

EXPERIENCES OF JUNIOR PRIMARY TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IN
OSHINDONGA MEDIUM MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS IN THE KHOMAS
EDUCATIONAL REGION

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Abstract

Multilingual learners' success is greatly reliant on the medium of instruction (MoI) in a multilingual classroom where students come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. In addition, the MoI they select can have an immense impact on their academic performance, cognitive growth, and overall learning experience. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners in an Oshindonga medium multilingual classroom in Namibia's Khomas educational region. The study employed interviews, observations, and focus group discussions to collect data.

The data revealed both positive and negative experiences adopting Oshindonga as an instructional medium in a classroom where not all children are Oshindonga native speakers. Moreover, the study findings indicated that teaching native speakers Oshindonga has been observed to enhance academic performance, increase motivation and engagement, and strengthen cultural identity. Furthermore, the results from the study indicated linguistic misperception in learners from minority language families who were/are studying in the Oshindonga medium class.

The study further revealed several problems, including a lack of resources, insufficient teacher training in mother tongue, weak language policies, minimal community involvement, and poor monitoring and assessment of educational practices. Therefore, the study recommended that teachers and policymakers engage to create an inclusive and successful learning environment by acknowledging and embracing the challenges, opportunities and effective teaching and learning strategies suitable in a multilingual classroom employing Oshindonga as the medium of instruction.

KEYWORDS: Multilingual learners; Academic performance; Language policy; Teacher training; Inclusive education; Cultural identity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EMI	English Medium Instruction
KkG	Khoekhoegowab
MT	Mother Tongue/ First Language
L2	Second language
LiEP	Language-in-Education Policy
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education, Art and Culture
MoI	Medium of Instruction
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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DEDICATION

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DECLARATIONS

I, Eveline Ngondumbo Ndatilifa, hereby declare that the work contained in the thesis , entitled, “EXPERIENCES OF JUNIOR PRIMARY TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IN AN OSHINDONGA MEDIUM MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM: IN KHOMAS EDUCATIONAL REGION”, is a true reflection of my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or part submitted it at any university or other higher education institution for the award of a degree.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

In the realm of primary education, the classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of both teachers and learners (Amaro, M. 2024). One such unique setting is the monolingual (Oshindonga) medium-multilingual classroom, where the dominant language of instruction is distinct from the diverse languages spoken by the learners. In this context, Junior Primary teachers experience multifaceted challenges as they navigate the complexities of imparting knowledge and fostering a supportive learning atmosphere. Simultaneously, young learners encounter a dynamic linguistic landscape, where they must contend with the acquisition of both the target language and their native languages, the medium of instruction so that they comprehend the content of learning, while also developing essential academic skills.

Thus, understanding the experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners in a monolingual (Oshindonga) medium multilingual classroom is of paramount importance, as it accentuates the intricate interplay between language, education, and socio-cultural variables. This study aims to explore the multifaceted dynamics at play in such classrooms, exploring the experiences, perspectives, and strategies employed by teachers and learners. By examining these intricate interactions, valuable insights can be gained into the challenges faced, the opportunities harnessed, and the impact on both teaching practices and learner-learning outcomes. Ultimately, this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on multilingual education and inform the development of effective pedagogical approaches that cater to the diverse linguistic needs of learners in monolingual (Oshindonga) medium multilingual classrooms.

1.1 Background of the study

In various Sub-Saharan African nations, English is used as the medium of instruction at various educational levels, including high school and primary education. This is observed in nations such as Zambia, Botswana, Nigeria, Namibia, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Malawi (Nel, C. & Ssentanda, M. 2023). English is perceived as a safe language in these multilingual countries because it "does not favour any specific ethnic group; though, it disadvantages everyone equally both socioeconomically and politically" (Kirkpatrick, A. 2018)

Due to the country's colonial history, the focus on implementing Language-in-Education (LiEP) policies has often helped unite its people in the period after colonial rule, with language selection seen as a key method of achieving this (Kavhura, M. 2018). Long before the Europeans arrived in Southwest Africa (now Namibia) the land contained 30 different indigenous languages until the Germans and other immigrants arrived (Vender, 2022). Vender (2022) further opined that invaders typically imposed their language on the native populations and forbade them from using their languages. Moreover, native languages were occasionally systematically outlawed by colonialist languages immediately and foreign languages were to replace their native languages.

At independence in 1990, Namibia inherited a society characterised by a history of racial discrimination, skin colour and origin. The quality of education provision and social status ascribed to groups largely reflected this inheritance (Asmal, 2000). This implies that at independence, Namibia experienced the challenge of teaching and learning the increasingly multilingual and multicultural classrooms, especially in the urban areas of the Khomas Region. Most teachers experience the challenge of multilingualism and multiculturalism in densely populated schools. This literature is

significant to this study because it outlines the history of a multicultural society in which Namibia operates.

The Language Policy for Schools in Namibia (2003) emphasizes that individuals in a multicultural society must maintain their cultural identity and traditional norms. It states that a language can only fully develop if it adapts to the influences of a dynamic society. Moreover, the policy advocates for the strengthening of indigenous languages through linguistic development, including assimilation, accommodation, and the creation of new vocabulary. Therefore, it calls for the promotion of mother tongue use through a nationwide language-in-education policy and the elevation of the status of native languages across all sectors in Namibia (p. 2).

