CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The present study investigated language policy implementation in selected high schools in the Mthatha District of the Eastern Cape, in the light of the change in medium-of-instruction policy in post-apartheid South Africa. In the introductory chapter, I contextualise the study by outlining the background of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research aims and objectives. This is followed by the research questions, statement of the problem, rationale of the theoretical framework, research assumptions, definition of terms and concepts, justification of the study, the research approach, the limitations of the study, the organization and overview of the study, and the conclusion.

Language is one of the major challenges of curriculum implementation for governments in post-colonial Africa. Language, which is the primary means of group identity formation and a shield to protect this identity (Zotwana in Alexander, 1989:77), is also linked to ideology and power (Makalela, 2005).Language has always been a controversial and explosive subject in post-colonial societies, primarily because of the legacy of colonial governments' language planning policies whose aim was to promote and entrench linguistic imperialism through divisive language legislation. Linguistic imperialism is the tendency to attribute favourable characteristics to a particular language whilst devaluing other languages (Phillipson, 1992). Makalela (2005:157) posits that the tendency for post-colonial governments to continue implementing their colonial masters 'language policies has not resulted in linguistic reform in post colonial societies because of the following myths surrounding African languages:

- Many of the languages are not developed, so they cannot be used in education;
- The costs of developing African languages are very high;
- Their exclusive use will block the window to the world and result in exclusion from participation in the international community;
- Some speakers of African languages do not wish to see their languages used in education because they have a total lack of confidence in the languages in these domains;
- European languages are neutral and have a potential for creating national cohesiveness among speakers of competing languages.

Linguistic imperialism has resulted in the marginalization of indigenous languages and in English being positioned favourably as a language of prosperity and progress in linguistically plural African societies. Ouedraogo (2000:19) asserts that the complexity of the language question in Africa has been compounded by factors such as the commercial importance of the colonial language, the perception that multilingualism is a problem, the political value of English and French, parental demands, globalization, structural and cultural factors, technological changes, wars and riots, and economic cycles. Ouedraogo argues that, for the sake of political expediency, many African states chose colonial languages as *lingua franca* and media of instruction.

1.2. Language-in-Education Policy Implementation in African Countries

Bamgbose (2004) classifies African countries into the following categories in terms of the medium of instruction:

1. Countries that were once under colonial rule and favour the use of African languages for teaching, particularly in early primary school education: Botswana, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda.
2. Countries which discourage the use of African languages for teaching: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Niger, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon Mali, Guinea, Mauritania, Chad, Togo, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé, and Equitorial Guinea.
3. Countries that support a dual language policy, or whose LIE policy is different from those of the colonizing countries: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, and Somalia.

In post-apartheid South Africa, a number of policies, aimed at redressing the imbalances of the past, were promulgated after the democratic elections in 1994. One of these was the 1997 multilingual language-in-education policy which guaranteed an equal status to all the eleven languages. Brock-Utne (2001:129) maintains that some African states, among them South Africa, Namibia, and Uganda, are not implementing their progressive language policies. Zimbabwe, despite its multilingual profile, has also adopted English as the main language of instruction, only

using Shona, and Ndebele in the lower primary school (Thondlana, 2002:33). The exception is Tanzania, where KiSwahili, which is the national language for about 95% of the population, is employed as a medium of instruction in primary schools. As a result, learners in Tanzania experience immense challenges with the language of instruction when it changes to English at secondary level (Makalela, 2005:157). Prah (2005) maintains that the situation in Tanzania came about as a result of half-hearted attempts by the government to employ KiSwahili as MOI, then abandoning it mid-stream, instead of going the whole hog and employing it up to tertiary level.

