The benefits and challenges of raising children in multilingual households

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

30 August 2023

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To whom it may concern

The mini dissertation entitled, "The benefits and challenges of raising children in multilingual households" has been edited and proofread as of 25 July 2023.

As a language practitioner, I have a Basic degree in Languages, an Honours degree in French and a Master's degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance. I have been translating, editing, proofreading, carrying out reference control, and technically formatting documents for the past 12 years. Furthermore, I am a member of the Professional Editors' Guild (PEG).

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents Mrs S.L and Mr EB (late) Mkhatshwa. To my mother, thank you for being my cheerleader in this journey of life. You allowed me all the opportunities and encouraged me to fly high. Thank you for being my source of inspiration and for giving me strength when I thought of giving up. Thank you very much for always being my prayer warrior. No matter what I feel or think, when I remember I have you praying for me, it reminds me that God will smile on me and change things for the better. You are appreciated.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the benefits and challenges of raising children in a multilingual household. The study utilised a qualitative research approach, guided by the interpretivism paradigm. The theoretical framework of this study focuses on the early development of multilingualism, with an emphasis on the role of parents and the possible models of education that they may introduce into their households. A case study design was adopted, and three parents with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds participated. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and a reflective journal. Inductive thematic analysis was used for data analysis.

The study found that there are benefits to raising children in multilingual households. These include children being able to speak multiple languages, which is important for interacting with members of the extended family, maintaining a connection to family culture and history, and making friends from different backgrounds. However, the study also found that while there are many benefits to multilingualism, it can also present some challenges. These include a significant investment in time and effort, for both parents and children. Multilingualism is considered a positive resource that can benefit children in terms of cognitive advantages, academic achievement, and socialisation. A key recommendation is that parents should be encouraged and motivated by schools and education districts to teach their children multiple home languages.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Intercultural marriages, language learning, culture.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EF   Executive Functioning

FLP   Family Language Policy

L1   First Language

OPOL   One Parent One Language

CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a multilingual, multicultural country, meaning that most children are exposed to more than one language between their homes and schools (Cockcroft & Laher, 2018). The cultural and linguistic diversity of the country has furthermore resulted in intercultural relationships (Bystydzienski, 2011). With the number of couples from different cultural backgrounds increasing, most children are raised in a multilingual environment where multiple languages are used in their daily lives (Penn et al., 2010). Language helps children communicate, fosters social skills and making friends, increases confidence and self-esteem, supports emotional and behavioural growth, and aids in helping children make sense of the world. In fact, language is the foundation for all social interactions (Rodriguez et al., 2009). However, language development in children, which is foundational to their communication skills and school readiness, is a complex process (Rodriguez, 2022). Research has shown that children in multicultural families experience communication and interactions that are different from those of children growing up in monocultural or monolingual parent homes. (Linhof & Allan, 2019).

Parents are the first people who engage and interact frequently and consistently with their children and, as such, are regarded as the child's first teacher in multilingual homes. Providing essential language experience is largely the responsibility of parents (Casillas et al., 2020; De Houwer, 2007; Tsinivits & Unsworth, 2021). For instance, the quantity of infant-directed speech and turn-taking children engage in predicts their speech and language development (Ramrez-Esparza et al., 2014; Donnelly & Kidd, 2021). Parents can play a crucial role in their children's language development by speaking to them in their native language. Multilingualism can be approached differently by various households. In some, the "one-person-one-language approach" can be used, with each parent speaking only one language to the child. In other situations, the parents communicate to the child in more than one language, perhaps even a third one amongst them (Orena et al., 2020). This can help children develop a strong foundation in their native language, and make it easier for them to learn additional languages later on (Rodriguez, 2022).

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According to research, the potential benefits of multilingualism include scholastic benefits, native languages and culture, improved professional prospects, and the encouragement of cross-cultural contact (Mosty et al., 2013). The perceived drawbacks of multilingualism include the possibility of causing language delay and false perceptions, which can lead to confusion between languages (Vera, 2011).

According to Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2013), multilingual parents have expressed the desire to raise proficiently multilingual children. However, there are advantages and disadvantages when it comes to raising children in multilingual households. From a personal point of view, most intercultural parents that I have observed are not comfortable teaching their children to engage in bilingualism or multilingualism. This is due to the development difficulties associated with it, such as language confusion and delays in language development, which are believed to be caused by multilingualism. It is frequently interpreted as an indication of confusion when multilingual children use words from two different languages in the same phrase. However, from my experience as an educational psychologist in training, children have the ability to learn multiple languages. Delays in speech and language can be caused by a variety of factors, usually neurological or physiological. There is no strong evidence related to multilingualism as a cause of linguistic delays. Furthermore, research has shown that no one language is difficult for children to acquire as opposed to an alternative, and the belief that confusion or delays happen when children acquire two or more languages simultaneously is a myth (Borges & Lyddy, 2023). Byers-Heinlein and Williams (2018) state that the same way in which monolingual children may have delays in speech, the same is true for multilingual children.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Children who are a product of multicultural unions require special attention because they are frequently exposed to multiple languages during their early years, both at home and at school (Jordaan, 2015). Language learning begins at birth, and culture is ingrained in the way in which that language is used. It is then developed and, later on, cultural knowledge is attained (Booyse et al., 2011).

Language is almost never separated from culture as it is more than just a tool for communication - children's heritage is embedded in their language. When parents

move with their children to live in another province or country, they often try to introduce their children to the culture of the new environment through language whilst encouraging them to keep in touch with their roots (Paradowski & Bator, 2018).

Learning many languages could be advantageous for a child, family, and society at large (Petitto, 2009). In the context of South Africa, the constitution accords equal status to all languages. Being able to speak multiple languages offers several benefits, some of which include the ability to communicate with relatives outside of one's immediate family, travel, maintain a connection to one's cultural heritage, and make friends from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. (Hampton et al., 2017; Paradis & Govindarajan, 2018; Peña, 2016).

According to other studies, children who speak multiple languages also typically exhibit greater cultural empathy and open-mindedness. Additionally, multilingualism can help build a bridge between cultures and advance intercultural dialogue because understanding both languages makes it simpler for them to comprehend cultural differences (Rumbaut, 2014).

No matter the motivation behind parents' desire to raise their children in a multilingual way, there are concerns around raising children using multiple languages. These include aspects such as whether their children will manage to learn several languages, whether it will benefit them, and what the best method is to teach the languages and achieve the goal of multilingualism.

I therefore conducted a study of limited scope to gain an understanding of parents' perception of the benefits and challenges associated with raising children in a multilingual household. Furthermore, this study sought to gain an understanding of their experiences, strategies, and decisions regarding raising children who are exposed to two or more languages in a home setting.

1.3 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Multilingualism is a multifaceted, complex notion, which is why it is studied in various fields of research such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and education (Cenoz, 2019). The term 'multilingualism' can be understood as the capacity for people, communities, organizations, and groups to frequently interact in

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two or more languages in their daily lives. The ability of humans to converse in several languages is a crucial component of multilingualism (Aronin & Singleton, 2012). Moreover, most of the world's societies are multilingual. Families may be multilingual in different ways; parents may speak different native languages, meaning that children are exposed to two or more languages at home right from the beginning. Planning for child rearing is the starting point for multilingual family communication. In particular, parents should think about creating an active multilingual child rearing strategy, and negotiate their differences in childrearing practices, family communication style, and home language socialisation techniques. The key to overcoming any barriers affecting the well-being of multilingual families is communication (Schalley & Eisenchlas, 2022).

1.3.1 The role parents play in children's language development

Raising children in multilingual households requires parental persistence and commitment in order for it to be successful because it can be a complex and demanding process (Paradowski & Bator, 2018). In addition, it is vital that parents provide an enriching and stimulating environment necessary for language acquisition (Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018). It is also a conscious and dynamic endeavour as parental decisions regarding their family's multilingual communication practices depend on their particular linguistic situation and needs at any given moment (Zabrodskaja, 2015).

The role of parents in their children's language learning is to provide a vibrant learning environment. A child who is exposed to linguistic situations that incorporate the quantity and richness of their language predicts the child's linguistic aptitudes (Paradis & Jia, 2017). It is recognised that the quantity and quality of language contribution is a strong determinant in the development of that language (Hoff et al., 2012). However, research has found that both vocabulary and grammatical development are affected by dual language input (Hoff et al., 2012). Therefore, the strength and excellence of language development influences either language delays or language proficiency (Scheele et al., 2010).

1.3.2 The benefits of raising multilingual children

An important benefit of early multilingualism is that children will be able to speak two or more languages, which is necessary for travel, speaking with members of one's extended family, retaining a connection to family culture and history, making friends with children all backgrounds, and professional advancements as adults (Kluger, 2013). Studies have indicated that multilingual individuals have certain advantages when it comes to social understanding (Byers-Heinlein & Lew-Williams 2013). This is understandable given that multilingual children must navigate a challenging social environment where various people have varying levels of language proficiency.

Further developmental benefits for children who learn more than one language at a younger age include improved Executive Functioning (EF) abilities, which are known to affect language performance, such as the capacity to think flexibly, exhibit self-control, focus attention, and shut out distractions (Byers-Heinlein & Lew-Williams, 2013). Children who speak many languages also appear to have an advantage in terms of cognition since they do better in tasks that require switching between activities and inhabiting previously acquired responses (Bialystok et al., 2012). According to Bailey and Osipova (2016), the benefits of multilingualism, particularly in terms of language development, academic success, and socio-economic results, is crucial to children's growth and wellbeing.

1.3.3 The challenges of raising multilingual children

Many scholars have questioned the idea of a multilingual advantage in recent years because the literature has demonstrated that there are certain shortcomings to being multilingual. Multilingual people frequently have to perform tasks that require verbal processing, speech perception, and executive functioning control. There are some processing costs for multilingual people that go along with the cognitive advantages (Filippi et al., 2019). Previous research suggests that bilingual people may be at a disadvantage because when they listen to speech, their lexical representations in both languages are activated. When compared to monolingual people, this dual activation makes bilingual people more competitive in terms of their mental lexicon (Green & Kroll, 2019).

Raising multilingual children may be a challenge, especially if parents find themselves in a community where multilingualism is not that common. This could lead to a lack of support and/or being able to relate to other families, which could demotivate some parents. Multilingual households can fall into one of two categories. Firstly, there are parents who are multilingual due to circumstances such as their own mixed-culture parents, or who reside in another province and might even use English at home when it is not their mother tongue. Secondly, there are those who choose to be multilingual. These situations may lead to difficulties because it is difficult to maintain languages while residing in a province where there is no real need for them, save for the advantages that parents imagine for their offspring in the future (Crisfield, 2022).

According to Liu & Lin (2019) multilingual households may face difficulties as a result of this diversity, for instances: **Language preferences**: when it comes to the language(s) that parents want their children to learn, choices can differ. An example would be that one parent might favour English while the other might favour a regional tongue. **Language ability**: Parents may not be fluent in all the languages they wish their kids to study. Their ability to assist their children with their homework or properly interact with teachers may be hampered as a result. **Language attitudes**: People may hold unfavourable opinions of some languages because they believe they are more prestigious than others. This may have an impact on how parents and children's view their own languages as well as those of others. Multilingualism may not be accommodated by a school's language policies, which may call for students to speak solely English or another dominant language Liu & Lin (2019).

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore the benefits and challenges of raising children in multilingual households from the perspectives of the parents. Parents with different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds were expected to share their experience of raising children in multilingual environments. Lastly, this study will offer a summary of the appropriate information regarding this topic for parents and other researchers who have a vested interest in this phenomenon.

1.4.1 Research Questions

The main research question of this study was:

What are the perceptions of parents regarding raising children in multilingual households?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

The following secondary questions were used in the pursuit of answering the main question:

    1. What are the languages learning strategies used by parents in multilingual households?

    2. What are the benefits of raising children in a multilingual household?

    3. What are the challenges of raising children in a multilingual household?

1.5 Working assumptions

In this study, it was assumed that:

- Intercultural marriages are one of the reasons why children are raised to be multilingual.

- Children raised in a multilingual household are reported to gain intellectual and cognitive advantages from acquiring more than one language. This includes having better focus and memory, as well as making decisions more quickly.

- Inevitably, there are challenges and complications that come with raising children in a multilingual household.

- Parents use different methods to best achieve the goal of raising children to be multilingual.

- Intercultural parents raising children in multilingual households plan and decide on whether they will raise their children to be multilingual, as well as which language they will use to communicate with their children.

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1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Language is a system of communication that involves speaking or writing as used by a particular social group (Crystal & Robins, 2019). In this study, language refers to the tool used in multilingual homes to share information between children and their parents, allowing them to converse with one another. It further refers to what the child speaks and writes.

Multilingualism is defined as the ability to use multiple languages, or the possession of competence in several languages (Nordquist, 2019). Multilingual people, also referred to as polyglots, are able to use more than two languages for communication (Omidire, 2019). In other words, these individuals can produce or comprehend two or more languages in spoken or written form regardless of ability, use, or the age at which they first learn a language (Grech & McLeod, 2012). This term may refer to one person, or an entire society. In this study, multilingualism refers to different languages being spoken by parents who are from different linguistic origins, and who use multiple languages to communicate with one another and their children in the home, while considering their different languages backgrounds.

Monolingualism refers to a person/community who can communicate with only one language (Crystal, 1987: 425). In other words, it is a condition of being able to speak only a single language, as opposed to multilingualism. In this study, Monolingualism refers to a family or children who use one language to communicate.

Culture, according to Celik and Yildiz (2019), comprises values, life orientations, perspectives, beliefs, and behavioural conventions that are commonly shared by a group of people. In such cases, people may also influence each member's behaviour or their overall view of life. In this study, culture refers to a family's values, beliefs, systems of language, and identity.

Family refers to a specific group of people directly linked by family connections, such as adult members who assume the responsibility of caring for children (Steel et al., 2012). In relation to this study, this term refers to married parents, a mother and a father, from different cultures and ethnic and linguistic backgrounds who are raising their children in a multilingual, multicultural environment.

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Intercultural marriages refer to the union of two people with different cultures and backgrounds (Essays, 2018). In this study, multicultural marriages refer to parents with different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds who are married and raising children in a multilingual, multicultural household.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Skinner's Behavioural Theory guided this study. This theory underlines the role of environmental factors in influencing behaviour rather than inborn or inherited factors, thus focusing on learning (Altintaş, 2019). Parents have an essential role in providing an enriching and stimulating environment that will encourage their children's language learning and development (Altintaş, 2019). Behavioural Theory guided this study by providing strategies and approaches to reinforce language learning. Behavioural Theory states that we learn new behaviour through classical or operant conditioning. This theory stresses the possibilities of children becoming multilingual. Furthermore, it provides strategies that parents can use to assist their children to learn more than one language, should there be any interest. This theory is discussed further in Chapter 2.

1.7 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Table 1.1 presents an overview of the research paradigms and approach utilised in this research.

Table 1.1: Overview of the research

Research methodology	
Epistemology of the study	Interpretivism.
Methodological approach	Qualitative approach.
Research design	Explanatory case study.
SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS	
Purposive sampling	Three married couples who have one or more children who were at pre-school to primary school level (ages four to 13) and were from

	the Mbombela area in the Mpumalanga province.
Data collection methods	Semi-structured interviews. Reflection journal.
Data analysis and interpretation	Inductive thematic analysis of interview transcriptions.
Ethical considerations	• Informed consent. • Participants' voluntary participation. • Trust. • Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy.