Lemmer et al. (2006) challenge that, multilingualism is not unique in Africa and elsewhere because many societies throughout the world reflect the multilingual and multicultural communities that they serve but have had diverse ways of responding to these realities. Policymakers in Namibia have found it challenging on how to engage with such diversity. Lemmer et al., (2006) emphasise that multilingualism is a concern globally and societies have become diverse because of various social and economic compression. Multilingualism-linguistic-diversity globalisation and political English, (2018) contend that Language overlap is a complex reality in schools, particularly in a multilingual and multicultural society. The English Language postulates that a multilingual society requires that people be prepared with language skills and learn to be sensitive to cultural differences.

UNESCO (2023) singled out that “the United States of America (USA) as one of the countries, experiencing the challenge of multilingualism”. In addition, the country contained many native (indigenous) languages, long before the European immigrants

arrived in the States. When the Italian, German, Dutch, French, Polish, Czechoslovakia, Irish, Welsh and many other immigrant groups arrived, there were already more than three hundred separate (native Indian) languages in the USA. Moreover, immigrants then brought with them a wide variety of languages resulting in a multilingual as well as Multicultural state (Baker, 2007). The USA however tolerated the diversity, and different languages were taught in both private and public schools around the 20th century up until 1919 when a resolution was passed by the USA Bureau of Education that all schools be directed in the English language (Baker, 2007). Consequently, the multilingualism multiplied putting pressure on education policymakers on how to engage with such diversities.

In Africa, most of the inhabitants are multilingual and many nations have accepted multilingual education. Namibia like any other African country experience multilingualism in its classroom and this has become an immense challenge in the education system. With diversified multiculturalism and multilingualism, Namibia considered it necessary to acknowledge and implement the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the Junior Primary phase from Grades 0-3 (Language Policy, 2003). The Language Policy for schools in Namibia (2003) contend that the mother tongue or a predominant local language shall be the medium of instruction (MoI) throughout the Junior Primary phase (Grades 0 – 3), in this case the Oshindonga is the predominant local language was viewed as a fashionable practice to ensure the inclusiveness in the multilingual classrooms. One objective of the language policy for schools in Namibia is to unite the Namibian inhabitants from different tribal groups (Language Policy, 2003). The Language Policy (2003) also specified that Grade 4 would serve as the transitional year for switching to English as the medium of

instruction. The English medium of instruction will continue from Grade 5 until Grade 12, while English and Mother tongue will be offered as subjects from grade 1 to grade 12 (MEC, 1993; Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture [MBESC], 2003). Moreover, a strong mother tongue foundation leads to a profound comprehension of the curriculum, especially concept formation, literacy and numeracy development. Therefore, it is significant that children retain their first language when they commence schooling in an altered language. More importantly, Namibia contains 13 indigenous languages that are linguistically classified into three groups such as Bantu languages, Khoisan and Indo-European languages (Asanda and Simasiku (2019).

Kasanda and Simasiku (2019), stipulate that Bantu languages are a large family, which includes the Zambezi and Kavango languages, Oshiwambo and Otjiherero languages. The Khoisan are spoken in Western and Southern Namibia, whereas Indo-European languages include English, Afrikaans, and German. However, only fourteen school languages have standardised orthography and are used in schools (Mensah & Anthonissen, 2015). The languages include Afrikaans, German, English, Ju'hoansi, Khoekhoegowab, Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Otjiherero, Rukwangali, Rumanyo, Sestwana, Silozi, Thimbukushu and Namibian Sign Language (Language Policy, 2003).

Multilingualism is an active and distinct phenomenon in Namibian society (Murray, 2007). Learners derive from different backgrounds in Namibia and other countries with their different languages, behaviours, and cultures. Among learners from all those different language backgrounds, some might not understand the medium of instruction selected at a particular school. Sometimes learners are placed in a language stream different to their mother tongue, due to limited space and availability of language teachers in schools. This results in the interconnection of languages in a

multicultural classroom, which presents a challenge as to how best to integrate the knowledge of numerous languages into the teaching and learning classroom.

Makalela, (2015) and McKinney (2017) argue that the only manner to enhance learning in multilingual classrooms is to value and employ linguistic resources that learners bring to school. It is in this regard that the researcher sought to examine and document the experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners in Oshindonga medium multilingual classrooms. Similarly, some teachers experience the challenge of having to apply their mother tongue to deliver lessons when there are limited teaching and learning materials in schools in those local languages. Moreover, they often must translate the content from the English language to generate content in their mother tongue. A common challenge is to find an Oshikwanyama native teacher teaching in an Oshindonga class and vice-versa. This situation is a result of staffing needs, as there might be a scarcity of specific mother tongue teachers at a particular school or educational region. More importantly, this contributes to a series of problems in the Namibian education system (Maho, 1998). This study selected the Oshindonga language as a focus of exploring the junior primary teachers' and learners' experiences in its implementation as a medium of instruction in a multilingual classroom.