Several explanations have been advanced for the success or failure of reform in the post-apartheid South African education system. Jansen (2002:200) cites political symbolism, which he describes as "the pre-occupation of the state with settling policy struggles in the political domain rather than in the realm of practice," and regards as the main reason behind the lack of policy implementation. According to Jansen, LIE policy-making in South Africa has largely become a symbolic activity. No provision for policy implementation has been made; teachers have not been trained in bilingual/multilingual education; a materials development policy is not in place; and parents and teachers are relatively uninformed about the policy and its intended consequences. Others contend that government inertia, socio-political factors, language status and inequalities, and the absence of a coordinated plan have contributed to the lack of implementation of the multilingual MOI policy and the continued imposition of the apartheid period medium-of-instruction policy (Heugh, 2000:3, and Mda, 2004:167). Myths or misconceptions which militate against the successful implementation of the multilingual LIE policy include: English is the only language that can deliver quality education; very little or no South African indigenous research on MOI has been conducted; bilingual/multilingual education is too expensive and the only option for South Africa is a mainly English education; parents want the straight-for-English model only; and many South African children speak many languages and therefore do not need mother-tongue education (Heugh, 2000:12-30). Kamwangamalu (2000: 6) cites resistance to mother-tongue instruction, ambivalent clauses in the policy, and the tentative language in which the policy is framed as the main reasons behind its non-implementation.

1.3 Background of the Problem

A brief synopsis of the history of language-in-education policy is presented in order to contextualize the language question in South Africa and to show how language has been used as a political tool to perpetuate the agendas of past governments. Makalela (2005) divides the history of language-in-education policy in South Africa into seven epochs, namely:

- the pre-colonial era;
- the arrival of the Dutch in 1652;
- the invasion of English colonizers in 1795;
- the Dutch-English bilingual system from 1910-1925;
- the rise of Afrikaans with apartheid policies in 1948;
- the 1976 Soweto student uprising;
- the multilingual policy provisions of 1997.

For the purposes of this study, the history of language-in-education policy has been divided into two broad phases, the apartheid era and the post-apartheid era. My discussion concentrates mainly on language-in-education policy implementation during the post-apartheid period in South Africa.

1.3.1 Medium-of-Instruction Policies during the Apartheid Era

A review of the historical background of the medium-of-instruction policies in South Africa reveals that after the National Party came into power in 1948, language was used as a tool to entrench inequality through its segregationist policies (Kamwangamalu, 2000). Through the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which was formulated to protect white interests, white students had access to languages of power and privilege, i.e. English and Afrikaans, throughout the school system, at university, and in the workplace. Black learners, on the other hand, were initially taught in their mother–tongue and then in English and Afrikaans, thus ensuring the delivery of a cognitively impoverished education for blacks and a culture of mediocrity and under-achievement in black schools (Kamwangamalu, 2000). The June 1976 student revolt in South Africa was a reaction to the realization that language policy in black education was legislated to promote inequality. Kamwangamalu maintains that the 1976 uprising had the following consequences for language policy planning and implementation. The status of English was boosted and was perceived as a

language of liberation in the black community; Afrikaans was discontinued as a medium of instruction in black education, but African languages continued to be stigmatized. Afrikaans and mother-tongue instruction in African schools were restricted to the primary school level and black learners were no longer required to meet the neo-colonialist requirement that they should obtain a pass in both English and Afrikaans before they could qualify for a Matric certificate (Alexander, 1989:25).

1.3.2 Medium-of-Instruction Policy in Post-Apartheid South Africa

The post-apartheid period in South Africa was marked by the crafting of legislation aimed at overhauling a discriminatory and fragmented education system. The policies that were designed to usher in a quality education system, founded on equity, the redress of inequality, non-racialism and non-sexism, included the Schools Act of 1996, the 1997 Language-in-Education Policy, and Curriculum 2005. The aims of the South African Language-in-Education Policy are stated (National Department of Education, Language-in-Education Policy, 1997:4-5) as follows:

- to promote full participation in society and the economy through equitable and meaningful access to education;
- to pursue the language policy most supportive of general conceptual growth among learners and hence to establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education;
- to promote and develop all the official languages;
- to support the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners or used by communities in South Africa, including languages used for religious purposes, languages which are important for international trade and communication, and South African Sign Language, as well as Alternative and Augmentive Communication;
- to counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home languages and languages of learning and teaching;
- to develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages.