Chapter 3 will provide a detailed presentation of the methodological procedures used in this investigation.

1.8 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 outlined the background of this study in detail. I explained the purpose of the study and gave the research questions that served as its compass. I also explained the study's core topics and made clear any assumptions that were made. A brief summary of the study's key elements was provided in this chapter, along with information on the research paradigm, methodological approach, quality standards, and ethical considerations that were applied.

Chapter 2 comprises a discussion on the literature reviewed. The literature analysed covers multilingualism within families, the emergence of multilingual families, language development in multilingual households, family language policies in multilingual families, and the benefits and challenges of raising children in multilingual households. This is discussed in the context of the increasing knowledge on this topic, and the variety of information obtained from previous studies. The chapter concludes with an overview of the theoretical framework that guided the study.

Chapter 3 explains and discusses the research methodology and paradigms of this research.

In **Chapter 4** the findings of this study are reported on by means of a thematic analysis.

Then, in **Chapter 5**, a discussion is conducted on how the findings answer the research questions. The study is then brought to a close with recommendations for future studies.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter conceptualised the study and further explained the rationale for undertaking the study. The key concept and the working assumption for the study were defined. The purpose of the study together with the primary and secondary research questions was discussed. The theoretical framework was introduced, and the methodology and research design was further outlined. Additionally, the ethical guidelines that were followed in the study were explained.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the relevant literature related to this study will be discussed. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), a literature review helps the researcher to demonstrate how the research fits into the current body of knowledge by expanding on existing information. This simply implies that a literature review enables reflection on what is currently known about the subject and what remains unknown, hence closing the research gap. This chapter presents, explores, and discusses the benefits, challenges, and also the effectiveness of the strategies parents might use if they want to raise their children to be multilingual.

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the different components of the literature review.
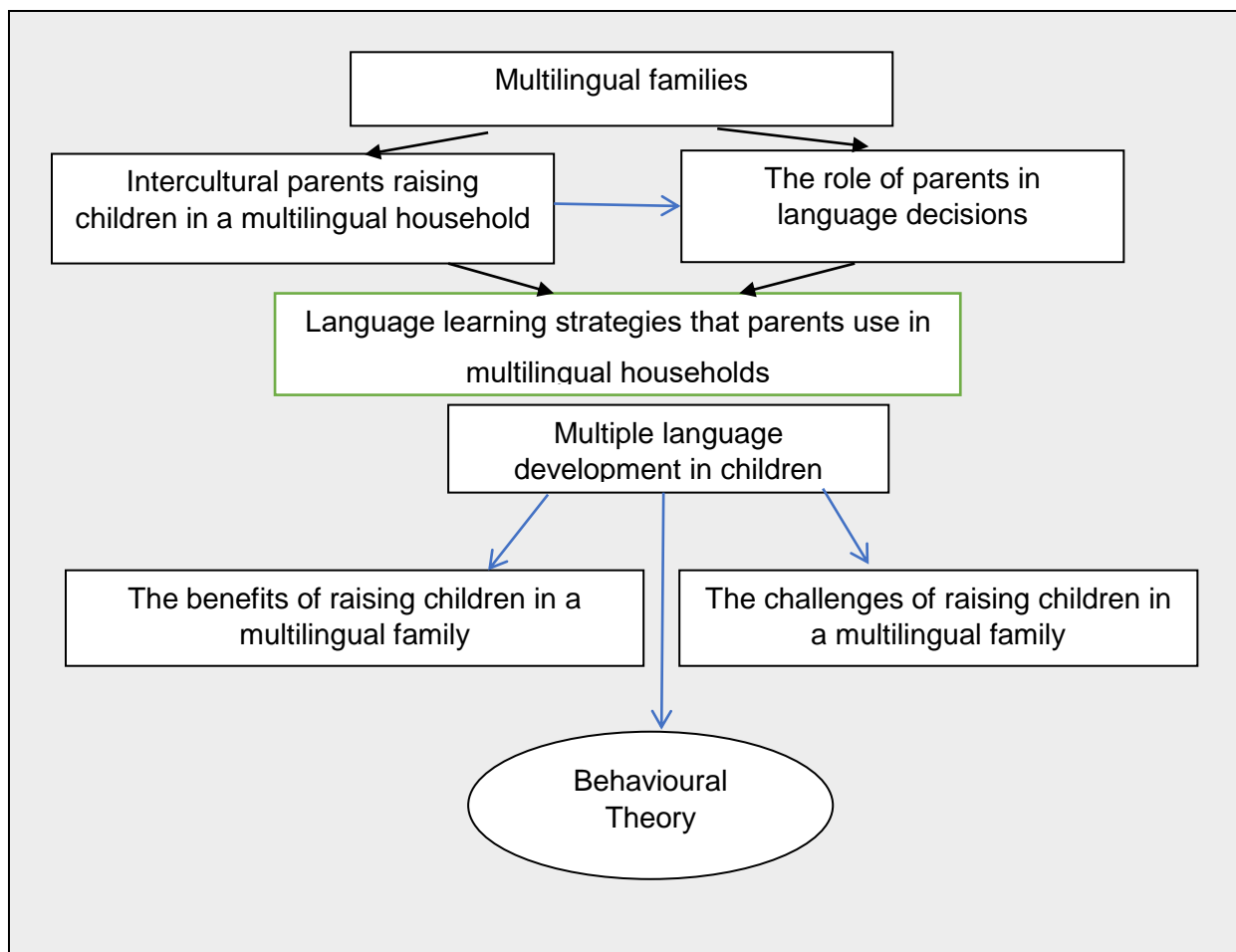
Figure 2.1: Key concepts of this study's literature review

2.2 MULTILINGUALISM WITHIN FAMILIES

Multilingualism is a complicated phenomenon with numerous dimensions, which is why it is researched in linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and education (Cenoz, 2017). Multilingualism is the capacity for society, institutions, groups, and people to regularly interact in more than one language in a particular space and time in everyday life. Multilingualism is the result of humans' inherent ability to converse in multiple languages (Aronin & Singleton, 2019). The majority of societies on this planet are multilingual. Families can be multilingual in a variety of ways, such as when the parents speak different native languages and the children thus grow up hearing two or more languages at home.

Given that many countries are now multilingual, many can no longer be defined as monolingual. Bilingual or multilingual individuals are those who are known to be fluent in at least two languages (Van Dalen, 2019). The terms bilingualism and multilingualism are frequently used synonymously in the literature (Grosjean, 2013; Uljarevic et al., 2016). However, multilingualism refers to the capacity to use two or more languages, whereas bilingualism refers to the capacity to use two or more languages proficiently (Lund et al., 2017).

In multilingual families, communication is important to overcome the challenges that can affect their well-being. Parents need to consider creating an active multilingual child-rearing plan, and negotiate their differences in child-rearing practice, family communication style, and home language socialisation strategies (Wang, 2012). Multilingual family communication begins with the planning of a child's development from the age of two.

Paradoswski and Bator (2016) mention that the increasing mobility of the modern world, which allows parents to relocate to other areas or countries, could be an ideal chance to showcase a diversity of cultures and languages. For instance, parents who move due to work and business purposes and also bring their children with them can increase their children's motivation to learn multiple languages. Many individuals mistakenly believe that multilingualism can only be achieved if language learning begins in childhood. While it is true that it is easier if it begins earlier, this is not an absolute requirement. It is the actual encounter with the language that counts (Paradoswski & Bator, 2018).

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2.2.1 Intercultural (mixed race) parents raising children in multilingual households

According to Omidire (2019), languages were once thought to be independent entities; each nation or group spoke its own language and rarely interacted with others. This has changed, and we now live in a world where people of many cultures and nationalities enter into and affect each other's spaces and cultures (Omidire, 2019).

Multilingual parents come from a variety of ethnic groups, bringing a wide range of values, behaviours, and resources with them. According to South African data, 23% of the population speaks isiZulu, 16% speaks isiXhosa, 14% speaks Afrikaans, and just 9% speaks English (primary or second language) (Espinosa, 2013). Intercultural partnerships are common in South Africa due to the country's cultural and linguistic diversity (Bystydzienski, 2011), with the number of intercultural couples from various cultural backgrounds increasing. Due to the fact that multicultural families experience cultural obstacles related to parenting, the children born from those unions require special attention (Bystydzienski, 2011). According to Molinal et al. (2004), children in multicultural households describe different communication and relationship experiences than children with monoculture/monolingual parents.

Because South Africa is a multilingual, multicultural country, the majority of children are exposed to multiple languages at home and at school (Rodriguez et al., 2009). As a result, most children are raised in a multilingual setting where they are exposed to many languages on a daily basis (De Houwer, 2021). On the one hand, language gives youngsters new opportunities to engage with others and participate in social culture (Rodriguez et al, 2009). On the other hand, language development in children is a complex process that is basic to children's communication abilities and school preparedness (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

Multilingualism is seen as a resource in the school context because educators and learners can use the diverse linguistic and cultural behaviour that they bring into the learning environment to improve the learning process and assist one another (Omidire, 2019). According to Omidire (2019), research has indicated that avoiding the diverse knowledge that bi/multilingual learners have does not help them but turns them into someone they are not (Omidire, 2019).

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Given its expanding significance in contemporary culture, multilingualism has attracted more attention in applied linguistics, as seen by the titles of journals, papers, books, and academic conferences that utilize the term (Dewaele & Li, 2020). As a consequence of this, a few researchers, such as Wida (2015), have suggested an upward trend of multilingualism replacing bilingualism. Multilingual or multicultural couples are no longer shocking or surprising. A growing number of people are deciding to spend their lives with a person of a different ethnic group, often meaning that they each speak a different home language. Because such a partnership often requires the introduction of bilingual upbringing, it may present some issues when it comes to raising children (Paradowski et al., 2016).

Some difficulties are especially of significance in intercultural marriages where the mother and father speak different languages. This could indicate that, at the start of a relationship or when children are born, parents have some choices regarding which language to use between themselves and with their children (Paradowski, 2018). This is especially true if one or both parents are bilingual. For individuals in a mixed-language relationship, it may seem natural for each parent to speak their own first language to their children. Some families recall making decisions, or there was some debate or disagreement on the subject. When one or both parents elected not to speak to their children in their first, most fluent, or strongest language, there was more knowledge and typically some rationale for the decision that was later communicated with their children (Paradowski, 2018).

Evidently, communication is one of the most important factors in parenting multilingual children in intercultural settings. Children are frequently required to know languages, both on a conversational level and in order to communicate because their parents speak different mother tongues. The child should be able to communicate in, and share knowledge with, not only his or her parents, but also other community members, the majority of whom frequently speak languages other than the one spoken at home.

Paradowski and Bator (2016) mention that a common reason for raising children to be multilingual is that children need to speak with their relatives on both parents' sides of the family. It is possible for relatives or even friends to be able to communicate in more than one language, even if the parents are from different

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language backgrounds. It is virtually impossible to separate language from culture; language is more than just a means of communication; language is a component of one's cultural heritage. When a child grows up in a culture other than the one in which their parents were born, those parents frequently use language to teach the child about their culture and encourage the child to remember where they came from. It is also natural to communicate in one's native language because it promotes a more sincere relationship.

2.2.2 The role of parents in children's language development

Bi- or multilingual parents must choose which language or languages to speak to their young child at home, as opposed to monolingual parents. The decision to use a particular language may be made consciously or by default, and will involve a number of factors. When it comes to promoting childhood multilingualism, language planning at a familial level entails making choices about which language or languages each family member will use with their child, as well as when and where the child will be exposed to various languages (Min, 2020).

Parents who are multilingual must make decisions about how to raise their children linguistically, whether they speak several home languages, or a home language that is different from the institutional language. These choices affect their Family Language Plan (FLP), or how a family interprets and organises language use. This may have an effect on the children and the family as a whole (Hollebeke et al., 2020). Multilingual parents, whether they are raising their children to be multilingual or not, should take into account a number of things. For example, they should consider both their own and their children's language abilities, the language(s) used for education at school, as well as the language(s) used in their community. Parents need to think about how their children will acquire a sense of culture, such as cultural identity. This further involves thinking about how children will discover their history and culture. Parents should contemplate how their children will interact with people who might not speak the same language(s) as them, as well as how their children will learn all the languages to which they are exposed. Additionally, parents need to think about how their children will utilise various languages in various situations, including family situations. They should therefore be mindful of how multilingualism may impact relationships and family dynamics. Lastly, parents need to put thought

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into how their personal beliefs about multilingualism may affect their children's language development.

According to Paradowski and Bator (2016), raising a child who speaks more than one language is a difficult, complex process that calls for the parents' perseverance and commitment. In addition, it is vital that parents provide an enriching and stimulating environment, which is necessary for language acquisition (McLeod, 2015). It is also a conscious and dynamic endeavour as parents' decisions regarding their family's multilingual communication practices depend on their particular linguistic situation and needs at any given moment (Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018).

It is recognised that the quantity and quality of language contribution is a strong determinant in the development thereof. However, research has found that dual language input affects the development of vocabulary and grammar (Hoff et al., 2012). The strength and excellence of language development play a role in either language delays or language proficiency (Scheele et al., 2010).

Fierro-Cobas and Chan (2001) advise parents of bilingual children to be consistent and keep language developmentally suitable. Correspondingly, when a child adopts two or more languages (at the same time or consecutively), the vocabulary and grammar of each language should be appropriate for the child's age. Incentive is important in training a child in an additional language, the objective of which is to permit the child to feel exceptional and gratified. Telling stories and playing dialect-based games add an entertaining and fun element for children whilst still encouraging them to practise languages (Thurman, 2017).

De Houwer (2007) investigated the reasons why some children raised in multilingual environments speak two languages and others do not. The researcher discovered that intergenerational language maintenance and/or loss is significantly influenced by the language that parents use with their children (De Houwer, 2021). This was based on the fact that children who grow up speaking two languages often learn the majority language first.

Raising children to be bi- or multilingual is typically a challenging process for parents that necessitate significant effort (Okita, 2002).). Alternatively, there are parents who a ppear to pay no attention to their children's language learning, and have bilingual

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children without any effort made on their part. According to a study conducted by De Houwer (2021), parental language input patterns have a significant impact on how successfully children learn to speak two languages. This implies that patterns for language selection can be set in advance and modified to suit the needs of specific families.

According to a study conducted by Gumarpi (2021) Parents are supposed to be sensitive and involved in assisting kids with one of their developmental duties, which is sharpening their language skills. Parents are accountable for the growth and development of children. Some of the things parents may do to support the early development of their children's language abilities include: Introduce appropriate and polite greetings within the family, such as softly addressing the father and mother as father, mother, grandma, and grandfather. In this situation, people who are around the family's youngsters must lead by example in all of their interactions.

According to Mursid, (2015) in children, language development will follow the stages of development. Between the ages of 2 and 6, children start to feel the urge to communicate with others, and on average, they can understand and employ between 1500 and 2000 words. The vocabulary a youngster possesses will have a big impact on his or her capacity to utilize and understand language. This suggests that in order to develop linguistic skills as social abilities in young children, the environment, especially families, must stimulate them.

