

**MULTILINGUAL PRESCHOOL LEARNERS: A  
COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION  
INTERVENTION**

**SANDRA DU PLESSIS**

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Hans du Plessis

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASHA	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CBD	Central Business District
CUP	Common Underlying Proficiency
DoE	Department of Education
EAL	English as Additional Language
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ELoLT	English as Language of Learning and Teaching
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ITPA	Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (Kirk, McCarthy & Kirk, 1968)
KLST	Kindergarten Language Screening Test (Gauthier & Madison, 1998)
LANGTAG	Language Plan Task Group
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
L1	First language or mother tongue
L2	Additional language
Mol	Medium of Instruction
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
PANSALB	Pan South African Language Board
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SASLHA	South African Speech-Language-Hearing Association
SD	Standard Deviation
TACL-R	Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language – Revised (Carrow, 1985)
TALK	The Project for the Transfer of African Languages
USA	United States of America

## ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** Multilingual Preschool Learners: A Collaborative Approach to Communication Intervention

**NAME:** Sandra du Plessis

**PROMOTER:** Prof B Louw

**CO-PROMOTER:** Dr S Human-Vogel

**DEPARTMENT:** Communication Pathology, University of Pretoria

**DEGREE:** DPhil Communication Pathology

Multilingualism in classrooms is currently prompting debate and has significantly impacted on schooling in South Africa over the last decade. At present South African educators face the challenge of coping with and finding solutions to culturally and linguistically diverse urban school contexts that did not exist before. In many South African communities young learners, without any prior knowledge of English, are placed in English preschools. Preschool teachers have the demanding task of preparing these multilingual preschoolers for formal schooling in English, and, in addition, are pressurised by parents or caregivers who expect their children to be fluent in English by the time they enter primary school. A group of preschool teachers in a specific urban, multilingual preschool context expressed concern about multilingual preschool learners' academic performances and their future, and requested advice and support. Consequently a need was identified for speech-language therapists to make their expertise available to multilingual preschool learners, as well as to their preschool teachers.

To address this need, an exploratory, descriptive, contextual research design, incorporating the quantitative perspective, was selected to describe the specific educational context of multilingual preschools in the Pretoria Central Business District (CBD) and Sunnyside area. A descriptive survey was conducted and two survey techniques were employed to collect the data, namely a questionnaire and a test battery. The questionnaire was used to collect information from 32 teacher participants to investigate the needs and strengths of preschool teachers and multilingual preschool learners. The test

battery was utilised to collect data on the language and communication proficiency in English of 30 learner participants.

Results indicated that the teacher participants perceived certain personal challenges while supporting the preschool learners acquiring English as Language of Learning and Teaching (ELoLT). These teachers expressed a need for knowledge and support. They also reported that the multilingual preschool learners in the research context had to communicate in ELoLT despite it being an unfamiliar language. Some of the multilingual preschool learners displayed behaviours that could be indicative of negative influences on their self-esteem. The language and communication assessment revealed that many learner participants' comprehension and expression in ELoLT were insufficient for learning and that they required support for academic success. In addition, the results support the claim that an integrated view of the multilingual learners' communication abilities need to be established across contexts, by combining assessment strategies, such as naturalistic and structured assessment, as well as interdisciplinary perspectives.

The results of the empirical research was used to propose a service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT in the research context. This proposed model may be an effective approach to provide supportive intervention to multilingual preschool learners with linguistic barriers to learning. In addition, initial stage intervention guidelines for the basic level ELoLT learner were offered in response to the needs of the specific community. These guidelines may provide a basis for the planning of intervention strategies to preschool teachers who were concerned about the education and future of multilingual preschool learners.

**Key words:** speech-language therapy services, multilingualism, English as Language of Learning and Teaching, consultation, collaborative intervention, urban preschools, service delivery model, intervention guidelines.