Heugh (2000:4) commends the South African government for the progressive thinking underlying the crafting of a post-apartheid medium of instruction policy that is "based on non-discriminatory language use and guarantees the best possible access to another language as it is based on a

bilingual/multilingual framework." According to Heugh, the multilingual LIE policy takes into account the socio-linguistic profile of the country, guarantees mother-tongue instruction for every learner, creates an opportunity for a learner to add a second or even a third language to his/her existing linguistic repertoire, and grants rights to pupils and parents, through School Governing Bodies (SGBs), to decide on media of instruction in schools. In practice, SGBs in African schools choose English as an MOI, not as a sign of resistance to mother-tongue education but because of negative attitudes towards Afrikaans and the fact that English is a resource-rich language (Makalela, 2005).

1.3.3 A Critique of the 1997 Multilingual LIE

A major criticism of the 1997 multilingual LIE policy is that it is based on a faulty colonial notion of multilingualism, one which puts artificial linguistic boundaries for otherwise related and mutually-intelligible and comprehensible South African indigenous languages (Makalela, 2005). Makalela posits that multilingualism is an artificial construct which came about when missionaries, who were agents for perpetuating colonialism through evangelism in Africa, put the African languages (in which they were not themselves proficient) in writing. This resulted in the balkanization of African language varieties and the emergence of the nine African languages which formed the basis of the Bantustan homelands. These nine local/indigenous languages are sePedi, xiTsonga, tshiVenda, siSwati, isiZulu, seTswana, seSotho, isiNdebele, and isiXhosa. The current multilingual LIE policy could easily have resulted in linguistic reform had it not been based on the faulty notion that there are nine African languages in South Africa, which like English and Afrikaans are now official languages. Makalela proposes a language harmonization model which reconsiders the notion of multilingualism by harmonizing cognate (mutually intelligible and comprehensible) African languages. The nine local languages could be grouped as follows:

A. Si language varieties (isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, siSwati)
B. Se language varieties (sePedi, SeTswana, seSotho).

According to Makalela (2005) and Prah (2005), a reduction in the number of local/indigenous languages would promote the use of African languages and lead to cost-effective materials development which could be shared across similar language varieties as shown above. This would

ensure that all African education could be offered in local languages from primary school to tertiary level, as has been the case for the Greeks, French, Germans, Chinese, Koreans, etc. Other languages, including colonial languages, could be offered as subjects to facilitate multilingualism (Prah, 2005: 35-36).

In South Africa, English continues to play a dominant role in education, with African languages being used as media of instruction at early primary school level only. This state of affairs does not reflect the spirit of the multilingual policy; instead, it undermines it. The proposed early introduction to English as a subject from Grade 1, when currently it is offered from Grade 4 onwards (Daily Dispatch, 16 January 2010), clearly indicates a move towards an English-only policy.

Webb (2006:9) states that the current language planning policies in South Africa show the following negative signs: too little effective language planning research and coordination of existing research projects, increasing institutional mono-lingualism, low level of public debate on medium-of-instruction (MOI), which is characterized by speculation and is ideological in nature, continued emotional resistance to indigenous languages, limited support for multilingualism at senior government level, and the lack of public support for multilingualism by public leaders. The positive signs are that the government has established the legal infrastructure for language planning and has shown willingness to involve language-planning experts in the discussions on language issues. Webb's analysis of language planning practices in South Africa indicates that, although a commendable LIE policy framework is in place, implementation is still lagging behind.