2.2.3 Language learning strategies that parents use in multilingual households

According to Bail, Morini & Newman (2015), Byers-Heinlein (2013), many parents of multilingual households frequently mix languages. In their study, Byers-Heinlein & colleagues (2013) revealed that more than 90% of bilingual parents self-reported frequently mixing languages when speaking to their children. When Bail (2015) monitored bilingual parents' language use during brief play sessions, they discovered that everyone, including those who self-reported not mixing, code-switched at least once throughout the session and in an average of 16% of their utterances. However, De Houwer & Bornstein's (2016) findings, which were based on parental reports and observations at 5, 20, and 53 months, revealed that bilingual mothers largely

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reported speaking only one language to their child, which was consistent with the observation data showing that only some mothers produced some code switches, mostly at 20 months.

To encourage multilingual development, parents can use a variety of techniques to make sure that their children are exposed to each language about equally (Kircher et al., 2022). It is typical for both parents to speak more than one language to their child or for one parent to speak more than one language while the other only speaks one (De Houwer, 2021). It can be said that multilingualism is the greatest gift a parent can give a child (Gudowska, 2019), something they can bestow upon their children. However, children's language development is dependent on the values, beliefs, and interactions which parents, as agents of the family language policy, can facilitate or limit (Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018).

2.2.3.1 Family language policy

The study of Family Language Policy (FLP) has become popular in South Africa (Thompson & Anthonissen, 2019). In recent years, there has been an increase in both national and transnational migration, which involves people moving to different places, crossing borders, assimilating into new cultural and linguistic environments, forming intercultural or interracial marriages, and raising multilingual families. Parents and society as a whole are becoming more concerned about which language or languages should be used to raise children, which language or languages should be preserved and developed, what kind of (socio)linguistic environment is conducive to learning more than one language, and which literacy practices offer affordances and constraints for multilingual development (Paradowski 2013).

Family is a language policy domain, according to Schwartz and Verschik (2013), and it is essential because it plays a vital role in the establishment and maintenance of a child's ecological language. FLP, like language policies in other domains, is made up of linguistic ideology, the management mechanism that governs it, and its practices (Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2009). The major goal of the FLP is to plan how languages are used in homes and among families (King et al., 2008).

2.2.3.2 One-Parent-One-Language (OPOL)

The one parent one language strategy has been a greatly explored technique in FLP and is the most common language strategy in multilingual families. According to Seppik and Zabrodskaja (2022) OPOL is a strategic decision made as a result of the birth of a child in a multilingual family. Paradowski and Bator (2018) further indicate that among multinational couples, the OPOL technique is one of the most commonly used. Even if the tight separation of languages is not observed in interactions, the majority of cases result in reported successful learning of at least two languages.

According to OPOL proponents, it is best for parents to speak just one language to their children and to keep the two languages distinct in order to prevent the mingling of the two linguistic systems (Schwartz & Verschik, 2013). Other scholars, however, contend that complete language isolation is not always necessary or possible.

According to Barroe-Hauwaert (2011), the OPOL technique brings consistency to children's language choosing in each given context. However, according to Thomas (2012), this strategy has hazards; parents are sometimes unsure whether to rigidly follow the OPOL approach or to be flexible. Some people also ask if they should let their children choose which language to speak. Because mixed parents' original languages are usually different, they must carefully choose which language to use to raise their children. Parents must decide on the language they will use to communicate with one other and their children when the entire family is present.

Piller & Gerber (2018) stated that the success of OPOL is significantly impacted by how parents feel about the plan. For instance, many parents believe that OPOL will undoubtedly result in their children becoming balanced bilinguals, while other parents think that OPOL is an investment in their children's future because it boosts a child's academic advantage by focusing on desirable language skills.

2.2.3.3 The Time and Place technique

According to Bouko et al. (2019), the Time and Place (T&P) strategy is based on a predetermined timetable in which parents and children choose to speak various languages depending on the time, place, or both. This method can be combined with the OPOL or Minority Language at Home (mL@H) techniques when there are more than two languages spoken in the household. This method can be used by parents,

who want their children to learn multiple languages, by separated parents, who want to support their children learning the language of their ex-partner, by single parents who want to speak more than one language with their kids, and by parents who want to introduce a second language later. Parents who are pressed for time may opt to speak a different language every other week, fortnight, or month (Bouko et al.). Additionally, they can separate the languages between weekdays and weekends.

2.2.3.4 Language proficiency, dominance, and preference in multilingualism

It can be challenging and even exclude people when operationalizing and analysing multilingual language use factors including language proficiency, linguistic dominance, and language preference. In terms of multilingualism, language proficiency is likely the easiest idea to define. According to Bedore et al. (2011), parents and teachers determine a child's proficiency, or how effectively they speak the target language.

Even though there is no one-size-fits-all technique or method for measuring dominant languages, language dominance is regularly discussed in studies on bilingual or multilingual individuals. Ability and preference are also factors. Language dominance is measured in terms of which language a child uses or hears more frequently, according to Bedore et al.'s (2011) analysis of relative language use. It is defined as the relationship between a bilingual person's proficiency in the two languages (Treffers-Daller, 2011).

According to Aronin et al. (2012), in circumstances where higher proficiency in one or both languages is evident, this is often signalled using the notion of dominance in respect to the stronger language. Language dominance is a broad, difficult topic, and scholars have yet to reach an agreement on how to operationalise and measure it. The focus of recent research has been on the development of appropriate instruments and quantitative, as well as qualitative methodologies for measuring the characteristics of language use in the form of dominance and preference (Bedore et al., 2011).

Assessing language dominance is important because it has become clear that the level of bilinguals' proficiency in each language and the relative strength of each language affect multilingual families. Prior research suggests that parent-child

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language differences can impede children's subjective well-being via their negative impact on family relations (Müller et al., 2020).

2.2.4 Multiple language acquisition in children raised in multilingual households

Language is critical to human existence since it is the medium of communication. Jafri et al. (2020) reinforce this by stating that language is a mode of communication that occurs within a social environment. Language enables people to communicate and exchange sentiments, information, and messages through a system of deliberately constructed symbols.

2.2.4.1 First language acquisition

Children begin speaking independently at a very early age (from birth to age five). Even if the words said do not always adhere to the grammatical rules of that language, they are capable of producing or uttering comprehensible phrases. According to Kochmar and Shutova (2017), a child is born with natural capacities that are responsible for language learning. This intrinsic ability enables the child to generate words they have never heard before and to say them in order to determine if the words are proper or not. The positive and negative reactions of other people, for example, the child's parents, are often used as a reference for determining if the word stated is accurate or not.

Meniado (2016) states that language is inherent to every human being, according to Chomsky's theory, human beings possess a natural ability to communicate from their first interactions with others. This suggests that humans are born with a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which plays a critical role in the acquisition of their first language. A few years after a child is born, they will begin to mutter a few words such as Mom, Dad, and so on, despite the fact that no one has taught them such words. This gadget is crucial in that period of time. From then, the child will begin to generate two to three words in a sentence or phrase, and with the guidance of elders, the child will eventually be able to construct whole phrases that make sense.

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2.2.4.2 Second language learning

Given that Hoque (2017) defines second language acquisition as the study of how children acquire an extra language after establishing their home language, it is critical to remember that home language serves as the foundation for all other additional languages acquired by children. This indicates that, while the mother tongue serves as the basis for a second language, some elements of the mother tongue may exist in the second language but not in the mother tongue. As a consequence, it will be difficult for a child to become proficient in a second language that will be utilised in lieu of the child's home language in all areas of learning. Noting that English medium schools utilise English as a first language rather than a second, the language that will serve as the learning foundation is English, but African pupils in such institutions already have an established home language (Joubert & Sibanda, 2022).

Chang (2019) emphasises that while second language learning theories differ, some similarities emerge, such as the fact that the phonological and phonetic similarities of the first or native language play a significant role in the acquisition of second language structures such as segments, features, phonotactic constraints, and prosodic patterns. This indicates that learning a second language will be simpler if the structures of the two languages are comparable or nearly identical. Nevertheless, challenges will develop if the structures of the first and second languages are significantly different.

2.2.5 The benefits of raising multilingual children

Multilingualism is known as the capacity to speak more than one language; there are no benchmarks for testing this capacity. A person can acquire the capacity to speak more than one language at different points in their lives, and being multilingual is both completely natural and quite advantageous (Cenoz, 2013). Being bilingual has various benefits and can be advantageous for both adults and children (Alladi et al., 2013; Bialystok et al., 2007; Paradowski, 2011). A very important and valued skill is the ability to speak more than one language; it improves brain function and has a positive impact on cognitive growth (Paradowski & Michałowska 2016). People who are multilingual may also be more accepting of other people's cultures and able to comprehend and respect their differences. Additionally, being fluent in several

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languages opens up a person's options for employment in the future and may even allow them to pursue school abroad, which may be more advantageous or less expensive than domestically available options (Paradowski & Bator, 2016).

According to Kuzyk et al., (2020) long-term studies aimed at determining how a bilingual environment affects cognition have shown that benefits go beyond those that allow bilinguals to interact with people in new ways and speak more effectively. An intriguing line of research has looked at whether bilingualism has an early-life impact on tasks that assess nonverbal cognitive abilities. Although the underlying cognitive mechanisms of early bilingual advantages are still unknown, some empirical evidence suggests that young bilinguals outperform their monolingual counterparts on tasks that impose high executive function demands, that is, those that require participants to choose a response among competing alternatives while disregarding misleading information. It's interesting to note that this impact has been documented as early as infancy, with bilingual-exposed 6- and 7-month-olds demonstrating greater attention flexibility than their monolingual peers (Kovács & Mehler, 2009; Singh et al., 2015). Bilingual children perform better on a modified Stroop task, which measures inhibitory control, than monolingual toddlers by the age of 24 months (Carlson & Meltzoff, 2008; Poulin-Dubois, Blaye, Coutya, & Bialystok, 2011).

Improved Executive Functioning (EF) abilities are one of the additional developmental advantages of early multilingualism. These skills—such as the capacity for flexible cognition, self-control, intentional focus, and tuning out distractions—are believed to have an impact on language performance (Paradowski & Michaowska, 2016). Other research indicates that multilingual children have better working memories than monolingual children. Working memory is crucial for problem solving and executive functioning because it stores, organizes, and refreshes information during brief periods of time (Morales et al., 2013). Additionally, multilingual children seem to perform better cognitively on tests that require switching between tasks and suppressing previously learned responses.

Children that speak more than one language, as evidenced by other studies, have better working memories than monolingual kids. According to Morales et al. (2013),

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working memory is crucial for problem solving and executive functioning because it stores, processes, and refreshes information during brief periods of time. Children who speak many languages also seem to have cognitive advantages, as evidenced by the fact that they seem to do better on tasks that require switching between activities and inhibiting previously acquired reactions (Bialystok et al., 2012).

According to Bailey and Osipova (2016), the benefits of multilingualism for children's growth and wellness, especially in terms of language development, academic success, and socio-emotional outcomes, is crucial. Parents place a high value on maintaining intergenerational bonds, family links to heritage and culture, and seeing their children better prepared for the new demands of globalization.

Bouko et al. (2019) state that bilingual Communication abilities are sensitive to the requirements and expectations of their discussion partners in terms of communication. They are better at taking into account the opinions of others, which explains this. People that are bilingual typically have more accepting and empathic personalities.

Bilingual people have the advantage of experiencing two different cultures, rather than just one, in terms of multiculturalism. Speaking the local language is the best method to interact with and truly understand a different culture. Additionally, multilingual kids can help build a bridge between cultures and advance intercultural dialogue because understanding both languages makes it simpler for them to comprehend cultural differences (Rumbaut, 2014). Raising multilingual children who are able to communicate with their family and friends in their native tongues abroad promotes family cohesion by preserving meaningful bonds and valued customs (Bouko et al., 2019).

Bilingual individual have an advantage in terms of language skills as well as other cognitive abilities thanks to the cognitive benefits of bilingualism. According to Huang (2022) raising children in multilingual homes has several cognitive benefits such as they tend to have an earlier understanding of theory of mind and are able to differentiate between different spoken languages from a much earlier age than monolingual children. They also possess a slightly greater aptitude for memorization, which is a skill that carries on to later life. Children raised in multilingual households are exposed to a variety of languages from an early age. Their cognitive growth and

verbal ability may benefit from this. However, a number of variables, including the quantity of exposure to each language, the quantity of input, and the context in which each language is used, affect how well children become fluent in each language. According to research, young infants who are exposed to numerous languages can become fluent in each one. The ability to multitask and think abstractly comes naturally to bilingual individuals, and they also tend to be more creative and better at maintaining focus (Rumbaut, 2014). They are more adept at managing conflicts in the workplace, and they are more likely to become more conscious of metalinguistic issues. Bilingual children are more likely to complete secondary school and pursue higher education, which is another benefit of their educational achievement. They have a higher chance of being hired when they apply for jobs as adults (Bouko et al., 2019).

2.2.6 The challenges of raising multilingual children

There are also undesirable effects of raising children to be multilingual. Some parents are concerned that children who are exposed to two or more languages are more likely to have language difficulties or delays. However, multilingual children are not likely to experience language problems, learning delays, or be given a diagnosis of language impairment, according to Paradis et al. (2011). Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2018) state that the same way in which monolingual children may have delays in speech, the same is true for multilingual children. This misconception likely persists because parents believe their bilingual child is developing their vocabulary and sentence structure later than their monolingual peers (Bouko et al., 2019). Even though bilingual children may know fewer words in a particular language than a monolingual youngster, research indicates that their overall vocabularies are equivalent in size if you add the words from both languages together (Guiberson, 2013). Although it is true that a very tiny percentage of young children do struggle with language, it is crucial to remember that bilingualism is never the cause of that. A child's ability to speak multiple languages has little to do with their language development (Bouko et al., 2019). Parents of bilingual children with a language or speech delay can relax knowing that speaking two languages will neither hurt their child nor make the delay worse (Guiberson, 2013).

A common challenge faced in multilingual homes, as stated by Thomas (2012), is that in the early years, bilingual children have a habit of rejecting one of the parent's languages. They start talking only one language continuously, regardless of the other languages to which they are exposed. This practice habitually leads to parents stressing about whether the additional language will be adopted by the child. A study has shown, however, that frequent and consistent use of more than one language will, over time, change as the child will eventually adopt all the languages spoken to them (Thomas, 2012).

A study conducted by Unsworth (2016) found that providing children with enough exposure to each language they are learning is one of the biggest problems in raising bilingual and multilingual youngsters. To become fluent, children must receive continuous, substantive language input. Language blending and code-switching, which can happen when kids are exposed to several languages at once, provide another difficulty. Confusion and trouble telling different languages apart may result from this. For multilingual children, social and academic support is especially crucial because they may experience bias or discrimination owing to their linguistic background.

