researcher conducted interviews as a follow up to some

responses in questionnaires. Interviews are unique in that they involve the collection of data through direct verbal interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer. Thus the actual physical presence of heads and TICs enabled all normal channels of communication to be open to them such as facial and bodily expressions, tone of voice gestures, reactions, feelings, attitudes, evasiveness and non-cooperation. The researcher acquired information that could not be conveyed in any other way. Chiromo (2006) also contends that interviews have an edge over other methods of data collection because of their flexibility. Many on the spot improvements, explanations, adjustments or variations could be introduced in the data collection process.

In this study the researcher took notes from the heads and TICs and tried to record them electronically. The interviews took place at the schools.

However, the researcher noted that interviews needed a lot of patience since heads and TICs are always busy attending to visitors. Most of them were slotted into afternoon sessions when temperatures were high with fatigue creeping in. Interruptions from cell phone rings were disturbing the flow of the sessions since the researcher had no power to ask them to switch off their gadgets.

To avoid time wastage the researcher avoided long lists of questions and directed the remaining to the ones that will answer the research questions.

3.4 Data collection procedures

The researcher took steps to administer instruments and collect data from respondents.

1. The researcher visited Muwunga, St Michaels and Sandara primary schools to make appointments with heads TICs and teachers before distributing instruments.

2. Distribution and administering of instruments was done by hand and by self which avoided losses and delays.

3. Ample time of a week was given to respondents before collection of the completed questionnaires.

4. Interviews were conducted with three heads and three teachers in charge from the three schools.

3.5 Data analysis plan for questionnaires

Responses to questions in questionnaires were presented in numerical order, question by question. The researcher reported on how respondents responded to each question in the questionnaire and then analysed the meanings that could be drawn from the nature of responses. The order was followed from the first to the last question in the questionnaire. Tables were used to record responses using numerical figures.

3.5.1 Data analysis plan for interviews

The researcher reported on details of each and every interview conducted one by one, quoting the respondents responses in italics.

The researcher analysed the responses at the end of every interview to draw meaning from exposed information.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the research design which is the descriptive survey. The research instruments, population and sample were outlined. Questionnaires and interviews are the basic instruments to be used. The sample, Muwunga cluster is made up of three schools, Saint Michaels, Sandara and Muwunga was extracted from a population of Gweru urban primary school ECE teachers. Three stages of data collection procedures ended with a data analysis plan that the researcher adopted.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses and discusses the research findings on the challenges faced by teachers in implementing mother tongue policy in teaching and learning in classrooms of diverse mother tongues. The respondents were heads of urban primary schools, TICs and ECE teachers. The objectives of the study were-:

- To determine the challenges facing teachers and learners in the process of implementing the mother tongue policy, section 2 at Muwunga, Sandara and St Michaels primary schools.

- To establish teachers' and heads' views regarding ways of addressing the challenges experienced in the implementation process.

Questionnaire and interview responses are presented separately. Responses are discussed one by one. Twenty seven questionnaires and four interviews were analysed.

4.1.1 Questionnaire responses

Responding to the first question on the questionnaire, teachers provided the number of indigenous languages spoken by the pupils. The following table summarizes their responses.

Table 1. Number of mother tongues per class

Languages	1	2	3	4	5	**Total**
Responses	0	0	2	15	10	**27**

Table 1 justifies the presence of diverse language backgrounds in urban primary schools. Not even a single class has one dominant language and there is a maximum of 5 languages spoken by pupils in 27 classes.

The second question solicited for the language used to teach in class. To this the teachers responded as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Languages used to teach

Language	Number of classes
English	15
Shona	10
Ndebele	2
Other	0
Total	**27**

The responses in table 2 show the domination of the English language as a medium for instruction. Fifteen teachers are not using indigenous mother tongues for teaching and learning. They still value the use of English because of the desire to stick to the past when proficiency in the English language was thought to increase chances of getting employment locally and abroad. This is a misconception since Skuttnab-Kangas (2004), explained that comprehension of educational material is enhanced by first learning in one's mother tongue. Shona features as the other language commonly used by teachers as a medium of instruction. This could be because the majority of the teachers in the study were from the Shona language background.