It is against the background sketched above that the complexity of language planning in the South African education system should be understood. This study aims at making a contribution to the existing body of knowledge on language-in-education by exploring how teachers in a post-colonial African context interpret and implement language policies in their classrooms. The historical background given above clearly indicates that the language question in the South African education system remains a complex and controversial issue, even after the promulgation of a multilingual language-in-education policy.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Language policy enactment at classroom level warrants investigation because the LOLT, which is a second language for black pupils, is viewed as a major factor behind the poor Matric results of black learners in South Africa (Daily Dispatch report, 12 January 2010). International studies such as TIMMS also cite English as a major contributory factor in learner achievement in schools where a second language (L2) is utilized as an LOLT (Reddy, 2006). In my research, I wanted to establish how teachers exercise their agency with regard to language policy implementation in a developing country, particularly in the light of the provisions of the 1997 language-in-education policy. This study contributes to the debate on the language question in education by giving teachers' perspectives on this complex and controversial issue.

In post-colonial African countries, the medium-of-instruction policy has always been a highly contested issue. Many post-colonial African governments have maintained the status quo and continued using colonial languages as official languages. Bamgbose (2004) refers to this phenomenon as "policy maintenance." The colonial experience shaped and defined language policy development in post-colonial states, and the colonial practice of using African languages only in the primary school phase was maintained. At secondary and tertiary levels, colonial languages continue to be used as media of instruction. The reasons often advanced for maintaining English as LOLT at secondary school level are that there is a lack of terminology in the vernacular at post-school level, that African languages are not used as LOLT, that the multiplicity of African languages makes it impossible to use them as LOLT, and that globalization puts a high premium on English (Bamgbose, 2004).

Prah (2005) and Makalela (2005) assert that in post-colonial countries, colonial languages were positioned as languages of prestige whilst African languages remained devalued. Speakers of African languages perceived them as incapable of providing access to employment opportunities in the job market (Zotwana in Alexander, 1989:77). "Policy shift", which involves either increasing or decreasing the use of African languages in education, is evident in some countries (Bamgbose, 2004). In South Africa, for example, there is a decrease in the number of years in which the mother tongue is used as MOI in the primary school section, though the shift towards

English only has not improved academic achievement in the school system. The reduced exposure to LI instruction puts black learners at a disadvantage because they switch to a new LOLT without having fully acquired their LI. The LI which is spoken in the wider community would have helped learners make sense of what they were learning at school, and resulted in improved motivation and achievement levels.

Firstly, the crux of the language question is that research indicates that the current language-in-education policy, which guarantees the use of all the official languages as LOLT, is not being implemented or is only partially implemented (Brock-Utne, 2001). For example, a major finding of the present study, which corroborates Brock-Utne's findings, is that in rural and township schools code-switching and code-mixing are employed extensively for teaching and learning, whereas in desegregated schools an English-only policy is pursued. In practice, indigenous languages are not employed as fully-fledged media of instruction, as was envisaged in the 1997 multilingual LIE policy.

Secondly, small-scale research needs to be conducted in order to uncover how languages in South African high schools are employed to deliver the curriculum, particularly in the light of the provisions of the 1997 medium-of-instruction policy. This study contributes to the debate on the language question in education by giving teachers' perspectives on the issue.

Thirdly, the heated current debates on language-in-education policy reveal that language is a topical issue not only for policy makers, politicians and researchers but also for the wider South African community. Shortly after the publication of the 2009 Matric results, the National Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshega, remarked that poor English skills were the major factor in the disappointing 2009 Matric results and that earlier exposure to the language (i.e. English) would prepare pupils for the final examinations (Sunday Times report, 10 January 2010). The Minister's statements - "We still want schools to offer mother-tongue instruction, **but** (my emphasis) we want them to teach more English…Even if we all agree to use Zulu, as a language of instruction, it's going to catch up with learners at university, because universities don't use it as a language of learning…It (English) really disadvantages them (black learners) compared to kids who start in English and Afrikaans. It's a major issue…In the main it's a factor which also affects