## OPSOMMING

<b>TITEL:</b>	Meertalige Voorskoolse Leerders: 'n Samewerkingsbenadering tot Kommunikasie-intervensie
<b>NAAM:</b>	Sandra du Plessis
<b>PROMOTOR:</b>	Prof B Louw
<b>MEDE-PROMOTOR:</b>	Dr S Human-Vogel
<b>DEPARTEMENT:</b>	Kommunikasiepatologie, Universiteit van Pretoria
<b>GRAAD:</b>	DPhil Kommunikasiepatologie

Meertaligheid in die klaskamer ontlok tans debatte en het die afgelope dekade die skoolsisteem in Suid-Afrika aansienlik beïnvloed. Die hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse leerkragte word gekonfronteer met uitdagings en moet oplossings vind in 'n stedelike skoolkonteks met diverse kulture en tale wat nie voorheen bestaan het nie. Baie Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskappe plaas tans jong leerders, met geen vorige kennis van Engels nie, in Engelse kleuterskole. Kleuterskoolonderwyseresse het gevolglik 'n veeleisende taak om hierdie meertalige kleuters vir formele onderrig in Engels voor te berei, terwyl die ouers of sorggewers verdere druk op die onderwyseresse plaas deur te verwag dat hulle kinders vlot moet kan Engels praat wanneer hulle laerskool toe gaan. 'n Groep kleuterskoolonderwyseresse in 'n spesifieke stedelike, meertalige kleuterskoolkonteks het hulle kommer oor meertalige kleuters se akademiese prestasies en toekoms uitgespreek, en raad en ondersteuning gevra. 'n Behoefte is gevolglik geïdentifiseer dat spraak-taalterapeute hul kundigheid beskikbaar stel aan die meertalige kleuters, asook aan hul kleuterskoolonderwyseresse.

Ten einde hierdie behoefte aan te spreek, is 'n ondersoekende, beskrywende, kontekstuele navorsingsontwerp geselekteer, wat die kwantitatiewe perspektief implementeer, om die spesifieke opvoedkundige konteks van meertalige kleuterskole in die Pretoria Sentrale Besigheidsdistrik en Sunnyside-gebied te beskryf. 'n Beskrywende opname is uitgevoer en twee opname-tegnieke is aangewend om data in te samel, naamlik 'n vraelys en 'n

toetsbattery. Die vraelys het inligting van 32 onderwyseresdeelnemers ingesamel om ondersoek in te stel na die behoeftes en sterk punte van die kleuterskoolonderwyseresse en die meertalige kleuters. Die toetsbattery (kontrolelyns) het inligting oor die taal- en kommunikasievaardighede in Engels van 30 leerderdeelnemers ingesamel.

Die resultate dui daarop dat die onderwyseresdeelnemers sekere persoonlike uitdagings ervaar in die ondersteuning van die meertalige kleuters wat Engels as Taal van Leer en Onderrig aanleer. Hulle het ook aangetoon dat die meertalige kleuters in die navorsingskonteks in Engels moet kommunikeer ten spyte daarvan dat dit 'n onbekende taal is, asook dat sommige van die meertalige kleuters se gedragpatrone geïnterpreteer kan word as aanduidend van negatiewe invloede op hul selfbeeld. Die taal- en kommunikasie-assessering het getoon dat baie leerderdeelnemers se begrips- en ekspressiewe vaardighede in Engels onvoldoende is vir leerdoeleindes en dat hulle ondersteun moet word ten einde akademiese sukses te behaal. Voorts staaf die resultate die aanspraak dat 'n geïntegreerde opinie oor kontekste heen ten opsigte van die meertalige kleuter se kommunikasievaardighede bereik behoort te word met behulp van assesseringstrategieë, soos natuurlike en gestruktureerde assessering, asook interdisiplinêre perspektiewe.

Die resultate van die empiriese navorsing is gebruik om 'n voorlopige diensleweringmodel daar te stel. Dié model kan doeltreffend aangewend word om meertalige kleuters in hul leerproses te ondersteun. Aanvangstadium-intervensieriglyne vir die basiese vlak kleuter wat Engels as Taal van Leer en Onderrig aanleer, is voorsien na aanleiding van die behoefte wat deur die spesifieke gemeenskap uitgespreek is. Hierdie riglyne kan die kleuterskoolonderwyseresse, wat hul kommer oor die akademiese prestasie en toekoms van meertalige kleuters uitgespreek het, help met die beplanning van intervensiestrategieë.

**Sleutelwoorde:** spraak-taalterapeutiese dienste, meertaligheid, Engels as Taal van Leer en Onderrig, konsultasie, gesamentlike intervensie, aanleer van

addisionele taal, stedelike kleuterskole, diensleweringsmodel,  
intervensieriglyne.