Fluency in spoken indigenous languages was also queried and the teachers responded as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Fluency in pupils' mother tongues in each class

Yes	No
0	27

The responses in table revealed that not even a single teacher was fluent in all languages spoken by pupils in his or her class. This showed that some minority languages are totally submerged and the learners receive instruction in a second language thereby infringing their right to learn in their mother tongue.

Responding to question 4 about challenges they face in implementing the mother tongue policy, teachers brought forward a myriad of facts shown in table 4 below.

Table 4. Challenges faced by teachers

Challenge	Number of teachers facing it
a) Clarity of policy	25
b) The need for change to mother tongue use	10
c) Practicability of implementation	17
d) Government material support	27
e) Head's follow up on mother tongue use	27
f) Teacher collaboration	9
g) Self-efficacy	19

Table 4 above exposes several challenges that teachers face in implementing the mother tongue policy. More than three quarters of the teachers are not clear on what language policy is all about. It is clear that teachers did not obtain the information from training institutions where they received professional education. It is the school that has the duty to in-service teachers on the 1987 Education Act and its requirements with regards to language use at ECE level.

Some teachers did not realise the need to move from using dominant languages as mediums for instruction. They want to remain in the old system where indigenous languages were suppressed by the colonial master's English language. Jansen (2009) identifies need as an important factor for successful implementation of innovations. Fullan (1991) contends that many innovations are attempted without careful consideration of whether or not they address what is seen as priority need by teachers and other stakeholders, hence leading to implementation failure. The resistance by 15 teachers to use indigenous languages as mediums for instruction leads to implementation failure.

Complexity of policy is another challenge revealed in the data. It refers to the difficulty and the extent of change that is required of those responsible for implementation. When teachers see the task too demanding, Jansen (2009) argues that they simply do not implement the proposed change. In the context of this study, change will be moving from dominant language use to using the mother tongues of all participating children in class.

More than half of the teachers face the challenge of practicability of implementing to indigenous mother tongue instruction programme. Fullan (1991) believes that inadequate quality of a policy can result when decisions to adopt it are made on grounds of political necessity. Such decisions are frequently made without the follow up or preparation time necessary to develop adequate materials. Thus teachers have doubts on the quality of the

language policy since no follow up is made and no new materials are produced in line with the 2006 amended language policy.

Heads of schools just do routine supervision of general teaching and learning and take little or no attention to the language of instruction that teachers use. Each teacher is therefore left with no other option except to adopt his or her own teaching language.

Lastly, the results showed the challenges of self-efficacy and lack of collaboration among teachers.

The teachers lack the in-built ability to teach in the minority indigenous languages, they also do not assist each other in terms of teaching style and indigenous language method of instruction.

Question 5 on the questionnaire quizzed teachers on their knowledge of the language policy. The responses are in table 5 below

Table 5: Knowledge and understanding of the language policy

Yes	No
0	27
Total	**27**

Among the 27 teachers, not even one of them had heard or seen the 1987 Education Act. This scenario complicates the implementation of the indigenous mother tongue policy in the sample under study.

The last question was on whether the teachers were ever visited by supervisors or assessors of mother tongue use or not. The responses are shown in table 6 below.

Table 6: Visits by language use assessors

Yes	No
0	27
Total	**27**

The glaring lack of visits by assessors of language use from district offices, provincial and national offices poses a strong challenge to the effective implementation of mother tongues as mediums for instruction at Muwunga, Sandara and St Michaels' primary schools. Ndamba (2013) conducted a similar research in Masvingo rural and discovered that education officials from all levels did not visit the schools to assess language use in classes.

4.1.2 Interview presentation and results analysis

While the researcher had planned to interview 3 school heads and 3 TICs, only 4 interviews were conducted with 2 heads and 2 TICs. The other head and the other TICs could not be reached on the scheduled dates due to unforeseen circumstances.

Interview with first head

Responding to the question on her experience in the Ministry of Education, head 1 said the following:

"I have worked for the Ministry continuously for 28 years."

Responding to the question on the knowledge of the language policy head 1 said the following:

The Ministry of education has no distinct language policy. Some requirements on the use of indigenous languages are found in the education act. Unfortunately, I don't

have a copy of the Act, I would have shown you what the act says on the use of local languages in class.