our results" - demonstrate the extent to which the Department of Education (DOE) is not supporting the multilingual LIE policy of which it is a custodian. It fails to question the 'unassailable position of English' in the South African context, or to confront the complexity of the language question in black education, or the disastrous effect that this has had on the academic achievement of black learners. Responding to the Minister's press statement in the Daily Dispatch (January 12, 2010), Laura Miti, who is not against children learning their first language at school as a subject, maintains that the "crisis" needs to be addressed urgently because the Matric examination is set in English, and attaining a minimum standard of English proficiency should be a basic outcome of primary education. Contrary to her proposal, the early introduction of learners to an L2 can only disadvantage black children, since they will not have attained initial literacy in their first language. Miti argues in her column that "every child should attain the English language competency required for meaningful progression in the educational system." She maintains that there is no sense in romanticizing mother-tongue instruction if it compromises learners' literacy in the language of commerce and industry. Miti's statements capture the concerns of many black parents, particularly those who cannot afford to take their children to well-resourced schools which can support an English-only policy.

Although the 1997 multilingual language-in-education policy has been commended for taking into account the linguistic profile of the country (Heugh, 2000), it has been criticized by other scholars who view it as a continuation of the apartheid language policy (Alexander, 1989; Makalela, 2005). Alexander and Makalela suggest that the alternative would be to harmonize Nguni languages and use them in high-domain functions to prevent them from becoming extinct.

In this study, the aim was to get the perspective of high school teachers on the language issue, especially in recognizing that languages other than English and Afrikaans are capable of serving as official languages and media of instruction. The study examined teachers' interpretation and implementation of MOI policies and the reasons behind their choice of language of instruction. This was done using a questionnaire, classroom observations and focused interviews. The impact of policies on classroom language practices needs to be tested or confirmed through research in order to contribute to theory-building and influence classroom practice.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to obtain a micro-perspective view of how South African teachers understand, interpret and implement the current language-in-education policies in their classrooms. This entailed establishing the "agency, resistance, and appropriation often present in micro socio-political processes" (Deng & Gopinathan, 2006:617). Deng et al., define a micro-perspective as "the lived culture and everyday experience of students, teachers, schools and communities." The present study investigated current classroom language practice in order to obtain a micro-perspective view of how high school teachers make sense of the medium of instruction policies in the light of the debates on language of instruction.

1.6 Over-arching Aim

The overall aim of the research project is to contribute to the knowledge of LIE policy and practice in the South African education context and also to improve LIE policy implementation.

1.7 Research Objectives

The study objectives were:

- To provide teachers from different school contexts an opportunity to reflect upon their classroom language practices and their effects on teaching and learning.
- To raise the awareness of the study participants about the centrality of language in education.
- To explain, analyse and record partici pants' responses to questions relating to their understanding, interpretation and implementation of MOI policy and their classroom language practices.
- To explore the reasons behind the teachers' choices of medium/media of instruction.
- To gain a deeper understanding of language policy implementation in different school contexts by examining the qualitative and quantitative findings of the mixed methods study.
- To make recommendations on LIE policy implementation on the basis of the research findings.

1.8 Research Questions

This study aimed at establishing possible answers to the following main research questions:

1. How do teachers understand and interpret medium-of-instruction (MOI) policies within their practice?
2. How do teachers implement medium-of-instruction policies (MOI) in their classrooms?
3. Why do teachers interpret the policies in the ways they do?

The following are sub-questions underlying the main research questions:

1) Are there any similarities and differences in the manner in which teachers in rural and urban-based schools understand and implement medium-of-instruction policies in practice?
2) Are there different MOI implementation patterns within each context?
3) Do subject and language teachers understand and implement MOI policies in the same manner?
4) What are the observed patterns of classroom interaction in both rural and urban schools?
5) Is teaching aligned with assessment practices with regard to language use?
6) Do teacher characteristics influence language policy implementation?

1.9 Rationale of Theoretical Framework

This research draws on the theory of linguistic imperialism which Phillipson (1992) regards as a distinct type of imperialism. Linguistic imperialism provides cogent explanations for the continued 'uncritical acceptance' of English as the only language that can be used in high-domain functions such as education, in developing countries. The teachers' implementation, non-implementation or partial implementation of MOI policies and the effects thereof are also explained in relation to qualification analysis and Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism.