1.2 Statement of the problem

It is obvious that the change of linguistic practices in Namibian schools, particularly in urban areas has affected the effective implementation of teaching and learning, this is consistent with Lahdenpera and Sandstrom (2011) who postulate that many teachers experience insecurities when teaching in a diverse classroom.

However, Murray (2007) suggests that effective teaching and learning in the early years is best achieved if instruction is done in a language that children understand. While there could be advantages of diversity in a multilingual classroom, there are a myriad of challenges in accommodating children from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in one classroom. The common situation in Namibian schools is that children from different cultural and language backgrounds are placed in one classroom and one mother tongue (which is in most cases not every learner's mother tongue) is employed to teach these learners.

Furthermore, the teacher in the multilingual classroom might also not possess linguistic competence in the different mother tongues of the learners in his or her classroom (Murray, 2007). This context poses various challenges in everyday teaching and learning. It is with these experiences that this study sought to examine and document as well as recommend best practices for teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom. The Oshindonga language medium of instruction classroom was employed as an example to examine the challenges faced by teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom. Therefore, the researcher considered it significant to investigate the experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners in an Oshindonga medium of instruction in a multilingual classroom so that best practices for teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom can be generated.

1.3 Research questions of the study

The study adopted the research questions:

- 1.3.1 What are the experiences of teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom of Oshindonga as a medium of instruction?
- 1.3.2 What are the challenges experienced by teachers and learners in teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom?

1.3.3 What strategies do Junior Primary teachers and learners employ to overcome challenges?

1.3.4 What support do Junior Primary teachers and learners require to enhance multilingual teaching and learning?

1.4 Significance of the study

A study of this nature is important as it will outline experiences lived by teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom and recommend effective strategies. Junior Primary school teachers can apply the recommended strategies to overcome challenges they encounter in their multilingual classrooms. This will benefit Junior Primary school teachers, learners and parents in Namibia who experience this challenge daily. Equally important, the study has the potential to provide recommendations to the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture regarding the implementation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in a multilingual classroom.

This study will also inform the policymakers to advance with the changing circumstances and maintain excellence. Consequently, educators will make a conducive and appropriate learning environment that meets the needs of learners from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. School managers and teachers of diverse classrooms will benefit from this study because it will assist teachers in providing learners with experiences through which they can develop a wide range of competencies that will prepare them for their livelihood as well as interacting in multicultural settings (Kasanda & Simasiku, 2019). Both learners and teachers will recognise the relationship between education, cultural diversity, and multilingualism.

In addition, the study will assist in developing a strategic framework for matters regarding diversity in Namibia. The study contributes to the current literature on teachers' participation with the official Language in Education Policy (LiEP) and knowledge about the usage of native languages and English in education in the post-colonial medium of instruction contexts (Kavhura, 2018).

1.5 Limitations of the study

The first limitation was that the study sample was small. A case study does not provide an in-depth comprehension of the phenomenon under study, as it cannot be generalised to the larger population. Secondly, the study focuses only on classrooms where Oshindonga is applied as the medium of instruction and may, thus, not offer a balanced view of challenges experienced with other languages in multilingual classrooms in Namibia. Moreover, the age of the learners in the junior primary may limit the collection of data as they may be too shy to speak out about the challenges they face during class, especially the non-Oshindonga speaking learners.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

The research participants were limited to Junior Primary teachers and learners at selected schools in the Khomas educational region. These schools only included those that offer Oshindonga as a medium of instruction to children from different language backgrounds.

1.7. Definition of terms

Multilingualism: refers to the ability to use more than one language or competence in several languages. Multilinguals are people who can use more than two languages for communication (Clyne, 2017).

Monolingual: is the speaking or writing of one language text or conversation (Oxford, 2022). Therefore, in this study, the term monolingual refers to the ability to speak only one language.

Bilingual: refers to a person who is fluent in two languages, it can be in the form of text or conversation conducted in two languages or speech community.

Culture: has various definitions from various perspectives. In this study, culture is seen as a blend of important and interconnected elements, all of which imply the teaching and learning process. Culture is therefore the process of social and human interactions as well as an embracement body of knowledge (Lemmer, Meier and Van Wyk, 2006).

Multicultural Education: Multicultural Education is referred to as the transferring of the recognition of our culturally pluralistic society into our education system (Lemmer, et. al, 2006). Moreover, multicultural education is the operationalising of the education system in such a manner that it suitably and rightfully includes all racial and cultural groups (Lemmer, et. al, 2006).

Multicultural Education is characterised as an integration of ideas and concepts that all students regardless of their gender and social class and their ethnic, racial or cultural background should have an equal opportunity to learn in schools (Banks & Banks ,1997). Hernandez (1989) perceives every teacher and learner as a unique and cultural being who brings to the classroom a distinct set of beliefs, values, experiences, attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions. The definition of multicultural education is significant to this study because of its consistency in the experiences of teachers and learners in a diverse multilingual classroom.