According to research by Tsai et al. (2012) and Winsler et al. (2014), knowledge of a minority home language may help youngsters acquire a language used by the majority, like English. When compared to their English-only children, some kids who were exposed to minority languages at home had difficulties with specific linguistic and academic activities. For instance, Hildenbrand et al. (2017) found that compared to their English-only counterparts, Australian three- to four-year-old bilingual youngsters significantly worsened their literacy and numeracy skills. Children that speak many languages may have difficulty maintaining their native tongues in addition to acquiring the local language. De Houwer (2007) discovered that 25% of bilingual youngsters in Belgium who began preschool spoke just Dutch. Another finding by Verdon et al. (2014) was that 22% of multilingual youngsters in Australia under the age of five eventually spoke only English.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Skinner's Behavioural Theory formed the theoretical framework of this study. Behaviourism is the idea that by utilizing conditioning as a lens, we may understand phenomena like language. For instance, Skinner (1957) proposed that the formation of language is a learned behaviour. According to behaviourists, toddlers learn through connecting experiences, a process known as classical conditioning; and by rewarding and punishing them, which is known as operant conditioning (McLeod, 2017). According to behaviourist theorists, children learn by observation and imitation, which is another part of behaviourism. Children learn verbal language through other humans, who are seen as role models. This is done through a process that includes imitation, reward, and practice. Children make noises or imitate speech patterns in an attempt to communicate, and they usually receive praise and rewards for their attempts (Altintaş, 2019).

The framework for the relationship between Behavioural Theory and the phenomenon explored in this study is shown in Figure 2.2 below.
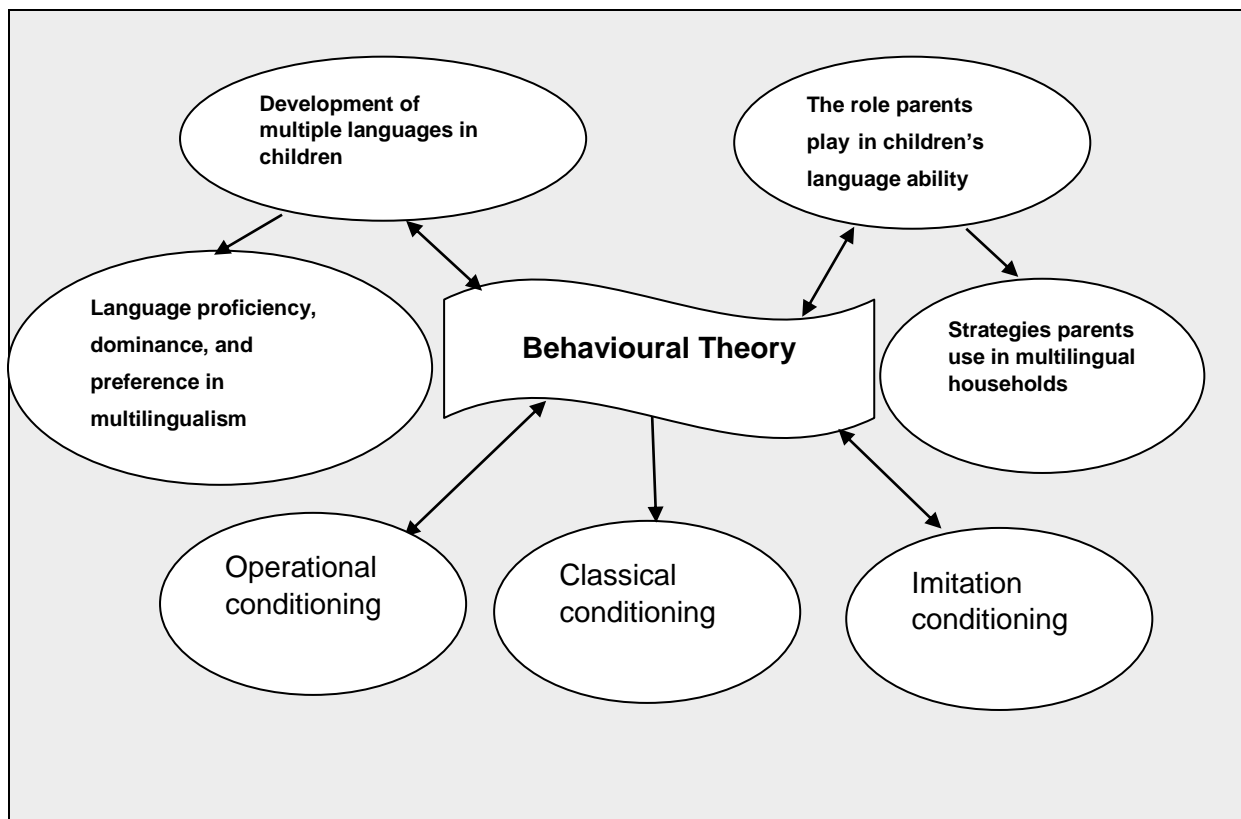

Figure 2.2: Theoretical framework of the study

A learning theory called behaviourism, sometimes known as behavioural psychology, is founded on the idea that all behaviours are taught through conditioning. Conditioning occurs as a function of environmental interaction (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). According to behaviourists, how we react to outside cues dictates how we behave. According to Skinner's imitation theory, young children learn to speak by mimicking their parents or other individuals in their environment. The theory holds that because children lack an inherent capacity for language acquisition, they must rely on operant conditioning to develop and enhance their understanding and proficiency in it.

Behavioural Theory asserts that children have a "tabula rasa," or "clean slate," when they are born. One of behaviourism's core beliefs is that children are born with no information, and are thus a blank slate. They therefore learn speech and language by watching and copying adults. When a child learns a language, he or she mimics the sounds and speaking patterns of adults (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Chomsky (1959), on the other hand, asserted that youngsters are born with the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), a pre-existing template or blueprint for language. This technique explains why children pick up language so quickly despite it being quite abstract. Supporters of the Innatist Theory were the main critics of this oversimplified theory of first language acquisition (L1). According to Nor and Rashid (2017), children do not begin learning a language from birth because they are capable of picking up complex grammar fast and independently with only exposure to the L1. Additionally, behaviourists define learning as a long-lasting change in behaviour, in which case learners lack free choice and are totally formed by their surroundings.

- **Operant conditioning**

Operant conditioning refers to the idea that behaviours are reinforced. Positive and negative reinforcement are the two types of reinforcement that are crucial to this theory. According to Skinner's theory, this reinforcement leads to changes in how youngsters use language. For instance, if a youngster asks for food politely (e.g., "Mama, eat"), they may subsequently get the food or hear their parents compliment them on their intelligence as positive reinforcement. Negative reinforcement occurs when parents neglect or correct their children when they use language improperly. Mcelod (2015)

This behavioural theory was applied in this study to comprehend the methods and situations that parents and children in multilingual families confronted. In this study, it was hypothesized that as children are raised by parents who come from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, language development takes place during interactions between parents and children. Parents adopt tactics to help their children learn languages. If the parents actively assist their children in their linguistic attempts, they can learn both languages. Behavioural Theory holds that when a youngster experiences positive reinforcement, they learn which language use results in a benefit and will stick with it going forward. Negative reinforcement causes the child to modify their language to meet the caregiver's correction or to try something new on their own. The behaviourist theory suggests that consistent practice and rewards for right responses are beneficial for second language learners (Ajdini, 2021). Parents should praise their children when they respond in the language that they are trying to teach them.

According to behaviourist beliefs, the closer the first and second languages are, the more effective the child will be in acquiring the languages. The more practice or repetition children engage in, the more successful they will be in learning languages. There are two essential factors in the case of input: quality and quantity. If the child wants to become actively multilingual, the environment must provide numerous opportunities to utilise the language (Ajdini, 2021). In order for parents to be successful in helping their children to learn one or more languages, parents or teachers need to provide positive reinforcement whenever children perform a desired behaviour. In time, they will learn to perform the behaviour on their own.

2.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Multilingualism has been widely researched in South Africa. Since multilingualism is a multifaceted phenomenon, it is important to approach it from multiple angles. Investigating and determining how parents view raising children in multilingual households was part of a complex task. Numerous articles have been written about multilingualism in South African schools and the difficulties South African youngsters have learning to read (Pascoe, 2022). However, less attention has been given to intercultural parents raising children in multilingual households. Broad research exists on policy and legislation, as well as the perspective of several participants

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such as teachers, parents and children on multilingual education. There is limited research in South Africa on parent's views on the benefits of raising children in a multilingual household.

This chapter has reviewed the literature on earlier studies that have been done on the advantages of raising kids in multilingual homes. The concept of multilingualism and the advantages and difficulties encountered in multilingual households were extensively covered in the first section. The Family Language Policy, parents' contributions to their children's language development, and methods for helping kids learn and keep many languages were also briefly covered. Finally, the theoretical foundation of behavioural theory was reviewed in light of how this study was affected by it. The research approach used in this study will be presented in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This starts with an overview of the study's methodology and research strategy. Firstly, the research paradigms and the qualitative methodological approach that were employed are discussed. Secondly, the case study research design will be explained, and then the sample process and data gathering techniques used in this investigation will be covered in great detail. Ultimately, the ethical guidelines followed and a summary of the researcher's responsibilities in this study will be provided.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The epistemology of this study was interpretivism. The interpretivism is a paradigm that focuses on comprehending the world via the subjective experiences of humans. According to Willis (1995), interpretivists trust that there is no single correct route or technique to gaining knowledge. Interpretivism maintains that reality and awareness are subjective, culturally and historically situated, and built on people's experience and their understanding of them. In this study, interpretivism was selected to understand and interpret parents' perspective on their experiences in raising children in a multilingual household. Interpretivism allows the researcher to understand how individuals make sense of the world in which they live.

Interpretivism posits that human life can only be understood from within, and cannot be observed (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Its foundation is the idea that people constantly construct their own versions of reality as a result of their diverse upbringings, assumptions, and experiences (Wahuni, 2012). Furthermore, Interpretivism recognizes the possibility of several subjective realities for a given phenomenon, each of which is different in space and time (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

Interpretivism seeks to offer a viewpoint on a topic and analyse it in order to shed light on how a specific set of individuals interprets their circumstances or a phenomenon they come across (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). According to Cohen et al. (1994), the interpretivist paradigm makes it possible for the researcher to understand the 'world of human experience. By employing interpretivism, I was able to get

comprehensive information from the participants and make sense of it as the researcher (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

Interpretivism was thought to be appropriate for this study since it aims to comprehend the phenomenon in which individuals create meaning in their natural environments in this case, their homes (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). This was suitable because my goal was to comprehend what parents and kids actually go through in multilingual families. Since interpretivism relies on participant experiences, perceptions, and understandings rather than data to reveal reality, it is qualitative in nature (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

One of the advantages of using interpretivism was that it expanded my approach to understanding the subjective experiences of the participating parents. It allowed me to gain comprehensive insight and understanding of the benefits and challenges of raising children in a multilingual household. In South Africa, where the majority of children are raised by parents from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, multilingualism and diversity are realities that impact people's experiences.

Alternatively, the subjective nature of interpretivist research was a potential challenge that was considered in conducting this study as it can prevent researchers from generalising the outcomes to the wider population (Creswell, 2016).

3.3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: QUALITATIVE APPROACH

This study employed a qualitative research approach in order to understand the subjective experience of parents who are raising children in multilingual households. This was achieved by placing a strong emphasis on the participants' subjective interpretations of the phenomena being investigated in addition to their perceptions and understanding of their environment (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). According to Nieuwenhuis (2016), researchers believe that using qualitative approaches can aid in their understanding of both individuals and the social and cultural situations in which they live. Finding a tacit, intuitive, and taken-for-granted understanding of a culture is particularly well-suited to qualitative research. Rather than only finding out what people say, qualitative researchers carry out their study in settings that allow them to observe and hear individuals as they actually act (Silverman, 2016).

According to this approach, knowledge is subjective rather than objective, and in order for the research to have an impartial understanding of the participants' lives and their significance, it must learn from them.

In this study, a qualitative approach provided an in-depth and holistic view of the participants' experiences of the strategies, perceived benefits, and challenges that emerge while raising children in multilingual households. The study was conducted in a natural setting, in the comfort of their homes, which allowed me to listen and collect in-depth data from the participants.

Qualitative research assist Individuals can better comprehend the world, their society, and its institutions. Qualitative technique can yield knowledge that addresses concerns, problems, or social challenges and benefits humanity as a whole (Tracey, 2013). Qualitative research is rich and holistic, providing an understanding of a sustained process, or lived experiences, within a specific context. It honours participants' local meaning, by explaining and interpreting their viewpoints and stories (Tracey, 2013). Qualitative research is focused on mutual meaning making of how participants experience the world (Finlay, 2015). It allows new insight and understanding to emerge and, therefore, provides opportunities for participants and researchers to discover unforeseen areas in the research. Qualitative research allowed me to gain insight, develop concepts, and develop an understanding from the information gathered (Taylor et al., 2016).

Qualitative research allows the researcher and the participants to interact in order to understand the participants' experiences. As such, the information generated is generally through direct contact and involves face-to-face interactions with participants (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative approach is more appropriate when the researcher's intention is to change the circumstances around the issue being studied, or to produce knowledge that promotes solutions to problems (Flicks, 2014). The purpose of this study was to seek and provide information regarding parents' perception of the benefits and challenges of raising children in multilingual households. Considering this purpose, qualitative approach was suitable for this study and might further provide insight for future investigations.

One criticism of qualitative research is its time commitment (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). In order to address this critique, this study's interviews were performed under time constraints, with data processing starting right away following the interviews. Another concern is that there is potential bias that can occur during the interpretation of the data (Houser, 2015). The data were created utilizing a range of methods, including field notes and interviews, to address this issue.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research designs are techniques that help ensure that the research problem is properly addressed. They also help ensure that research is conducted in a logical and coherent manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study of limited scope, a case study research design was used. Case study research refers to an effective qualitative method used to investigate and understand a contemporary phenomenon, set within its real-world context. This is particularly helpful in situations where it is difficult to distinguish between the phenomenon and its surroundings (Yin, 2014). This case study can be classified as an intrinsic case study as the intention was to better understand the case being analysed (Maree, 2020). A case study is an appropriate design to generate new knowledge about real-world behaviour and its meaning by providing an in-depth insight. Second, the case study approach encourages data collecting in a natural environment, and this design emphasizes the study of a phenomenon within its real world context (Maree, 2020).

I found the use of an explanatory case study to be suitable for this study as it enabled me to carry out a limited-scope inquiry. A case study can be conducted on an individual or a group of people, a single environment such as a home setting, and any bounded system (Putney, 2012). In this instance, it was utilized to investigate the methods employed by parents of diverse cultural, linguistic, and ethnic origins in raising their children in multilingual homes. When attempting to comprehend the complexities of a phenomenon, case studies are typically taken into consideration since they enable the researcher to engage with participants in their environment and obtain comprehensive information from them (Yin, 2014). It also allowed me to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of parents regarding the benefits gained and the challenges faced by children in multilingual homes.

One of the criticisms of the case study is that it has a single or small number of cases, and the findings cannot be generalised to a wider population of people, places, or things (Greenhalgh & Trisha, 2015). This was not an issue in this study as my focus was on gaining an understanding rather than being able generalise the findings.