The study also employed qualification analysis of the different skills for which the South African education system, in particular high school education, prepares its graduates, through its curriculum and the language(s) in which it is delivered. By subjecting the lesson transcripts to qualification analysis and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, I traced patterns of classroom interaction both between teachers and learners and amongst the learners themselves, using these to determine how the choice of language of instruction enabled or constrained the learners.

1.10 Research Assumptions

I undertook this study with the following assumptions in mind:

1) At school level, medium-of-instruction policies are derived from the national policy on medium-of-instruction and take into account school contextual factors such as teacher and learner linguistic profiles, the subject being offered, and the academic support learners need in order to master the curriculum on offer.

2) Teachers are conversant with the provisions of the 1997 LIE policy and are exercising their agency by making some adjustments to LIE policy, as dictated by the circumstances or contexts in which they teach.

3) Teachers at school level implement language policy in the same manner as during the apartheid era, in both rural and urban contexts, because they have to adhere to the provisions of their school language policies.

1.11 Definition of Terms/Concepts

In this sub-section, concepts which form the basis of the theoretical framework are explained in relation to the study. Phillipson (1992: 38) states that terminology used in the analysis of language and imperialism is ideologically loaded and tends to reinforce Eurocentric myths and stereotypes.

1) Mother tongue/ Home language/ First language

    These three concepts are often used interchangeably. The defining criteria of `mother-tongue' are origin, function, competence, self-identification, and identification by others (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984 a, in Phillipson, 1992:39). 'Mother–tongue' also refers to the language of the biological mother, or father, or a local vernacular language (Calvert, 1987, in Phillipson, 1992 p. 39). In the present study, the three terms shall refer to the language(s) spoken both in the child's home environment and in the wider community.

2) Second language refers to any language that one learns or acquires after first language acquisition

3) 'Hegemony' refers to dominant ideas that we take for granted (Phillipson, 1992:72). It is associated with "some notion of contrivance, of deliberate manipulation, and at the same time of having an identifiable source, of being devised to forward or protect a particular

interest" (Phillipson, 1992:73). According to Williams (1977:112-3, in Phillipson, 1992:74), hegemony is not a simple matter of manipulation or indoctrination; it has to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified, just as it is continually resisted, limited, altered, and challenged by pressures not all its own.

4) English linguistic hegemony refers to "the explicit and implicit values, beliefs, purposes and activities…which contribute to the maintenance of English as a dominant language" (Phillipson, 1992: 73).

5) Legitimation refers to advocacy for a particular language in the form of explicit statements or arguments that are aimed at promoting a particular language policy (Phillipson, 1992:74).

6) Imperialism is defined as a political system in which one group dominates another from an imperial centre for economic and other reasons; from an economic point of view, it refers to the penetration and control of markets and raw materials of the colonized by powerful countries with the aim of making profits.

7) Linguicism refers to ideologies and structures where language is the means for effecting or maintaining an unequal allocation of power and resources (Phillipson, 1992:55). It involves attributing desirable characteristics to a language in order to either include or exclude certain people (Phillipson, 1992: 55).

8) English linguistic imperialism, which is a sub-type of linguicism, means promoting English by attributing to it favourable characteristics and devaluing other languages for the purposes of exclusion and inclusion. Phillipson's working definition (1992:47) of English linguistic imperialism is that the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and by continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.

9) Linguistic imperialism is a skewed way of thinking, evident when people are dominated by another language to the extent that they sincerely believe that they can only use that language for high-domain functions such as education (Ansre, 1979:12-13, in Phillipson, 1992:57).

1.12 Justification of the Study

The topic justifies research for the following reasons:

Firstly, in most economically advanced countries such as the South East Asian countries, Europe, and the United States of America, the home/first language (L1) is employed throughout the school system and beyond, and a language of wider communication is offered as a subject. South East Asian countries overhauled their education systems without giving up their culture and languages, and although they adopted education systems that favoured the teaching of Science and Technology, they kept out Western cultural values (Ouedraogo, 2000:48). This is not the case in most post-colonial states. Some African states, for example South Africa, Namibia and Uganda, favour the use of African languages as media of instruction; however, in practice they are not implementing their medium of instruction policies (Brock-Utne, 2001:129). I wanted to establish how teachers exercise their agency with regard to language policy implementation in a developing country such as South Africa, which has experienced colonialism and apartheid.