Asked whether there was a school language policy in place Head 1 had this to say.

We don't have, we did not get one from the ministry, we could have drawn ours from the main one so that we don't lose focus.

Responding to the question on the level of material support for mother tongue use from the ministry the first head said the following.

We don't get direct material resources that are linked to mother tongue use. With the current economic environment, it is difficult for government to support schools along those lines. Some donors like UNICEF can supply books for certain subjects with no bearing on the use of mother tongues, they are mostly printed in the English language.

Responding to the issue of challenges facing teachers in the implementation of mother tongues as mediums for instruction the first head said the following.

While I know some aspects of the education act on language of instruction, the ministry has not made effort to conscientise us on what exactly we should do to implement the provisions of the Act.

Asked about measures taken to improve mother tongue use in ECE classes the first head said the following.

Personally I have not done anything to change teachers' teaching style. Each individual teacher is forced to choose and mix languages to achieve his or her objectives.

Interview with head 2

Responding to the question of experience in the Ministry of Education head 2 had this to say

I have been in the service for 25 years, I am about to retire now.

Asked about her knowledge on the language policy, head 2 said the following

We do not have a circular that spells out what language should be used in class. I think teachers are just trained to teach at colleges and they just come to deliver in the manner they were trained to.

Asked about whether they have the education act or not heads2 said the following:

I am not sure, I haven't gone through all papers in our cupboards. We might have or we don't, I will find time to check one day.

Responding to the question on material resources obtained from the Ministry, the second head said the following:

Virtually nothing in my memory. We source books and other teaching materials on our own with, our SDCs. If funds permit we just buy what TICs need for their departments with no particular reference to mother tongue use.

Asked about challenges they face in implementing the mother tongue policy, the second head said the following:

We are not clear on the policy position of the Ministry and we don't get any material support hence we are left in darkness as to what exactly we should do.

Interviews with TICs

Responding to the question on experience in the teaching field, TIC 1 had this to say;

> *It's about 20 years now.*

Asked about whether she knows the contents of the 1987 Education Act, TIC 1 said the following:

> *We do not have a clear language policy in place. We just hear in the media that they are advocating mother tongue use in classes. Our teachers are free to use any languages they deem fit to enhance understanding.*

Responding to the question on challenges they face in implementing the mother tongue policy, TIC 1 said:

> *Firstly we are not clear on the policy requirements, then we did not receive any material support to enhance implementation.*

Asked about the coming of inspectors who will be checking mother tongue use TIC 1 said the following:

> *None, not that I remember, we are just inspected routinely for teaching and quantity of work we give, not on language we use to teacher.*

Responding to the question on whether they have a copy of the 1987 education act, TIC 1 said:

> *I am not sure but I haven't come across it since I come to this school, I will consult our neighbouring schools if they have a copy then we photocopy and file it.*

Interviews with TIC 2

Responding to the question on teaching experience, the second TIC said the following.

I have been teaching for 18 years.

Asked to shed some light on the ministry's language policy, the second TICs said the following:

I am not sure whether there is a policy or not but the new constitution is advocating the promotion of minority indigenous languages.

Responding to the issue of challenges faced in implementing the mother tongue use policy the second TIC said the following:

"We are not knowledgeable on what ministry's policy on mother tongue use is all about. We also do not have text books that are written in all the mother tongues spoken by pupils.

Responding to the question on whether inspectors come to check mother tongue use in lessons at the school, the second TIC said the following:

Inspectors just come to assess teaching and learning. I haven't seen any one of them asking about the language of instruction ever since I started teaching.

Asked whether she has a copy of the 1997 Education Act or not the second TIC said:

I haven't come across one, will ask the head to look for one.

4.2 Discussion of interview results with Heads and TICs

The two heads and two TICs, have been in the Ministry of Education for a reasonably long period of time, 3 have above 20 years experience while one has 18 years. It was noted that

only one head had knowledge in the existence of a language policy but was not pushing for its effective implementation citing poor material support from the ministry. The challenge of clarity of policy was prevalent among the school heads and hence no school language policies were developed for the schools under investigation. All the heads and TICs confirmed that no follow up was made by ministry officials in as far as mother tongue use was concerned. The researcher discovered that a copy of the 1987 Education Act can be bought at a cost of only $2, 00 at the local Print Flow government printers shop, but no school had such a document. This then posed a challenge to both administrators and teachers as to what the education act is all about. The researcher managed to obtain a copy which is attached to this document.