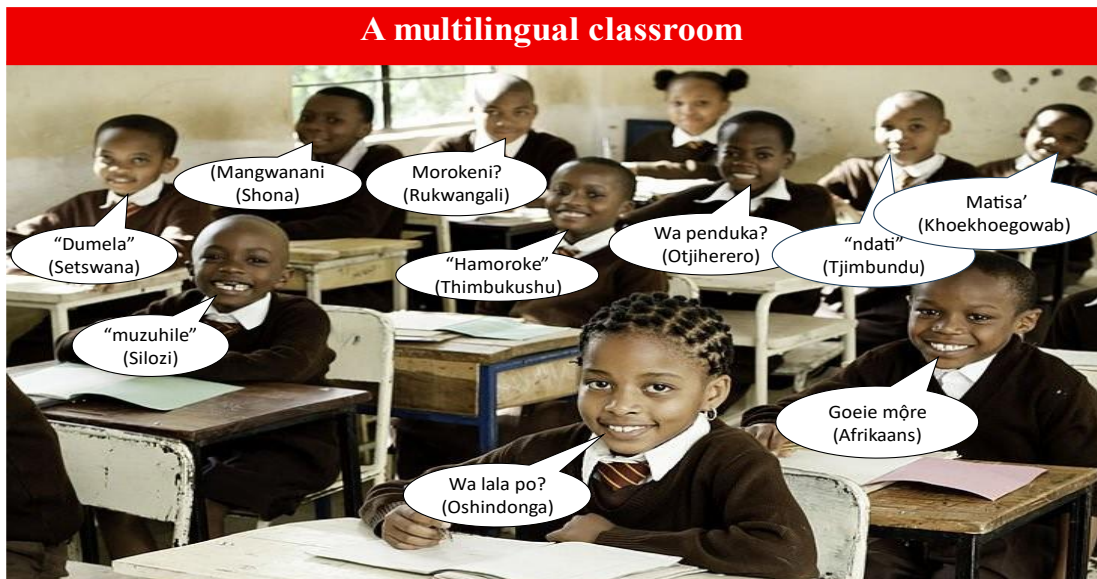


Figure1: A multilingual classroom

Figure 1 shows a vibrant, inclusive classroom where linguistic diversity is celebrated. Learners come from various linguistic backgrounds. Each morning begins with a culturally affirming ritual in which learners greet one another in their home languages as shown in the figure above.

Mother Tongue (L1): Refers to a language that someone has been exposed to and began to acquire since birth.

Second language (L2): This is defined as a language that is taught and acquired in a context this is a language that is acquired and/or taught in addition to the language acquired at birth. (Chana, Gilhooly, Lyn, Manan & Soorom, 2017). In this study, English is seen as a Second Language by many learners in Namibian schools.

Foreign Language (FL): This is a language taught in a context where there are no official domains (Channa, Gilhooly, Lynn, Manan & Soorom, 2017).

1.8. Organisation of the study

The study explored the experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners in an Oshindonga medium multilingual classroom in the Khomas educational region. The thesis is divided into six chapters:

Chapter One is a synopsis of the historical background of Namibia's emergence and its development of language policy in response to the South African apartheid regime in a multilingual country. The chapter further outlined the educational background that has described how Namibian education was shaped by the colonial and apartheid policies. The chapter equally outlined the challenges faced by teachers and learners in a diverse medium of multilingual classrooms.

Chapter Two concentrate on the literature review, empirical studies related to this study and the concerns that reflect on the experiences of teachers and learners in the Oshindonga medium of instruction in a multilingual classroom in the Junior Primary phase is provided. The chapter further presents the theoretical framework and how it relates to the study.

Chapter Three narrates and validates the data-gathering method employed in this phenomenological qualitative research study. The chapter also outlines the research design, describes the population, the sample, and sampling procedures for selecting participants, data collection as well as data analysis procedures. It further describes the validity and dependability of the study.

Chapter Four presents' data, analyses, and interprets data from the field notes, and other interpretive data. Thematic analysis is explained including the identification of themes and categories. It further provides a description, analysis, and interpretation of the findings.

Chapter Five discusses the study's findings on the experiences of teaching and learning Oshindonga medium in a multilingual classroom and demonstrates how the investigation addressed the research questions and matched the findings to the current theory

Chapter Six summarises the key findings as derived from the literature review, which was directed administering in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and thematic analysis.

Conclusion

The chapter outlines the introduction, the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, significance, and limitations and delimitations of the study. The chapter further presented the organisation of the study. The next chapter reviews the related literature to the current study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed the literature to identify knowledge gaps in multilingual education research and indicated the relevance of this research to supplement new knowledge.

The review will be based on the following sections: the theoretical framework, experiences of teachers in multilingual as well as monolingual classrooms, strategies used by teachers in multilingual classrooms, teacher training for multilingual education, and the importance of learning in the mother tongue.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The study is underpinned by the social constructivist theory of Lev Vygotsky (1978). This theory assisted the researcher in addressing the research questions of the study. The development of the conceptual framework is equally influenced by the prominent theory.