3.5 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The selection of participants refers to the decision the researcher makes regarding who will participate and provide data that answers the research questions (Creswell 2016). This study's participants were purposefully chosen. In qualitative research, purposive selection of participants is frequently employed to identify and choose people based on their relevance to the topic of interest (Patton, 2015). This means finding and selecting participants who has specific knowledge or experience about a subject of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The participants were three married couples; parents who are from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds who are raising their children in a multilingual, multicultural household. These three couples lived in the city of Nelspruit, in the Mpumalanga province in the Mbombela area. The parents were from different linguistic backgrounds, speaking Nguni languages such as siSwati, isiZulu, Ndebele, and isiXhosa, as well as SiPedi and English. In order to qualify for participation, the married couples had to have one or more children who were at pre-school to primary school level, from ages six to 13. The interviews were conducted in English. These participants were chosen based on a specific reason, for example their knowledge and experience of this particular phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Furthermore, the participants were selected based on the four point process of selecting participants, as explained below (Robinson, 2014).

Step 1: Define the sample universe – the sample universe was defined based on the set inclusion criteria: the participants were parents who, at the time of this study, were married and raising children in multilingual households. They lived in the city of Nelspruit in the Mpumalanga province within the Mbombela area.

Step 2: Decide on the sample size – a small sample size was chosen for the purpose of the study. Three married couples, parents who are from different ethnic,

cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, and raising their children in a multilingual, multicultural household were selected.

Step 3: Devise the sample strategy – the participants were selected purposefully: they were parents from different linguistic backgrounds speaking Nguni languages such as SiSwati, Zulu, Ndebele, and Xhosa, as well as SiPedi and English.

Step 4: Sample source – Three families (father and mother) were requested to participate in the study.

Guided by the above process, with the purpose of answering the main research question, I selected three married couples who were:

- Originating from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds; and
- Raising children in a multilingual household.

The table below illustrates the participants' biographical information.

Table 3.1: Biographical information of the participants

	Father's Language	Mother's language	Number of children	Age	Limitations
Parents 1	SiPedi	SiSwati	01	7	Only the mother was available for the interview.
Parents 2	SiSwati	Ndebele	03	5, 9, 13	
Parents 3	Xitsonga	Xhosa/ SiSwati	04	6, 8, 11, 13	

3.6 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

In this section, I will describe the different data tools used to collect data in this study. Data collection was carried out through qualitative methods. Semi-structured interviews and reflective journal were the methods for gathering data. These data collection tools included semi-structured interviews and a reflective journal. These methods were deemed appropriate to gather comprehensive, contextually rich, and pertinent information.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

In semi-structured interviews, the participant restructures their experience in relation to the topic under study (Seidman, 2013). It is an influential tool used to gain information on important social concerns through understanding the involvement of the individuals whose lives replicate those issues (Seidman, 2013). Semi-structured interviews do not follow a set schedule; instead, the researcher typically has a prepared list of questions or a schedule for the interviews (De Vos, 2011). The questions asked in this study were open ended and allowed for probing and explanations on certain aspects of the participants' responses. This method allowed flexibility, and gave me the opportunity to follow up on particular avenues of interest that emerged in the interview. In addition, the participants were able to elaborate and give a fuller picture.

My role as an interviewer in this study was to listen carefully, to be open-minded, and to display an empathetic attitude (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008). The questions were open ended and were based on a few broad questions, however, additional probes and prompts were utilised to expand on certain ideas during the discussion. In addition, the interview questions were primarily guided by the responses each participant gave to ensure a smooth flow of the dialogue. Semi-structured interviews allow for a more adaptable method of gathering data from the viewpoints of the participants. I was able to delve extensively into the participants' experiences—including their attitudes and beliefs—during these interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

A total of three interviews were conducted telephonically for 30 minutes each due to COVID-19 regulations. The interviews were conducted telephonically. This method allowed the interviewer and participants to determine the best interview times because of its flexibility. In this study all the participants chose to schedule a telephone interview during their leisure time such as after work. A follow up interview was conducted for further exploration of the information provided. Three sets of married parents from different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, and who were raising their children in multilingual households were interviewed. My objective was to obtain understanding of the participants' lived experiences and to interpret the significance of those experiences.

3.6.2 Reflective journal

I also kept a reflective journal for the duration of the research process. The reflective journal assisted in the writing of individual reflections on some of the themes that were brought up (Maree, 2020). This tool was also crucial in assisting me in keeping track of my ideas, writing anything significant, or anything that would allow me to make note of something that might aid in understanding more about the research participants.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this study inductive thematic analysis was employed, which is a technique for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. It describes data sets in great detail and is minimally organized. The analysis approach assisted me to discover the behaviour, attitude, and motives of the selected participants (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Thematic analysis allowed the identification of cross references between the data and the pattern or themes that emerged (Alhojailan, 2012).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the six stages of analysis can be outlined and navigated using thematic analysis. I started by reading the interview transcripts and making notes to become acquainted with the data. Next, I created the first programs that would be used to extract relevant information from the data. In addition, I looked for themes, examined the topics, and investigated how the data related to these themes. I then gave the topics definitions and names. After doing this, I concluded

my research and prepared a report that I would give to the participants in order to verify, enhance, amend, and make any necessary clarifications to the data that had been supplied.

Inductive thematic analysis works well with a variety of research questions, from people's experience to the construction of phenomena, and the analysis of different types of data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This was useful as I investigated the benefits of raising children in a multilingual household, as well as the benefits and challenges that come with it.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria provided ethical clearance prior to the start of research activities to guarantee that the study adhered to ethical standards. The participants were provided with an invitation letter to participate in the study. The letter explained the nature of the study, as well what was expected of them. This letter was provided timeously to grant the participants enough time to read through it and then give signed consent for participation. I avoided doing any harm to the participants by informing them of their right to withdraw from the study if they wished to do so.

The ethical principles that guided this study were: voluntary participation, informed consent, trust, and confidentiality.

Informed consent was sought before engaging in the in-depth interviews. The participants were informed about the whole process and the purpose of the research.

Voluntary participation – the participants who took part in the activity did so willingly and without being forced to. Furthermore, they were made aware of their choice to discontinue participation in the study at any point without facing any repercussions.

Trust – During the research process, the subjects were not exposed to any deceitful or betrayed acts. The participants received no incentives, and there was no conflict of interest during the participant selection process.

Confidentiality, Anonymity and Privacy – the participants' personal information was protected at all times. The study did not utilize their true names. Pseudonyms

were instead employed to conceal their identities. The nature of the study did not risk the privacy of the participants because I did not seek deep personal information from them.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter gave a thorough analysis of the study's methodology and design used. It further described the method and procedure the data was collected, and continued to explain the ethical guidelines that were adhered to. The outcomes of the examination of the collected data are presented in the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings that were discovered during the data collection process are discussed. I organised the findings into themes and sub-themes using a thematic analysis system, and thereafter interpreted them. A summary of the data that were included and excluded is also provided to assist the reader in understanding the study's findings.

4.2 EMERGING THEMES FROM THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

During the thematic analysis process, four primary themes, and ten sub-themes were established. These themes concern how parents view the relevant topics related to raising multilingual children. The following themes were discussed:

❖ Conceptualising multilingualism;

❖ The strategies that parents use in multilingual households;

❖ The benefits of raising children in a multilingual family; and

❖ The challenges of raising children in a multilingual household

Table 4.1: Themes related to raising children in a multilingual household

Themes	Sub-themes	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Conceptualising multilingualism	Parents' understanding of multilingualism. Multilingualism in a home setting. Multilingualism in a school context. Multilingualism in a community setting.	Any reference to how multilingualism is understood or defined.	Any reference to considering raising children multilingual or not.
Language decisions in multilingual households	Family language decisions. Methods used for language development in multilingual homes. Maintenance of multiple	Any reference to factors that parents consider when deciding whether or not to raise their children to be multilingual, and the	Any referenced to the definition of multilingualism.

Themes	Sub-themes	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
	languages in a multilingual home.	roles that need to be considered.	
Benefits of raising children in a multilingual family	Home Setting. School Setting. Community setting.	Any reference to how multilingual settings are of benefit to their children.	Any reference to how multilingualism is defined or the factors that influence why it is considered.
Challenges of raising children in a multilingual family	English versus home language. Children mastering one language more than the others.	Any reference to the challenges experienced by multilingual parents.	Any reference to how multilingualism is defined.

Table 4.2 below indicates the codes that were used to represent the study participants.

Table 4.2: Codes for each participant

Parents 1 (P1)	Parents 2 (P2)	Parents 3 (P3)
Father – P1F1	Father – P2F2	Father – P3F3
Mother – P1M1	Mother – P2M2	Mother – P3M3

4.2.1 Theme 1: Conceptualising multilingualism

This theme refers to the definition of multilingualism that the participants gave it and their comprehension of it. Within the theme of **conceptualising multilingualism**, four sub-themes emerged.

The figure below provides a visual presentation of the theme conceptualising multilingualism and the sub-themes that were identified.
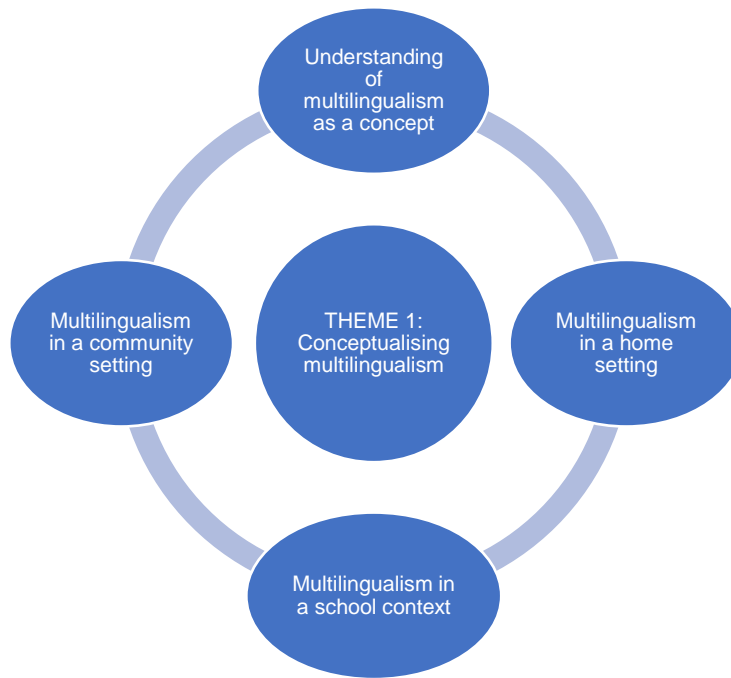
Figure 4.1: Visual representation of Theme 1

The concept of multilingualism refers to the presence of multiple languages in a country, community, or region (Conez, 2013). The world is now completely dominated by multilingualism due to its enormous scope of expansion. The term 'globalisation' is commonly used in this context because the main elements of globalisation, such as mobility, diversity, and technological innovation, are all connected to the current notion of multilingualism (Conez, 2013). The capacity to speak three or more languages is widely recognized as multilingualism. In this regard, many people consider multilingualism to be an inherent human quality (Flynn, 2016).

Sub-theme 1.1: Parents' understanding of multilingualism

Multilingualism has its benefits in South Africa, a nation with eleven official spoken languages, and improved job prospects are at the top of the list. To be able to converse with individuals from other ethnic groups that they come into contact with on a daily basis, many South Africans, nevertheless, learn many languages (Desai, 2016).

The information that was obtained from the participating parents indicates that they understood the concept of multilingualism. This was evident in their definition of multilingualism, which included speaking, fluency, and expressing oneself in more than two languages.

"It is to be fluent in two or more languages like me; I can speak more than two languages" (P2F2).

A similar response from participants P1 and P3 showed the same understanding of multilingualism.

"I will say it is the ability to speak different languages" (P1M1).

Multilingualism is to know more than one or two language. It is when the individual is speaking and expressing his or herself fluently in more than two languages" (P3F3).

Sub-theme 1.2: Multilingualism in a home setting

An increasing number of people choose to live their entire lives with someone who is not from their country and frequently speaks a different mother tongue. Since such a partnership often requires the introduction of multiple language learning, this can lead to children being raised in a multilingual home setting (Grosjean, 2015). These parents were asked to share their understanding of a multilingual home setting

"Multilingualism in home means families who are diverse, speaking more than one language. My family speak more than one language because we are from different language background. I am SiSwati and my husband is SiPedi" (P1M1).

Participant 3 indicated:

"It is a setting where parents are from different cultures and are speaking different languages. My wife is a mix of isiXhosa and SiSwati and I am speaking Xitsonga, yah" (P3F3).

Couples who are multilingual and multicultural are no longer to be ignored in South Africa. Moreover, children who are exposed to such a setting are born with the advantage of being both multilingual and multicultural.

Sub-theme 1.3: Multilingualism in a school context

Language competence has improved greatly over the past few decades as more and more people learn languages fluently (Grosjean, 2015). In a school setting, there are many children in each classroom who speak a different mother tongue. Parent 1 indicated the following:

> *A school is another place that cannot ignore multilingualism, my child for instance is from a multilingual home and her home languages are siSwati and SiPedi. So you can imagine how many children with different home languages in her school, but then she is only learning in English and Afrikaans* (P1M1).

Parent 3 stated:

> *"Multilingualism is everywhere even in schools, my children are in an English medium school and they learn English and their home language is Xitsonga and SiSwati. These means there is cultural diversity in schools these days* (P3F3).
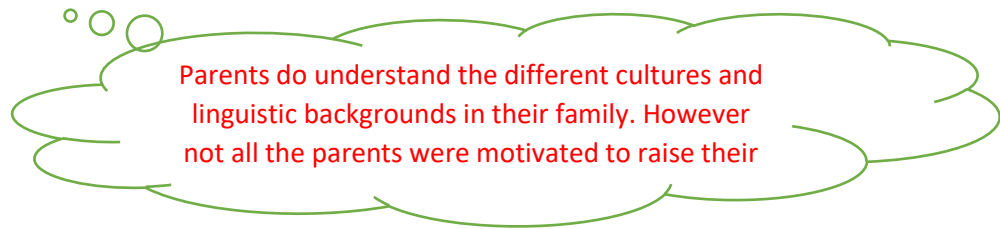
Because of the schooling system, interacting with people from diverse cultures is inevitable, thus children are exposed to different languages on a daily basis. Children who are unable to communicate in more than one language are severely limited in their social development and interaction (Langeloo et al., 2019). We should therefore explore the effects of multilingualism on the field of education.

Sub-theme 1.4: Multilingualism in a community setting

The usefulness of learning different languages for communication reasons is unquestionable. The majority of the parents declared that it is of vital importance to speak at least two languages in order to communicate (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016).

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"A multilingual community is made of different people who are from different cultures and speaking different languages. And nowadays it is impossible to shy away from multilingualism since communities are made by people from different provinces and countries. Who come together because of work, marriages and other things" (P3F3).

My reflection

Parents do understand the different cultures and linguistic backgrounds in their family. However not all the parents were motivated to raise their

4.2.2 Theme 2: Language decisions in multilingual households

For a variety of reasons, parents choose to raise their children bilingual: some desire their children to grow up to be cross-culturally literate and global thinkers; some have a parent or other relative who speaks a language other than English at home and would like to preserve that language for their own cultural heritage; still others want their children to become nearly fluent in the language of the place they are living in.

Based on the responses that the participants provided, a theme was developed concerning the strategies that parents use in multilingual households. In particular, this related to the decisions that they need to make in terms of language, and the role they need to play in their children's language development. The sub-themes that emerged within this theme are indicated in the figure below.