Secondly, the positions taken by scholars on the controversial and complex question of medium-of-instruction in post-colonial states have to be verified through research.

Thirdly, teachers are a resource that could influence policy implementation favourably or unfavourably through the manner in which they exercise their agency, regardless of how policy makers expect them to act out their roles. Their classroom practice could offer a micro-perspective on medium-of-instruction (MOI) policy implementation in a variety of socio-linguistic contexts.

Fourthly, Heugh (2000:3) argues that the 1997 policy on medium-of-instruction is silent on how teachers should implement this policy. As a consequence of this omission, teachers have had to take decisions on how to appropriate the policy, in spite of the fact that they have never had bilingual/multilingual training. It was envisaged that this study would steer the medium of instruction debate towards implementation issues, since the current medium-of-instruction policy is relatively untested. Emergent classroom-based research is needed to help policy makers

understand how medium-of-instruction policies constrain or enable teachers in their practice. On the basis of evidence gathered, MOI policies could be fine-tuned when the need arises.

Lastly, the intellectual justification for carrying out this study is that teachers' language practices have a bearing on factors such as lesson delivery, teacher effectiveness, student participation, learner achievement, retention rates, and throughput rates. There was therefore a need for teachers' language practices to be examined critically and understood in relation to policy provisions on the medium of instruction.

1.13 Research Approach

This research takes the form of a mixed methods approach and utilizes both quantitative and qualitative tools to address the research questions on the complex phenomenon of language of instruction. In a mixed methods study, numerical and text data are collected and analysed in order to provide a deeper and comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation (Maree, 2007). Maree adds that when qualitative and quantitative methods are used together, they complement each other and provide a more elaborate approach to the research problem (Maree, 2007:261). A questionnaire, classroom observations and focused interviews were employed in this study to collect data that would give possible answers to the three research questions on teachers' understanding, interpretation and implementation of MOI policies, and the reasons behind their choice/s of language of instruction.

1.14 Limitations of the Study

This small-scale study was confined to a few selected high schools in the Mthatha District. Even in the selected schools, only a small percentage of the staff complement, those offering Business Economics/Economics, History, English and Geography, took part in the study. However, valuable lessons can be drawn for contexts similar to the one in which the study took place.

1.15 Organisation and Overview of the Study

The study comprises five chapters.

Chapter 1: introduces the inquiry by focusing on the historical background and context of the problem, the purpose of the study, statement of the problem, research aims and objectives,

research questions, rationale of the theoretical framework, research assumptions, the research approach and limitations of the study, overview and organization of the study, and conclusion.

Chapter 2: positions the study by examining empirical research on the subject of medium-of-instruction (MOI) and identifies gaps, silences and contradictions in the selected studies. It also introduces the theoretical framework and justifies the need for the kind of research conducted.

Chapter 3: presents the research design and framework for the study. It discusses and justifies sampling procedures, the choice of data collection tools, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4: gives an evaluation of the research findings and an account of how the data from the different sources were collected, organized and analysed. The findings are discussed, and are related to the literature review, theoretical and conceptual framework, and the three research questions.

Chapter 5: presents the summary, deductions, findings and conclusions, recommendations, and the study's contribution to the expansion of knowledge in the field of medium-of-instruction policy implementation in post-colonial African states.

1.16 Conclusion

Language policy development and implementation in post–colonial states has always been an emotive topic because of the history that these countries shared with their colonizers. Many of them modelled their language policies after those of their colonizers. South Africa has tried, at least at the level of LIE policy development, to break away from the legacy of colonialism by crafting a multilingual LIE policy. The present study investigates the uptake and implementation of MOI policy from the teachers' perspective.