2.2.1 Sociocultural and sociolinguistic perspectives on multilingual classrooms

In researching into the experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners within the Khomas Educational Region's Oshindonga multilingual classroom, it becomes imperative to underscore the pivotal role of sociocultural and sociolinguistic theory in elucidating the dynamics of language acquisition and usage. In this study, the sociocultural theory acts as the overarching theory as multilingualism accommodates learners from different cultural backgrounds who meet at school and in classrooms as social contexts. In the same vein, the sociolinguistic theory acts as the specific theory as multilingualism is an aspect of linguistics. Moreover, sociolinguistics as a branch of linguistics, provides a structured framework for the examination of language's social functions within diverse linguistic milieus (Chambers, 2017).

2.2.2 Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory: sociolinguistic inquiry primarily scrutinises the social dimensions of language utilisation, it inherently intersects with sociocultural theory, advocated by Vygotsky (1978) which explores into the broader nexus between cultural and social influences on cognitive development and educational processes. Sociocultural theory underscores the pivotal role of social interaction, cultural context, and the guidance of more knowledgeable others in shaping cognitive growth and linguistic proficiency (Kuzolin, 2004; Hedegaard & Flear, 2008; Sannino et al., 2009).

In multilingual educational settings, sociocultural theory provides valuable understandings into how language learning is influenced by social and cultural interactions. Moll, (1990) contend that language is a primary cultural mechanism that mediates cognitive development. In multilingual classrooms, learners bring diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds into the classroom, which can enrich the learning environment. In addition, educators can employ sociocultural theory to develop culturally responsive teaching strategies that recognise and value learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, this approach can create an inclusive learning environment that supports the cognitive and linguistic development of all students (Moll, 1990). This theory is then a rich field of study (umbrella) that explores the complex relationships between language and society. It studies how language varies and mutates across different social contexts, influenced by factors such as social identity, power relations, and cultural norms.

2.2.3 Sociolinguistic Theory

At its essence, the sociolinguistic theory is a rich field of study that explores into the complex relationships between language and society. It studies how language varies and mutates across different social contexts, influenced by factors such as social identity, power relations, and cultural norms. It emphasises the fluid interaction between language and societal structures, acknowledging the deep entrenchment of linguistic practices within established social norms, power dynamics, and cultural identities. Consequently, within the multilingual classroom domain, sociolinguistic theory emerges as an invaluable mechanism for comprehending the shaded intricacies of language acquisition and communication (Chambers, 2017).

Sociolinguistic theory, as elaborated by Chambers (2017), explores the intricate relationship between language and society, focusing on how social factors influence linguistic behaviours and variations. On the other hand, Coupland (2016) outlines how sociolinguistic theory fosters awareness of the interface between language and society and emphasising the importance of understanding language use in its social context. In the context of a **multilingual classroom**, sociolinguistic theory provides valuable insights into language acquisition and communication. It enables teachers understand how learners' linguistic backgrounds and social identities influence their learning processes and interactions. Mostly, sociolinguistic theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex ways in which language and society interact.

2.2.4 Integration of Theories

In the multilingual classroom context, the union of sociolinguistic and sociocultural paradigms presents a holistic framework through which to explore the educational experiences of both teachers and learners. Language acquisition and mastery, are not

solely dictated by linguistic structures, but profoundly influenced by a display of social interactions, cultural backgrounds, and pedagogical contexts (Chambers, 2017; Kuzolin, 2004; Hedegaard & Flear, 2008; Sannino et al., 2009).

Through the adoption of a sociolinguistic perspective, researchers can examine the intricate webs of language ideologies, policies, and attitudes that infuse the Oshindonga medium multilingual classroom. Furthermore, sociocultural theory provides invaluable guidance in investigating how interpersonal dynamics, collaborative learning environments, and teacher-student interactions contribute to language acquisition and cognitive development among learners (Chambers, 2017; Kuzolin, 2004; Hedegaard & Flear, 2008; Sannino et al., 2009).

In conclusion, the convergence of sociolinguistic and sociocultural perspectives offers a nuanced comprehension of the educational landscape within multilingual classrooms. By acknowledging the intricate interplay between language, culture, and cognition, educators are better equipped to design inclusive and effective teaching methodologies that cater to the linguistic diversity of their learners, thereby fostering enriching and meaningful learning experiences.

2.3 Experiences of Teachers in Multilingual Classrooms

This section reflects the experiences of monolingual teachers in multilingual classes. It examines the difficulties they experience, the techniques they employ to conquer language limitations, and the effect their experiences pose on teaching and learning results. This review provides insights into the specific views and considerations of monolingual teachers in multilingual educational contexts by synthesising pertinent literature.

Multilingual classrooms create unique challenges for monolingual teachers who may not share their learners' linguistic backgrounds. This research review examines the problems monolingual teachers encounter in multilingual classrooms, the techniques they employ, and the implications of their experiences on classroom dynamics and learners learning.

2.3.1 Teacher Experiences in Multilingual Classrooms

Research through a sociolinguistic perspective accentuates the complexities teachers navigate in multilingual settings. Teachers contend with issues of language dominance and equity, where learners' home languages may differ from the language of instruction. This can lead to challenges in ensuring all learners have access to grade-level content and can participate meaningfully in classroom discussions (Garcia, 2009). Furthermore, sociolinguistic research points to the potential for teacher bias towards students from dominant language backgrounds, unintentionally impacting participation and learning opportunities (Hornberger & Chick, 2001).