There were no visible measures that schools had taken to implement the mother tongue language policy. This left teachers with total freedom to do what they wanted in the classrooms. They were free to use any language they wished to use since no follow up come from authorities and local ministry superiors. Heads and TICs had not trained teachers through in-service programmes to conscientise them on the provisions of the language policy. Collarbone (2009) submits that sustainable change depends on three factors, namely establishing a compelling reason for change, a clear vision of the future and a coherent plan to reach there. In light of this dispensation, it is clear that teachers' responsiveness and adaptation to change is dependent on their being convinced about the reason for bringing about change and how to implement the change.

Ndamba (2013) conducted a research on challenges facing teachers in implementing the mother tongue policy in Masvingo district in Zimbabwe. She suggested that successful implementation of mother tongue policy takes place when teachers collaborate with one another. The same view is brought forward by Fullan (1991) who posits that the power of change lies in individual enterprise and that analysis, evaluation and experimentation in concert with colleagues are conditions under which teachers improve.

4.3 Summary

This chapter gave a report of research findings. It analysed the responses to interviews and questionnaires. The responses to questions were analysed in tables that were followed by brief discussions. An outline of every interview presented was given and a discussion of Heads and TICs responses closed the chapter. The researcher also discussed the possible implications of the findings in the education system. The next chapter presents a summary of the whole study, draws conclusions from the findings and offers recommendations from the investigation.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is made up of a summary, the conclusions and recommendations reached based on the major findings. The investigation was on the challenges facing teachers in implementing the language policy in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in areas of diverse language background. The researcher adopted a descriptive design based on a qualitative approach

5.1 Summary

This investigation was on the challenges faced by teachers in an urban set up in implementing the mother tongue as a medium for instruction at ECE level. It arose from the realisation of the multiplicity of indigenous languages spoken by pupils enrolled at Muwunga, Sandara and St Michael's primary schools.

The first chapter introduced the study. It gave a background to the study, stated the problem under investigation, and the research questions, delimitations and limitations. The second chapter dwelt on the review of related literature. An outline of Zimbabwe's language policy was given, as enshrined in the 1987 Education Act. The subsections of part XII of the Act were quoted, leading to the preceding constant reference to the same sections as the researcher tried to link policy and practice. The challenges faced by teachers in implementing the language policy were outlined and explained in the Zimbabwean context in general. The experiences of other countries were mentioned in passing while particular interest was paid to challenges that are faced by teachers in an urban set up.

Chapter three revealed the research methodology used by the researcher. This was the descriptive survey which enabled description of events, phenomena in teaching and learning

in a selected sample of primary schools. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews to collect data from thirty three (33) respondents. Questionnaires were administered to twenty seven (27) teachers and six interviews were planned (3 heads, 3 teachers in charge). A data analysis plan which presented responses in tables and an analysis below the table was used.

The fourth chapter presented, analysed and discussed the findings from the interviews and questionnaires. The data was presented in tables and analysed and discussed table after table. The results from interview were also presented and discussed followed by a summary.

This last chapter sums up the whole research, concludes it and makes recommendations to various stakeholders in the country.

5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions could be drawn from the collected data. Firstly teachers were barely clear of what the language policy stipulates bringing clarity of policy as the first challenge towards implementation of mother tongue instruction. It can also be concluded that most ECE teachers were not fluent in many mother tongues and their deployment to schools does not automatically put them in a class that has a dominant language they can speak fluently and use as a medium of instruction. Thus it is not easy to totally match fluency with class language dominance.

Teachers also did not realise the need to change from curriculums that place importance to English and putting focus on the use of the mother tongues. This need stems from a knowledge and appreciation of the benefits of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Some teachers may know the new policy but were reluctant to implement it because of the desire to maintain the status quo, a mere resistance to change.

Ndamba (2013) noted practicability and quality of the language policy as a challenge to implementation. This was also a conclusion in this study. Diversity and human resource alignment made it impractical to implement mother tongue as a medium of instruction in urban primary schools.