Language decision in multilingual households

Sub-theme 2.1: Family home language decisions

Sub-theme 2.2: Methods used for language development in children raised in multilingual homes

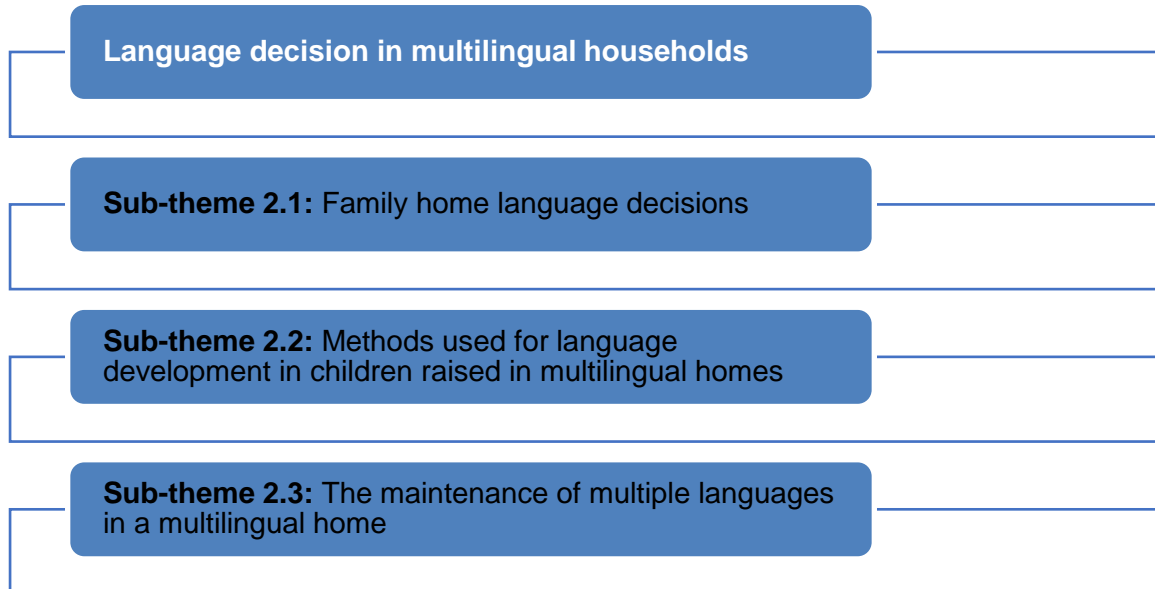**Sub-theme 2.3:** The maintenance of multiple languages in a multilingual home

Figure 4.2: Visual representation of Theme

There are different strategies that parents can use in multilingual households. These can assist them whether they choose to raise their children as monolingual or bi/multilingual. However, parents who are from different linguistics background need to consider or make certain decisions on how they will run their homes and raise their children. According to the participants, there are different strategies and methods that helped them to develop and maintain multiple languages in a multilingual household.

Sub-theme 2.1: Family language decisions

Multilingual families need to make decisions on which language they will use with their children. The majority of multilingual families are made up of mixed parents in terms of language, culture, and ethnicity. Making a decision about languages requires parents to consider many factors, such as the languages they both speak, the cultural identity of their children, and their family values. Decisions regarding which language a child should speak rest entirely with the parents.

Both parents' languages should be considered as it important for cultural identity, fitting into society, and maintaining good relationships within families. Parents 1 (P1) mentioned the following:

"We decided to raise our child in both our languages because we wanted her to know both of them. You know that culturally a child is supposed to speak

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her father's language, but because I was the one who spend more time with her, it was obvious that she will speaking my language, so we decided that we will speak both our languages to her. I was speaking siSwati to her and my husband SiPedi with the help of her grandmother" (P1F1).

Parents 3 indicated:

"We decided to teach them our languages because we want them to fit into society and in both families and not feel inferior or left out. Culture plays an important role in our life, so was important for our children to learn both our home languages. They need to know who they are, learn their cultural background. They need to be able to communicate with the grandparents and have a sense of belonging" (P3F3).

Other parents indicated that it is important to decide which language best suits their home to avoid confusing their children. In this case, it is possible for parents to decide to use another language that they feel comfortable teaching or raising their children in, such as English. Furthermore English is associated with success because it is considered as an official language academically and also in the workplace. Parents 2 indicated that:

"We chose to raise our children in English because we didn't want to confuse them. One of the most important is communication, so we wanted to make things easier for our children by teaching them a language that we were both comfortable in, but then they can still learn another language when they are old on their own" (P2M2).

Parents 2 further stated:

"English was the best option for our children as even at school it is an official language of instruction. And without English it is not easy to reach greater heights in life. And for the reason that we as parents communicated in English even before we had kids, so to avoid confusion, we speak English to our children" (P2F2).

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Sub-theme 2.2: Methods used for language development in multilingual homes

It is important for parents to have different methods to consider in order to be able help their children learn both languages in a multilingual household. Parents 1 indicated that they were each communicating with their children in their own language, and this strategy worked very well for them.

"Since she was a baby, we were both speaking our languages to our daughter. She knew which language to use when she is speaking to me, her father and her grandmother. She is also speaking English because she is in an English school, so at home it's SiSwati with me, SiPedi with Daddy, and English with friends" (P1M1).

Another method indicated by Parents 3 was focusing on one language and introducing another language when the child was fluent in the first language.

"With my first born we started speaking siSwati to her; sometimes I will be mixing between siSwati and Xitsonga, but then she learnt to speak siSwati first. So, because she was always visiting my family in the villages, ended up learning Xitsonga. She is fluent in both languages" (P3F3).

The parents further explained that they relied on their experiences with their first child*:*

"Yes it was the same with all our children. They all learned siSwati first and Xitsonga second. It was easy for number two and three to learn the other language because we use to communicate in all the languages" (P3M3).

Sub-theme 2.3: Maintaining multiple languages in children

The participants explained that they have a very essential role in helping and supporting their children to learn and maintain multiple languages, especially while they are still young. Firstly, according to them, they needed to be willing and provide a lot of motivation. Secondly, they had to practice different techniques to help their children develop and maintain multiple languages. The participating parents indicated the following methods that they used to support their children to maintain multiple languages.

"We continue to read books to her, allowing her to play with other kids of different languages. Allowing her to visit both her grandparents. Continue to talk to her in my language and my husband in his. Encourage her by telling her why it is important, Uhm, to learn both languages, yes" (P1M1).
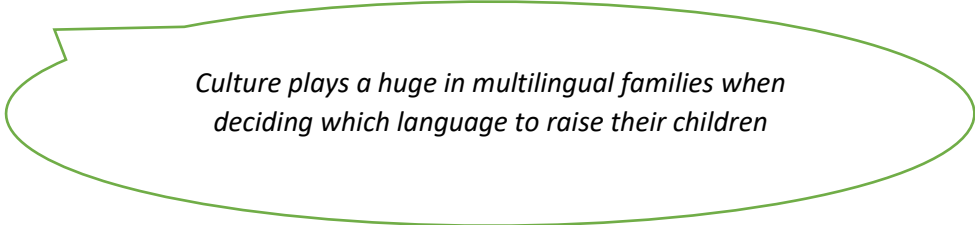
Parent 3 added:

"We play together, sing song and read stories mostly on Xitsonga because my other kids are still learning it. Yes, by exposing them to those languages for a long time, and allowing them to visit their grandmother and speak Tsonga with them. Exposing them to TV program that plays in the other languages" (P3M3).

They further indicated:

"Yes, also encouraging them to speak more, I used to tell my older girl to speak to her younger siblings in Tsonga because she was fluent. So when they are inside the house, they play in Tsonga and I am also talking to them in Tsonga and they mostly play in English with their friend" (P3F3).

My reflection

Culture plays a huge in multilingual families when deciding which language to raise their children

4.2.3 Theme 3: The benefits of raising children in a multilingual family

A visual summary of this theme, which has ties to children's home, school, and community, is shown in Figure 4.3 below.
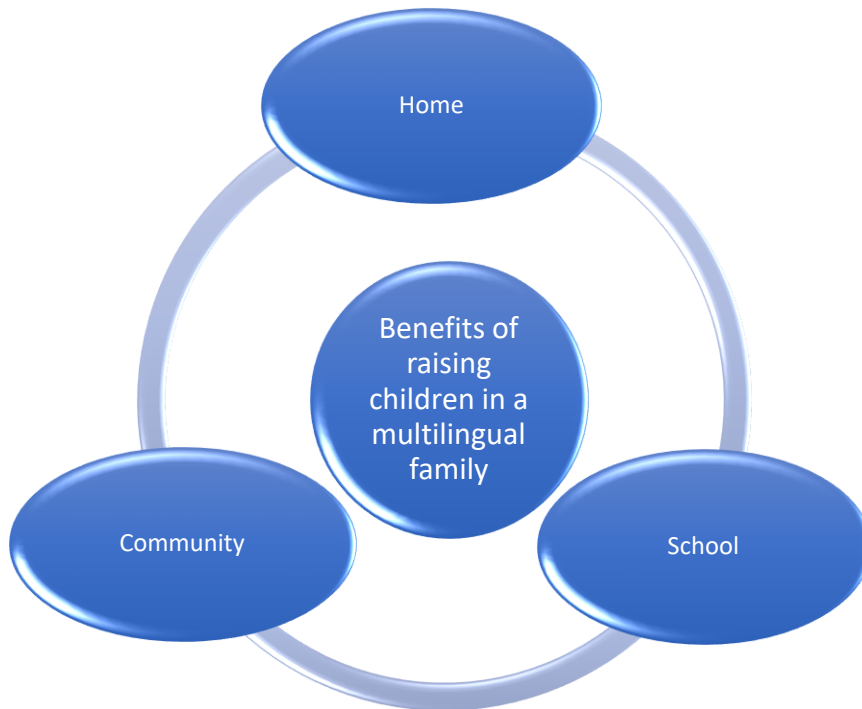
Figure 4.3: Visual representation of Theme 3

According to the participants, growing up in a bilingual or multilingual home has several advantages. Initially, there are the psychological advantages. Speaking the languages of their parents helps children develop a closer bond with them and gain a deeper understanding of their upbringing, culture, and beliefs. Benefits to society also exist. Children who speak two languages have a tendency to be more accepting of variety and various cultures, as well as more sensitive to cultural differences. Consequently, it is evident that growing up in a bilingual or multilingual setting has several advantages, ranging from social, emotional to cognitive.

Sub-theme 3.1: Home Setting

The parents indicated the benefits that they noticed in their multilingual children when at home. They mentioned that their children became flexible, fearless, and showed confidence. They also indicated that in the home setting, multilingualism maintained family relationships, including those with extended family members, such as grandparents.

"My child is flexible, she can communicate with different people and she is confident. She is not afraid to visit her grandparents. The most important thing is that she is part of both our cultures" (P1M1).

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"Seeing her being comfortable with both languages is a great experience for me. She enjoys both our families, she visits both families with confidence, and she knows she needs to speak SiPedi when she is visiting my family" (P1F1).

Parents 3 further agreed with Parents 1 that children who are raised in multilingual households are accommodative, and they respect different cultures and beliefs.

"Our children are able to accommodate both our cultures, they now how… what to do and how to behave when they visit my both our families and relatives. The good thing is that they never compare, they love both their grandparents" (P3F3).

Sub-theme 3:2: Community setting

Our linguistic abilities and skills also enable us to gain some understanding of the needs, emotions, observations, schemata, thoughts and reasoning of others. This may include others who do not necessarily belong to our own linguistic and cultural community with whom we share a mother tongue. These skills therefore extend to communities of speakers of other languages with whom we become acquainted (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016).

The parents indicated that in a community setting, their multilingual children interacted very well with their friends and with other people:

"My child is a confident young girl; she fits in very well with other children. Enjoys playing with her friend, flexible to communicate with any language she knows, and not afraid to try new things" (P1F1).

Other parents added:

"It is easy for my children to switch languages; they can play with friends who are speaking siSwati and sometimes they play in English. They enjoy being around people, most especially the older ones and they are willing to learn other languages" (P3F3).

Sub-theme 3.3: School setting

Researchers argue that knowledge of more than one language has cognitive and economic benefits (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015), and allows learners to be

themselves within the social and educational context. Being able to value their identity boosts their confidence and, therefore, improves their academic performance (Omidire, 2019).

The participants provided the following information when discussing the benefits of raising children in a multilingual household:

> *"Being at school was never a problem for my child because she is confident and able to communicate with her peers. Since she started school, she is getting high marks in both the languages that she learned at school and other subjects, she is very intelligent"* **(P1M1).**

Parents 3 added to this:

> *"My children are flexible, confident and they are performing very well at school. Language is not a barrier to them; it is easy for them to accommodate other languages such as Afrikaans since it is their second language at school. They don't have a problem; they are willing to try other languages"* **(P3F3).**

Parents 2 also stated:

> *"My kids are fluent in English and that is the language of instruction in their school. They perform very well because they learn it since birth and even at home, we are using English to communicate"* **(P2M2).**

In South African schools, it must be noted that the predominant languages are English and Afrikaans. The system seems to ignore the fact that learners bring their own, different linguistic and social behaviours to the classroom. This leads to parents only viewing English as being beneficial to their children.

Reflection

Parents mostly see the benefits of raising their children multilingual, when the children are able to communicate with their paternal and maternal relatives

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4.2.4 Theme 4: The challenges of raising children in a multilingual household

Figure 4.4: Demonstrates some of the difficulties of raising children in a multilingual family as supported by the statements made by the participating parents.
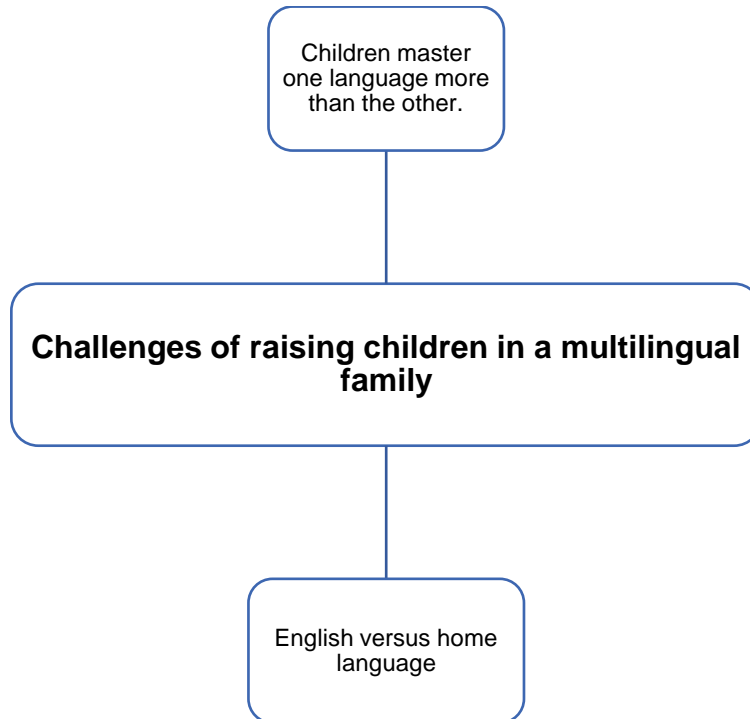
Figure 4.4: Visual representation of Theme 4

Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for theme

Sub-themes:	Inclusion	Exclusion
English versus home language	Data that include negative experiences of parents in multilingual homes.	Data that include positive experiences in multilingual homes.
Children master one language more than the other	Data that include negative experiences of parents in multilingual households.	Any reference to information that includes parents' positive experiences.