Sociocultural theory offers additional insights into teacher experiences. Teachers must act as cultural mediators, navigating diverse cultural backgrounds and learning styles within the classroom. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) becomes particularly relevant, where teachers scaffold learning by utilising learners' existing linguistic and cultural resources to bridge the gap towards new knowledge (Moll, 1992). However, research also underscores the challenges teachers experience in implementing effective scaffolding strategies within resource-constrained environments or with limited training in multilingual education (Flores & Parker, 2011).

By integrating these perspectives, a richer understanding of the multifaceted experiences of teachers in multilingual classrooms is gained. They are tasked with fostering language development, content knowledge acquisition, and intercultural understanding, all while navigating the complexities of social dynamics and power structures within the classroom.

2.4 The Influence of Monolingual Teachers' Experiences

Monolingual teachers who commit to comprehend their learners' languages and cultures can assist them form closer relationships. Building trust, rapport, and empathy in the classroom enable to create a conducive learning environment and improve student engagement and learning results (Smith, 2018; Johnson & Lee, 2020).

2.4.1 Self-reflection and pedagogical adaptation

Working in a multilingual classroom frequently prompts monolingual teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. To meet the diverse requirements of their learners, they may modify their teaching tactics, integrating more visuals, gestures, and customised learning.

When working in multilingual classrooms, monolingual teachers challenge several issues. They can overcome language barriers and create positive learning environments for their learners by employing various strategies such as collaborative learning (Cahyani et al., 2018), visual aids (Idris et al., 2020), professional development (Gartziarena & Villabona, 2022), and self-reflection (Hauks, 2016).

2.5 Challenges of A Monolingual Medium of Instruction (Moi) In A Multilingual Classroom

2.5.1. Communication and language barriers

The language impediment is the most significant challenge for monolingual teachers in multilingual classrooms. Learners' native language skills may impede efficient communication, comprehension, and educational delivery. Monolingual teachers frequently struggle to express complicated concepts and ensure learner comprehension (Smith, 2015).

2.5.2 Differentiated education

It might be challenging for monolingual teachers to adapt education to meet the various requirements of Learners with varying degrees of language ability. It is a difficult challenge to design and implement differentiated teaching strategies that respond to individual learners' requirements while retaining academic resilience (Brown, 2016; Tomlinson, 2017).

2.5.3 Cultural awareness and sensitivity

Monolingual teachers may struggle to comprehend and appreciate their learner's cultural diversity. This lack of cultural awareness can generate an inconducive learning environment for learners from diverse backgrounds. Learners may feel misunderstood, unheard, or even alienated if their cultural perspectives are not acknowledged or integrated (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Conversely, fostering cultural awareness in the classroom allows teachers to leverage the richness of their learners' experiences. By appreciating these differences, teachers can generate a more inclusive and engaging learning environment where all learners feel valued and empowered to participate. This can lead to a profound comprehension of the curriculum, stronger classroom relationships, and a more positive overall school experience (Hauks, 2016).

2.5.4 Medium of instruction policies, agreement, and execution

Cummins (2005) and Heugh's (2011) postulate that studies, MoI policies, agreements, execution, and how they expand geopolitical and socio-political agendas in multilingual settings complements another degree of complexity to the debate over MoI in the multilingual classroom. This is comparable to Aronin's (2015) argument that the movement of people, their goods, and their knowledge has contributed to the spread of not only the dominant language practices in education but also the diffusion of numerous other languages, resulting in complex and dynamic classroom language ecologies.

Walker and Benson (2013, p. 278) alluded that MoI is important for learner's cognitive development in addition to determining an individual's success or failure. The authors opined, "Learning is most successful when learners are taught and assessed in the language they understand and speak fluently." This is because the MoI plays a vital role in learning. This is consistent with the findings of the World Bank (2005, cited in Benson, 2016), which claimed that half of the children worldwide who attended school in monolingual MoIs in multilingual classrooms responded to teacher-centred strategies like chorus teaching, drilling, memorisation, and recalling language without understanding the meanings by remaining silent or passive. The latter influences how easily learners can acquire knowledge and how effective learners are taught in a classroom. Moreover, in a multilingual classroom, the prioritised language MoI exposes students to marginalisation, shame, and humiliation on an equal basis (Benson, 2016, p.3).

In support of that, Rasheed, Zeeshan, and Zaidi's (2017) conducted a study in Pakistan and indicated that the diversity of the classrooms makes it enormously challenging for English teachers to teach English in a multilingual situation, because they fear making

mistakes, the learners in the multilingual classroom also lack confidence in their ability to use the English language. According to the authors, programs are deemed ineffective in assisting learners in improving their English language skills. On a related note, Namuchwa (2007) investigated the difficulties of using English as MoI in Uganda's Senior Primary Phase, he noted that the teaching and learning process causes tension and predicaments for both teachers and learners. Namuchwa (2007) further discovered that the learners' academic performance was adversely impacted by using English as MoI. Based on the research, this researcher concluded that learning occurs more effectively when learners are taught in their mother tongue rather than a foreign language.