It was also possible to conclude that external factors like government financial support and material resources coupled with follow up mechanisms are lagging behind. Teachers find themselves without resources like text books in most of the mother tongues and they also lack information on the policy requirements which could be beefed up through advocacy workshops from the top to the bottom. With frequent follow ups from the government teachers will not lose direction in terms of policy implementation.

Another possible conclusion is that local challenges at school level manifest themselves where the head who happens to be the immediate supervisor, may not be familiar with the language policy as well, and thus fail to push for classroom implementation of the mother tongue policy.

Teachers also face a collaboration challenge with colleagues, absence of collegiality in policy implementation reduces teacher efficacy. Teachers' attitudes towards mother tongue use are strongly determined by self-efficacy which is a form of confidence and belief in individual potential to pursue a goal.

5.3 Recommendations

The results from this investigation reveal that there is ineffective policy dissemination. It emerged that at the three schools, the participants were of the opinion that the government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) did not formally put in place mechanisms to disseminate information on the 1996 language policy. All the respondents testified that there was no advocacy to popularise the policy to enable

implementers to effect change. According to them, there was no commitment on the part of the government to make implementers aware of the policy as well as educating teachers on how to implement it.

In view of the above, the researcher strongly recommends that Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education avails resources to train school heads and teachers and conscientise them on what the education act stipulates on mother tongue use in class. It should also provide educational material resources such as textbooks and charts in mother tongues to promote effective implementation of mother tongue policy.

The researcher also recommends that parents' perceived belief on the role of English be swayed to mother tongue valuation. Such a change in perspective requires persistent advocacy from teachers, through the media and the constitution to enlighten stakeholders about the merits of mother tongue mediums of instruction.

Another recommendation is that of promoting professional development of teachers. Universities, teachers' colleges and MOPSE should also make teachers aware and conscientise them on the language policy and also how to implement the policy effectively.

The researcher also recommends that heads and teachers should be ready to accept change from their high regard for English to mother tongue usage for the benefit of the learners. If adopted, the above recommendations would result in a resounding implementation of the mother tongue policy which would enhance understanding in the teaching and learning process. Thus comprehension of educational material will positively improve pass rates and produce socio-economically productive individuals who can develop their nation.

Increased mother tongue use in teaching and learning also positively results in the respect of minority languages which would otherwise be extinct if not recognised. Thus culture balance

is maintained in the society with good morals in some cultures remaining in place to play their role in the methodical socialisation of the young. Such continuous recognition of mother tongues would reduce the rate at which westernisation is encroaching into African nations.

Increased mother tongue use also improves participation in education and pass rates in schools since less gifted children, if taught in their mother tongue would comprehend better what they are taught than in any other language which may not be their mother tongue. Thus pass rates would be improved.

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APPENDICES
MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS

My name is Zinanga Ndaiziveyi Grace, a final year student at Midlands State University studying towards a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. In partial fulfilment of my degree programme. I am undertaking a research into the challenges faced by teachers in implementing the language policy in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in areas of diverse language backgrounds, the case of Gweru urban. Your responses will provide most needed and valuable inputs to this research. If you may, please take some of your valuable time to respond to this questionnaire, I would be very grateful. Please respond by ticking in the boxes provided for possible answers to given questions or respond in writing in spaces provided.

1. How many indigenous languages are spoken by children in your class?

....

2. What language do you use to teach ECE learners?

....

3. Are you fluent in all the indigenous languages spoken by your pupils?

Yes ☐   No ☐

4. If yes, what are the challenges you are facing in implementing the language policy?

....

....

5. What solutions have you come up with regards to implementing the language policy?

....

....

6. Has anyone visited you to assess language use in teaching and learning?

Yes ☐   No ☐

7. If Yes what were their recommendations?

....

....

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR URBAN SCHOOL HEADS AND TICS

- Introduction.

- Purpose of interview and approximate time to be taken.

- Duration of member with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

- Provisions of the 1987 Education Act with regards to language use at ECE level.

- Understanding of the language policy at the school.

- Support from Ministry.

- Challenges faced in implementing the language policy.

- Measures put in place to effectively implement the language policy.