Sub-theme 4.1: English versus Home language

Some of the participants stated that they preferred to teach their children English as they felt that they were not fluent in each other's languages. Additionally, they also

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believed that English has more potential to assist their children to achieve well academically and socially in this diverse country. However, this decision disadvantages children and robs them of the privileges associated with being born in multilingual homes.

Parent 2 stated:

"One of the issues we have in our family is not having the knowledge on how to accommodate both our languages and teach our children. It was easy for use to teach our children English than both our languages" (P2F2).

They further added:

"It is not easy for my kids to visit their grandparents because of language challenges. They are always complaining why they only speak English because is not their language. It has always been a problem, but it's what we want" (P2M2).

Sub-theme 4.2: Children master one language more than the other

One of the most common challenges in raising children in multilingual households, as described by the participants in this study, is that children refuse to use one of the languages, and most often this is the language not used in the community. The reason for this could be because the children have not used that language enough or it is because the parents have not enforced the use of that language. It is therefore extremely important that from the beginning, parents encourage their children to respond in the desired language that they eventually want them to speak. This information was evident in the statements made by Participants 1 and 3 as they explained as follows:

"Yes, there are challenges, especially because children learn different, you will find that one child is fast and the other is very slow. So you need to be careful and understanding and make sure everyone is accommodated" (P3M3).
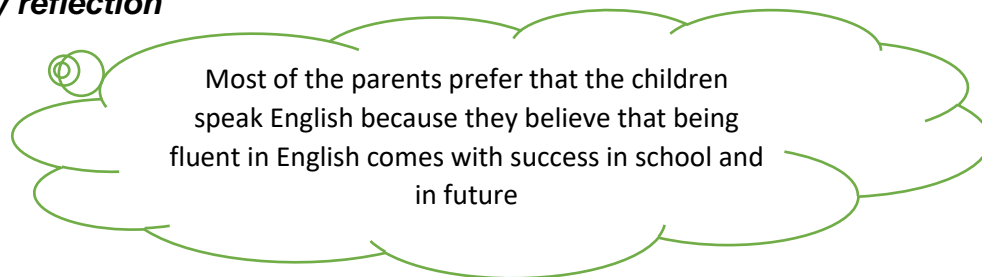
Parent 1 further stated:

"I was concerned about my language, especially when it was clear that she is speaking SiSwati, I thought she didn't want to learn my language and for the fact that we are in community where most of the people are speaking siSwati, I was worried" (P1F1).

Parent 3 added that:

"My youngest child prefers to speak SiSwati and English because it is a language that majority speaks in the area, so it is difficult for him to speak, he is struggling to speak Xitsonga even if you speak Xitsonga to him, he answers by mixing all the languages and end up speaking English or Swati" (P3M3).

My reflection

Most of the parents prefer that the children speak English because they believe that being fluent in English comes with success in school and in future

4.3 REVISITING THE LITERATURE

In South Africa, the practice of multilingualism is widespread. The usefulness of learning more than two languages for communication reasons is unquestionable. Multilingual homes are made up of mixed parents who are from different linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016). In terms of multilingualism in a home setting, the parents further emphasised their children learning both their home languages as being the most important part of creating a sense of belonging and gaining knowledge of their cultural background.

Additionally, the parents in this study pointed to the necessity of raising their children in English since it is an official language in South Africa. Eisenchlas and Schalle (2019) find that English plays a dominant role alongside other daily life stresses; parents are often more concerned about their children's English and their children's acquisition of English skills than their children's native language. They focus on their

children's academic performance and prospects for future success, as well as their family's integration into society, which is usually closely linked to English skills.

The children of the parents in this study learned different languages and seemed to understand all the languages spoken by their parents. The choice of language the family was largely centred on the parents' mother tongue, preferences, and skills in the language. Effective language policies and planning techniques within the family emphasize the language-management initiatives, efforts, and language-planning tasks performed by parents at home (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; King et al., 2008; Lanza & Wei, 2016). These initiatives are frequently motivated by parents' hopes for their children's language development in the future as well as their memories of the past.

Parents employ a variety of strategies to enhance their children's' experiences and language repertoire. These include the One-Parent-One-Language (OPOL) approach; using one language on specific days; the minority language being used only at home and mixed language strategies (Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza, 2018).

Behavioural Theory was confirmed in this study as it posits that Imitation, rewards, and practice are the processes by which infants learn spoken language from other human role models. In a learning environment, human role models give children the the stimuli and rewards (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). When an infant tries to verbally communicate or imitate speech sounds or patterns, he/she is usually praised and shown affection for their efforts. This was confirmed as the children in this study were introduced to learning multiple languages within a warm and loving relationship before they were even able to speak. It has been discovered that family practice and behaviours significantly influence the kind of input that children are exposed to. In this study, Attaining fluency in their mother tongue was intimately associated with engaging with various family members, acquaintances, or additional indirect language providers, such as television shows, movies, and literature.

The study further indicated that there are benefits to raising children in multilingual households. As mentioned by Festman et al. (2017), children will benefit from early multilingualism. The researchers further indicate that there are solid social, psychological, and cognitive advantages to being multilingual. The benefits of being better and more confident communicators were also highlighted. The parents in this

study indicated that their children were flexible, confident, and not afraid to try other languages.

According to other studies, children who speak multiple languages also typically exhibit greater cultural empathy and open-mindedness. This study indicates that children that are multilingual will have no challenges conversing with their relatives, friends, or grandparents who speak different languages. This implies that they will be able to preserve and maintain their cultural and linguistic heritage whilst at the same time expanding their social network.

In South African schools, however, the predominant languages are English and Afrikaans. The system seems to ignore the fact that learners bring their own, unique linguistic and social behaviours to the classroom. It was revealed in this study that this became a challenge as some of the parents opted to only have English as their home language. Raising multilingual children with competence is something that many parents desire (Byers-Heinlein & Lew-Williams, 2013). However, multigenerational language transmission can be difficult, particularly if one or more home languages are included in the repertoire of languages being passed (Ahooja et al., 2022).

4.4 CONCLUSION

The foundations for success in early literacy include language-rich settings and positive, healthy interactions. This study offers insight into children's emerging literacy and family participation in a multilingual setting. Parents can create a cumulative culture of literacy in their homes by using the knowledge of how children learn many languages. According to research on multilingual families, their motivations can range from the desire to give their children greater work possibilities to the reportedly enhanced cognitive and intellectual advantages of multilingualism (Bouko et al., 2019).

Being multilingual offers several benefits, some of which include the ability to communicate with relatives outside of one's immediate family, travel, maintain a connection to one's cultural heritage, and make friends from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds (Hampton et al., 2017; Paradis & Govindarajan, 2018; Peña, 2016).

CHAPTER 5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an overview of the preceding chapters and a summary of the main findings are presented. Furthermore the limitations and recommendations for future research are provided. Finally, this chapter draws to a close with concluding remarks for this study.

In this study of limited scope, the perception of parents who are raising children in multilingual households was explored. Specifically, this study aimed to understand how parents from diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds raise children in multilingual environments. The importance of this study was in highlighting the benefits and challenges experienced by parents while raising children in multilingual households.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 introduced the study and provided information underlining the rationale and purpose of this research. This was achieved by exploring the benefits and challenges associated with multilingual families, particularly when parents of diverse linguistic and cultural origins are rearing their children in these multilingual environments.

Chapter 2 explored existing literature related to parents raising children in multilingual households. The chapter presented, explored, and discussed the benefits, challenges, and the efficiency of the strategies parents might use if their aim is to raise their children to be multilingual. Behavioural Theory was discussed as the framework of this research. This theory focuses on the early development of multiple languages by emphasizing the role of parents and the parenting styles they might utilize with their children.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the processes used to structure the in-depth study, data collection, and the methods used for the analysis. The epistemological paradigm, methodological approach, and methods of data collection and design were explained. Furthermore, the data generation techniques and data analysis

procedures used have been detailed. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the ethical considerations followed in this study.

In Chapter 4 the findings of this study was presented through thematic analysis. The themes and sub-themes given in this chapter were then derived from the findings. This required a thorough examination of the study interviews in order to first identify the themes that appeared often throughout the findings and then classify those themes into sub-themes. The four themes were: 1) Conceptualising multilingualism, 2) Language decisions in multilingual households, 3) The benefits of raising children in a multilingual households, and 4) The challenges of raising children in a multilingual family.

5.3 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that were posed in Chapter 1 were addressed using the study findings. The main research question was:

> What are the perceptions of parents regarding raising children in multilingual households?

The secondary questions were as follows:

> 1) What are the language strategies parents used by parents in multilingual households?

> 2) What are the benefits of raising children in a multilingual household?

> 3) What are the challenges of raising children in a multilingual household?

I will answer the three secondary questions first, and then the primary research question, which relates to the main purpose of this study.

5.3.1 What are the languages learning strategies used by parents in multilingual households?

Language learning strategies refer to the course of action chosen by parents for the purpose of teaching their children languages (Griffiths, 2018). There are different strategies and methods that are considered to work in helping parents to develop

and maintain multiple languages in multilingual households, such as OPOL, and the time and place methods. In the research findings, the focus was on language strategies used by parents who are raising children in multilingual homes. Language decisions were important for all of the families in this study. Parents based their decisions about language development and maintenance for their children on their desire to foster multilingualism in their children.

The planning of language by mixed-parent families is based on their hopes and worries over their children's linguistic future. From this angle, the dilemma of multilingual parents presents two possibilities: either teach children in one of the parents' languages, or instil multilingualism in them. The findings in this study indicated that the parents had a clear understanding of which languages they should teach and use when communicating with their children and for any other purposes. The parents in this study indicated that they were in charge of deciding whether to raise their children to be multilingual. They indicated the requirements and importance of planning and discussing which language to raise their children in since it was important for their families on both sides. Both languages spoken by mixed parents should be considered as these are important for cultural identity, fitting into society, and maintaining good relationships within families. The literature review indicated that parents appear to pay no attention to their children's language learning, and have bilingual children without any effort. However, contrarily, it is typically a difficult process for parents that necessitate a lot of effort. De Houwer (2021) reveals that parental language input patterns have a significant impact on how successfully children learn to speak two or more languages. As a result, language selection patterns can be set in advance and modified to suit the needs of particular families. Parents who choose to speak both languages, for instance, may decide to stick on using only one of them. One-Person-One-Language (OPOL) arrangements are an option for families when a parent speaks the language of the majority while the other speaks the minority language, giving them a better chance of success. (De Houwer, 2021).

The verbal interaction tactics show parental attitudes regarding multiple language learning. Although parents' perceptions of their ability and responsibility to help their children learn languages may vary, (Stępkowska, 2022). The parents in this study

used different methods to help their children learn both languages in a multilingual household. These parents conversed with the children in their native languages; for example, the mother spoke SiSwati and the father SiPedi. These parents spoke with the child in their first languages, e.g. the father spoke SiPedi and the mother spoke SiSwati. The most popular strategy used by the parents in this study turned out to be the OPAL method. This was motivated by the notion that, if the children learned each language to some degree, communication within the family would not be limited to one parent.

According to the participants, parents have a very essential role in helping and supporting their children to learn and maintain multiple languages, especially while they are still young. Firstly, they need to be willing and provide a lot of motivation, and secondly, they must practice different techniques to help children develop and maintain multiple languages. The parents indicated that in order to support their children to maintain multiple languages, they allowed them to spend more time with their grandparents and other relatives who spoke the target languages. The literature review highlighted similar views to those of the participants in that the quantity and quality of language contribution is a strong determinant in the development thereof. However, research has discovered that exposure to two languages has an impact on the development of vocabulary and grammar (Hoff et al., 2012). The strength and excellence of language development creates either language delays or language proficiency (Scheele et al., 2010). In addition, it is vital that parents provide an enriching and stimulating environment, which is necessary for language acquisition (McLeod, 2015). It is also a conscious and dynamic endeavour as parental decisions regarding their family's multilingual communication practices depend on their particular linguistic situation and needs at a given moment (Cruz-Ferreira, 2010).

According to Skinner's Behavioural Theory, the environment where a child is raised has a significant impact on their language development. The results of this study support this theory. Cognitive processes and behaviour formation are the main factors influencing children's language development. Skinner argues that observation, operant conditioning, and classical conditioning are all effective ways for children to pick up new abilities. The impact of these circumstances on a child's learning environment was further highlighted in this viewpoint. This implies that

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rewarded responses are repeated, and reprimanded responses result in suppressed or curbed behaviour in terms of language development and response formation. Therefore, when it comes to maintaining and fostering home languages, parents are regarded as experts. The literature advises parents to read to their children, to promote reading for pleasure, and to take their children to the library. This advice is offered to all parents who are willing to raise their children in multiple languages whether both native and non-native speakers of the particular languages (Kirwan, 2019).

5.3.2 What are the benefits of raising children in multilingual households?

According to the findings of this study, the ability to speak and communicate with relatives on both sides of the family seems to be the most significant and immediate benefit of being multilingual. This study focused on families with parents who come from different cultures and have different mother tongue, so this benefit seemed to outweigh all other benefits. All of the parents in this study, including their grandparents and other relatives, had different linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, for these reasons their children need to be multilingual in order to communicate with them.

In this study, the parents highlighted a number of advantages of multilingualism in their children, such as advancing their economic and professional prospects, improving communication, developing a well-rounded personality, and maintaining their culture. This is in line with the body of literature, which lists similar benefits of multilingualism.

Since these children were exposed to multilingualism between their homes, community, and schools, the parents were able to observe the many advantages of raising children to be multilingual. The findings indicated that children raised in a multilingual environment and raised to be multilingual become flexible, fearless, and show confidence.

The findings further indicated that in a community setting, children raised in multilingual homes are likely to be more culturally sensitive, more understanding, and more tolerant of other cultures and diversity. In the interview, the parents further

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indicated that their children performed well at school and were intelligent. Similar findings to those of this study are reported in the literature covered in Chapter 2. According to Bailey and Osipova (2016), the importance of multilingualism in children is its advantages of development and well-being, mostly around academic achievement, language development, and socio-effective outcomes. Parents value preserving generational bonds, family ties to heritage and culture, and seeing their children better equipped to face the challenges of a changing global society. People who speak more than one language are blessed with the ability to experience two worlds instead of one. Speaking the language of another culture is the best way to interact and connect with it and truly be a part of it. Furthermore, being multilingual makes it easier for children to comprehend cultural differences, so they may serve as a bridge between cultures and encourage cross-cultural conversation (Rumbaut, 2014).

5.3.3 What are the challenges of raising children in a multilingual family?

While there are many benefits to multilingualism, it can also present some challenges. This study indicated that time and efforts are important when raising children in a multilingual environment where the goal is for them to become multilingual. Learning multiple languages requires a significant investment of time and effort, both for parents and children.