Similarly, the Government White Paper on Education in Uganda emphasises the importance of indigenous languages as the foundation of education by stating that they are essential for the dissemination of regional culture, values, norms, and the development of identity. Based on Mazrui's (1994) and Ngugi's (1986) studies, the research literature encompasses psychological theories related to language acquisition and development, as well as the progression of socio-cultural evolution.

It is believed that to promote the evolution of the truly indigenous way of life in a formerly colonised society, the learners' first language or familiar African local language should be developed as the language of instruction (Namuchwa 2007). In agreement, Phrah (2002a) revealed that there is a continuance of historical patterns of domination and over-lordship or colonialism when the language of instruction is different from the mother tongue in a classroom. This tempers with the researcher's curiosity regarding how instructors and educational senior officers feel about using Oshindonga as the MoI in a classroom with several languages.

2.5.5 Lack of teaching resources and difficulties in standardising the MoI

Tshotsho (2013), on the other hand, examined the availability of resources and the difficulties of regulating the MOI to deliver quality education. Thsotsho (2013) claimed that because there are so many varieties of a single language, it is frequently difficult to standardise the language employed for instruction. The lack of reading and audio resources that should assist and advance the learners' education in their mother tongues is another challenge. The researcher concurs with Tshotsho. After all, teachers sometimes adapt English resources by translating them into Oshindonga because most of the materials are written in English rather than Oshindonga. This may be time-consuming, and it can also place the teacher under immense stress and pressure and may delay effective teaching and learning. According to Pluddemann (2018), teachers must rely on locating or making their materials, and occasionally the constraint of time is so immense that they are obligated to use improper items like newspapers. There are also many teachers who are certified to instruct in the mother tongue. The researcher concurs with Pluddemann (2018) since these challenges are present in the Namibian setting rather than being foreign to it. These challenges include instructing learners or teachers in a language in which they are not fully fluent, both orally and in writing, as well as a dearth of teaching resources in local languages especially at the Junior Primary level.

As a result, Liyanage and Walter (2019) advise that the MoI policy be periodically evaluated and monitored in multilingual classrooms. During the creation and review of the MoI policy, teachers and stakeholders must be consulted. Despite this suggestion, there is still a critical need to comprehend teachers' and learners' experiences in the Oshindonga MoI's multilingual classroom, particularly in the Khomas region.

2.6 Significance of teacher training for multilingual teaching education

Shihako and Shaimemanya (2020) underscore the importance of training educators and teachers to effectively teach in diverse multilingual and multicultural settings. Their research accentuates the need for educators to be equipped with the necessary skills to teach in both the learners' mother tongue (L1) and the second language (L2), even if they are not native speakers of the L2.

Currently, teacher education programs in many parts of the world are structured around traditional disciplinary divisions, where teachers are trained as specialists in specific subjects. As a result, matters related to the education of emergent bilingual learners, whether they are language minorities learning a dominant language or language majorities acquiring additional languages, are often addressed by specialists in language or bilingual teaching (García & Kleifgen, 2010).

However, it is increasingly vital for all teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of the challenges encountered by emergent bilinguals and bilingual learners. This requires collaboration between teachers across different subject areas and specialists in bilingualism in education. It is vital to take note that this collaborative approach does not deny the need for specialised subject teachers. Rather, it suggests that teachers in the 21st century should be prepared to adopt a bilingual teaching approach that supports learners' development of additional languages alongside their academic growth (Adelman Reyes & Kleyn, 2010).

While initial teacher education typically occurs at tertiary institutions, it is essential to recognise that professional development is a lifelong process for teachers. This ongoing development is necessary due to the dynamic nature of society, changes in socio-political contexts, evolving conceptions of knowledge, advancements in

instructional methods and technology, and the ever-changing characteristics of learners themselves. Consequently, all teacher education programs, whether offered at tertiary institutions, teacher unions and centres, or local schools, should integrate a curriculum that fosters three key competencies: (a) understanding bilingual learners and their families, particularly those from language minority backgrounds; (b) knowledge of language and bilingualism/multilingualism; and (c) awareness of effective pedagogical strategies for multilingualism (García, O. & Lin, A. M. Y. 2023)

To effectively teach in the mother tongue, teachers must be equipped with appropriate methodology and pedagogy. They need to have a thorough command of the languages spoken by their learners and a profound comprehension of their sociocultural backgrounds. This enables them to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments that support both the academic and socio-emotional development of their learners (Alimi et al. 2020).

To strengthen their understanding of their students' languages and cultures, monolingual instructors may participate in professional development programmes or language learning courses (Gartziarena & Villabona, 2022). Learning basic language skills assists improve communication and cultural sensitivity, allowing for more effective classroom interactions.

2.7 Benefits of learning in the mother tongue

The government of Namibia has acknowledged the advantages of mother tongue education, according to the language policy for schools. To foster social interaction, promote national cohesion, and ensure the sustainability of culture, the policy placed a high priority on the requirement that every learner to learn the language of their

immediate environment, which is the mother tongue or vernacular spoken by every learner at home (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 1993).