This study also noted resistance; children may resist learning multiple languages, particularly if they see it as difficult or challenging. The findings indicated, children occasionally choose speaking one language over another, and frequently this is because that language is the one they are exposed to the most. When children completely reject speaking the minority language, having a preference for one language can sometimes strain relations with the parent who speaks it. This usually leads to parents stressing whether their children will be able to adopt both languages. The study's findings concurs with those in the literature as a common challenge faced in multilingual homes is that in the early years of the child, bilingual children have a habit of rejecting one of the parent's languages (Thomas, 2012). They start talking only one language continuously, regardless of the other languages to which they are exposed. This practice habitually leads to parents stressing

whether the additional language will be adopted by the child. However, a study has shown that frequent and consistence use of more than one language will, over time, change as the child will eventually adopt all of the languages (Thomas, 2012).

The findings further noted that some parents prefer to teach their children English as they feel that they are not fluent in each other's languages. Additionally, they believe that English has a better potential to assist their children to achieve academically and socially in this diverse country. This disadvantages and robs children of the privileges associated with being born in multilingual homes.

5.3.4 What are the perceptions of parents regarding raising children in a multilingual household?

The findings from the responses to these research questions mostly focused on how parents broadly define multilingualism. It also looked at how they develop and negotiate their own and their children's language and cultural identities, as well as how they spread ideas about official languages. (Palviainen & Bergroth, 2018). In defining multilingualism, the participants stated that this refers to knowledge of more than one language. The participants demonstrated a broad understanding of the nature of multilingualism and what it entails. They shared a similar understanding of this concept as that of many scholars. The literature analysed in this study indicated that multilingualism is defined as the ability of societies, institutions, groups, and individuals to interact with more than one language on a regular basis in space and time in everyday life (Aronin & Singleton, 2019).

This study showed how parents understand multilingualism in a home setting. The participants mentioned that multilingualism in the home refers to families who are diverse, and speak more than one language. Families can be multilingual in a variety of ways, such as when the parents each speak their native and the child grows up hearing two or more languages at home. The literature indicates that multilingual intercultural partners are no longer shocking or surprising. A growing number of individuals are deciding to devote their entire lives with a partner of a different ethnic group, and frequently speak a different home tongue to their partner. Intercultural partnerships are common in South Africa.

The findings suggest that the People from many cultural backgrounds and language backgrounds make up the multilingual community. Nowadays, it is impossible to shy away from multilingualism since communities are made up of people from different provinces and countries. In many cases, these individuals come together because of work, marriages, and other factors. The literature highlights a similar view that increasing mobility in the modern world allows parents to relocate to other provinces. This presents a wonderful chance to highlight the diversity of cultures and languages in our nation. For instance, there are parents who move because of work and business purposes and bring their children with them. This may increase their children's motivation to learn multiple languages (Paradoswski & Bator 2016).

This study further revealed that the participants acknowledged the importance of multilingualism in a school setting. This is unavoidable as children are exposed to multiple languages on a daily basis, which occurs when they interact with other children at school who are from different cultures, and therefore different languages.

The literature shows that considering children's home language and cultural backgrounds at school confirms their identities and offers a solid basis for learning different and multiple languages. Multilingualism in classrooms can be quite beneficial In order to engage diverse children. Moreover, this supports academic success, and fosters positive identities associated with their home cultures.

The importance of learning different languages for communication reasons is undeniable. The majority of the participating parents acknowledged that it is of vital importance to speak at least both parents' languages in order to communicate (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016). Given that parents are crucial role models for their children, and this includes both their language and attitude. Children born to intercultural parents ought to be capable to communicate not only with their parents, but also with other members of the community, the majority of who speak languages that are frequently different from those spoken at home. For children to become multilingual, their parents must support the concept of multilingualism, and must motivate their children accordingly.

This study revealed that one of the most crucial motives for raising multilingual children in multicultural relationships is mutual communication. Children are

frequently required to know both languages in order to communicate because their parents speak different mother tongues.

The literature review further indicated that the environment is one of the most crucial elements in the successful development of multilingualism. Social and linguistic factors should both be taken into account. At least two languages are often introduced to children of parents from various ethnic groups at home; some introduce three or more, either simultaneously or sequentially. The language spoken in the community frequently differs from the languages spoken at home. The environment must thus provide plenty of opportunities for children to utilise the language in order to become actively multilingual.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are several limitations on this study that should be acknowledged. Due to the small sample size of participants, the results' generalizability was limited. Despite the limited sample size, common themes in the interviews could be found, and some degree of data saturation was attained. In some instances, only one person mentioned certain qualities; however, the small sample was also deliberate due to the limited scope of the study as it was a mini dissertation.

To learn about these families' linguistic patterns, this study relied on interviews. There were no formal observations of the families' actual language use. Therefore, the stated behaviours might not always accurately represent how these parents actually speak to their children on a daily basis.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

For parents in intercultural marriages

The findings of the study reflect that intercultural parents should be encouraged to teach their children multiple home languages. This is considered to be a positive resource and can benefit the child in terms of cognitive advantages, academic achievement, and socio-effective outcomes. Parents should further empower themselves and consider supportive resources that can assist them in multiple

language development and learning for their children. Future research studies could focus on children's perception of being raised in multilingual environments.

For schools

The findings of this study suggest that schools should consider teaching multiple languages since multilingualism is unavoidable nowadays. It is important to treat all South African languages equally so that all learners, regardless of their home language, can get a relevant and inclusive education. This will allow even non-dominant and minor community languages to regain their voices. These can benefit children who are raised as monolingual to learn multiple languages since it is associated with economic gains, career advancement, and enhanced communication advantages.

To overcome the limitations of this study's findings and reproduce them with a bigger sample size, different age groups, and children from various demographic and linguistic backgrounds, additional research is required. Future studies should also employ a comparable methodology to assess other crucial developmental outcomes, like academic success and socio-emotional development.

5.6 CONCLUSION

It should go without saying that language proficiency is crucial in today's world. Despite the fact that multilingualism is a common phenomenon, its advantages and benefits are mostly readily available to the children whose parents come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It was considered to be effective and advantageous for parents of different nationalities to raise children in many languages. Children raised to be multilingual possess an advantage when compared to monolingual children. Even while the procedure is demanding on parents and children, it is well worth taking the chance, especially considering how satisfying the outcome is in the end.

Growing up in a multilingual household can be rewarding for both parents and kids. Children can learn numerous languages at once because their brains are designed

for language learning. The easier it is for children to learn, the sooner you start. One language, one parent is a useful strategy for raising multilingual children. The child will be exposed to both languages from a young age in this way. When children are having fun, they learn best. Parents must try to make learning a new language more enjoyable, consider combining games, songs, and other entertaining activities. A new language requires time and effort to learn. As your child progresses, have patience with them and offer encouragement. There is evidence that multilingual children have higher chances for travel, employment, and developmental psychology. In comparison to their monolingual counterparts, they frequently exhibit stronger executive function. One of the best gifts you can give your child for the future is to raise them in a multilingual home.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO THE PARENTS

Department of Educational Psychology

Dear Parents

I am a master's student in the department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria. I am currently working on a dissertation titled *"The benefits and challenges of raising children in a multilingual household"*. You have been selected to be part of this study as you meet the requirements of the research topic. With this letter, I wish to invite you be the participant. The aim of the research is to explore the benefits and challenges of raising children in multilingual households from the perspectives of parents. Parents with different cultural, ethnic and linguistic background will be expected to share their experience of raising children multilingual. Overall, the outcome of this study will shed light on the benefits and constraints of raising children in a multilingual household.

This research project will involve semi-structured interviews with the parents who are raising children in a multilingual household. The interviews will be conducted virtually and will be audio recorded. The interviews should take approximately 40 minutes and will be scheduled when you are available. The information obtained during this research project will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

All information collected will be securely stored in line with the University of Pretoria's regulations. The recordings made during this time will only be viewed by my supervisor and myself, and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcast to any third party, now or in the future.

I would again like to thank you warmly for your participation in this study. I hope that that the research findings will make a creditable contribution in explaining the benefits and challenges of raising children in multilingual household.

Nomfundo Mkhatshwa
Student researcher
Email mfundosp@gmail.com

Prof Funke Omidire
Supervisor
funke.omidire@up.ac.za

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Declaration of consent

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. Signing this letter indicates that you understand that your participation in this project is voluntary and that you may withdraw from the research project at any time. Under no circumstances will the identity of the research participants be disclosed or published to any party/ organisation that may be involved in the research process.

I, _____ (your name), agree to take part in this research. The topic of research being: **"*The benefits and challenges of raising children in a multilingual household"*** I agree to allow the researcher to take audio recordings of my lessons and audio record the interviews for the duration of the proposed study. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principals:

- **Voluntary participation**- participants may withdraw from the research at any time during the study.
- **Informed consent**- research participants will at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent of their participation in this research.
- **Safety in participation**- participants will not be placed at risk or harm of any kind.
- **Privacy**- meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents will be protected at all times.
- **Trust**- participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Parent's signature: ……………………….. Date: ………………………………

APPENDIX C: Interview Questions

Demographic questions

1. Names of parents

2. What is your age range?

3. What is your highest level of education?

4. What is your occupation?

5. What is your home language?

6. Have your language habits changed over time?

7. Where are you originally from?

8. How long have you been together?

9. How many children do you have?

9. What ages are your children?

10. What is the gender of your children?

Planned Questions

1. What do you understand about the term multilingual?
2. How do you feel about raising your children in a multilingual household?
3. Are you raising your children to be multilingual, if yes or no please explain why
4. Which language(s) do your children speak?
5. Was raising your children multilingual or not a planned between the both of you and how did you come to that decisions.
6. Which language do you as parents speak between yourselves in the presence of your children
7. Which language is mainly used to communicate in your household and why?
8. How can you support language communication in multilingual settings?
9. How do you promote children's multilingual development
   Or

How do you promote language development in children?

10. When can you start teaching learning multiple languages?

11. How does learning multiple languages affect language development?

12. What do you think are the benefits of raising children in a multilingual household?

13. What are some challenges faced by multilingual parents while raising children in multilingual households?

Follow up Interview questions

1. How would you define multilingualism in a home setting?

2. How would you define multilingualism in a school setting means?

3. What do you understand by multilingual community?

4. How did you come to the decisions or what were you concern when deciding which languages to raise your child (ren) with?

5. What did you consider when you decide to raise them multilingual? If not, what factors made you decide not to do so?

6. What languages do you usually use for communication outside your home (at work, at school, in shops etc.)? Why?

7. Which method best worked for your family when teaching languages?

8. How have your children's multilingualism/ language skills developed at different stages of their lives? If you have more than one child, have there been any differences between the developments of their language skills? What has caused that?

9. How are your children progressing at school? In your opinion, how does multilingualism affect your children at school? What languages do your children study and use at school?

10. What kind of challenges have you had with raising your children in multilingual household?

11. Can you mention examples of situations when you felt that multilingualism was an advantage/disadvantage for your children and for you?

APPENDIX D: Extracts from transcripts

Transcript for parents 1

Mom103	Yes laughs
Interviewer	What do you think are the benefits of raising children in a multilingual household?
Mom103	My child is flexible she can communicate with different people and she is confident. She is not afraid to visit her grandparents. The most important thing is that she is part of both our cultures. (benefits)
Interviewer	That's good
Mom103	Yes laughs
Interviewer	What are some challenges faced by multilingual families while raising children
Mom103	Hmmm I can't say it is challenging because the only thing is that you need to support your child and allow her to make mistakes and not give up. Also understand that she cannot just be fluent in both languages. Swati is the most dominant language, am speaking Swati, and most of the few around here are speaking Swati. So it was easy for her to learn Swati. So with SiPedi it was very slow she few sentences but know she is perfect.
Interviewer	yah neh
Mom103	Yes
Interviewer	Yoh thank you so much for all this information, it was nice talking to you
Mom103	Okay you welcome sisi

Follow up parents 1

Interviewer:	Thank you for allowing me this opportunity
Mom:	You are welcome
Interviewer:	**I want to ask you more question from our last interview**
Mom:	Ok no problem
Interviewer:	From our first interview I was clear that you well understood multilingualism. So I want us to try and break it down a little so I can have more understanding.
Interviewer:	**What is your understanding about multilingualism in a home setting?**
Mom:	Multilingualism in home settings means families who are diverse, speaking more than one language. My family speak more than one language because we are from different language background. I am Swati and my husband is Pedi.(understanding)
Interviewer:	**So which other languages that you can both speak?**
Mom:	I can speak SiSwati, SiPedi, and English

Interviewer	So I'm going to take few minutes of your time hmm as I informed you earlier.
P2M2	No problem take you time
P2F2	Yah, take your time
Interviewer	Thank you, so tell me what you understand about the term multilingual?
P2M2	Multilingual is speaking more than two languages that's what I can think off
P2F2	Aah, it is to be fluent in two or more languages like me; I can speak more than two languages.(Defination)
Interviewer	Okay, so how do you feel about raising your children in a multilingual household?
P2F2	I like the fact that we have different cultural expectations but in terms of language we decided to have our own primary language as a family which is English
P2M2	Uhm, yes I agree with my husband, it is good that we come from different background but we decided to raise our children in English as their home language.
Interviewer	So you mean is the English is the only language of communication that you are using in your household?
P2M2	Yes, I use English because I am Ndebele and my husband is Swati. It is difficult for me to learn my husband's home language. I wish I can but hhayi "laughs" yoh, I grew up at the rural villages where the only language of communication was Ndebele and a bit of English at school.
P2F2	Yes I also use English because it is a language we are all comfortable with.
Interviewer	Which other languages can your children speak?
P2F2	My 3 kids can now speak a bit of SiSwati because we visit my village a lot but they are not that fluent, still learning.
Interviewer	So, Was communicating in English with your children planned before or it was just a decision made when you got your first child?
P2M2	Yes, we planned it; we could not want to confuse our kids with something that is very difficult for me, unless they learn on their own. For me they are not expected or forced to speak our languages. (Language planning)
P2F2	I think the important issue is the way we express our selves towards each other, we need to understand each other.
Interviewer	What do you think are the benefits of raising children in multilingual households?
P2F2	It is very important looking at the fact that we live in South Africa and we have 11 official languages. We like traveling a lot and always feel like we don't belong. There is

Mom 3	With my experience learning multiple languages do not affect language development, a baby when start talking will make up words in their minds they feel it means what they want so you as a parent must direct the child because at first you won't even here what the child is trying to tell you. You just need to direct them. Unless they have speech delayed.
Interviewer: household?	What do you think are the benefits of raising children in a multilingual
Mom 3	It promotes a good relationship between children and their friends and families. It shows the spirit of Ubuntu where you understand that the other person only speaks one language and you can accommodate them since you are fluent in that language
Dad 3	Yes firstly it strengthens the relationship. Children become cultural sensitive and they become more understanding for other cultures. They can be able to communicate in many languages. It is beneficial.
Interviewer children?	What are some challenges faced by multilingual families while raising
Mom 3	*Yes, there are challenges, especially because children learn different, you will find that one child is fast and the other is very slow. So you need to be careful and understanding and make sure everyone is accommodated.*
Dad 3	Yes that's true
Interviewer	Yes true, thank you so much for all this information.

Follow up for PARENTS 3

Interviewer: you	Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity again, I needed to ask more question about my topic.
Mom 3	Yes no problem