Alimi et al. (2020), contend that

employing the native language as a medium of instruction in all subjects not only reverses a long-standing dismissive attitude toward native languages but also greatly strengthens the status and produces favourable outcomes in each learner's performance. Nolasco (2012) suggests similarly that by using and mastering their mother tongue in their local context, learners can cultivate the critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities necessary for lifelong learning. The mother tongue is important in influencing a person's ideas and emotions (Nishanthi, 2020). The author went on to state that having a mother tongue is important for a learner's overall development. For instance, a mother tongue enables a child connects to his or her culture, fosters cognitive growth, provides a solid foundation for learning other languages, and also has practical advantages (Vygotsky, 1978).

In addition, Jansen (2008) claimed that teaching children in their mother tongue has several advantages. In a language they can comprehend, learners learn more effectively and more quickly, preventing learning deficits. As learning becomes more engaging and fun, they feel more at home while they are in school. Learners typically exhibit more self-esteem, and parents prefer to participate more as they can easily assist with homework. With a low failure rate, mother tongue education increases good learner achievement.

Teaching in the learners' mother tongues, according to Jansen (2008), provides them with the notion that learning is not a stressful process. In line with the foregoing, Stoop (2017) claims that when learners commence school, it is a new social setting for them

and that learning in the mother language is crucial because it creates a connection from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

The RUFU Foundation (2022) however, asserts that there is not a single model that can accommodate all situations in which learners from all backgrounds can study and fulfil their learning requirements.

The foundation contemplates that the educational benefits will be higher the longer the learner can learn in and through his or her mother tongue. Another benefit is that learners tend to learn quickly and effectively in a language they are familiar with, they appreciate school more and feel more at home; The benefits of mother tongue instruction include: parents are more involved and easily able to assist their kids with their schoolwork; schools often perform better and report lower failure and dropout rates.

When learners are familiar with the language, schools often perform better and report lower failure and dropout rates. A mother tongue strengthens one's cultural and personal identity. An individual's understanding of themselves, their environment, and their past enhances their sense of individuality. The best means of preserving the culture is adopting the original indigenous languages. More people continue to identify with their roots and culture. Mother language builds awareness in the individual mind and develops self-confidence. According to Nishanthi (2020), an individual first hears their native language while in the womb, which subconsciously forms their perspectives and emotions. This early exposure forms the basis for a deep connection with family, society, culture, and identity. A strong foundation in one's native language fosters self-acceptance through an understanding of social origins and character in a natural and fundamental way. Furthermore, maintaining the various

languages spoken within a society nurtures cultural identity, which seamlessly influences other aspects of an individual's life (Nishanthi, 2020).

Languages play a crucial role in preserving culture. Often, direct translations fail to capture the true essence of the original language, making it essential to know the language to fully understand the culture. The mother tongue helps individuals stay connected to their culture and roots. Research has shown that cognitive and intellectual development is faster in those fluent in their mother tongue. Additionally, learners educated in their mother tongue tend to achieve higher educational success compared to those taught in a different language (Nishanthi, 2020).

Furthermore, the mother tongue makes learning and acquiring new languages easier. Long-term gains in school success and closing the achievement gap between migrant and native-born children; greater gains in children's self-assurance, cultural awareness, and pride in their heritage; and longer-term gains in expanding career options. Similarly, McMillan and Rivers (2011) alluded that, L1 can improve cognition, communication, and social skills in language classrooms. Anton and Dicomillo (1999) also supported the latter by stating that, using L1 helps learners in forming friendly, cooperative relationships among peers. In line with this ongoing discussion in the field, Carless (2008) makes the following argument: "Use of learners' native language can serve a humanistic and learner-centred strategy, with the ability to boost learner learning".

2.8 Strategies used by teachers in multilingual classrooms

To offer all learners equal opportunities to learn and display their learning, multilingual education requires a diversity of teaching techniques. The middle school teachers in Florida who participated in the Allison and Rehm (2007) study deemed

four of the ten activities and methods to be the most successful in inclusive classrooms (mean ratings between 4.00 & 5.00). The most successful techniques were visuals (m = 4.44), peer tutoring (m = 4.19) supportive learning (m = 4.06), and alternate kinds of assessment (m = 4.0). Whereas Garcia and Wei (2014) discovered translanguaging, and Schmidt (2002) identified code-switching. The specifics of each of these techniques are discussed below, along with ideas for how JP school teachers can use them in their unique classes.

2.8.1 Code-switching

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), code-switching is a teaching strategy in which a teacher switches from one language or language variety to another. Ahmad (2009) on the other hand explains that code-switching assists in the flow of classroom instruction because teachers do not have to spend as much time explaining to learners or searching for the simplest words to clear up any confusion that may arise. Gulzar (2010) surveyed 406 teachers in Pakistani EFL classrooms, the focus of which is the functions of teachers' code-switching. The study's findings indicated that teachers use code-switching to their first language for eleven functions, listed in descending order from most frequently cited to least frequently cited: clarification, ease of expression, effective instruction, creating a sense of belonging, checking understanding, translation, socializing, emphasis, repetitive functions, topic shift, and linguistic competence. Sampson's (2011) study on code-switching supports Gulzar's (2010) findings in that his findings show that first language has communicative functions in classrooms, such as "expressing equivalence, discussing procedural concerns, floor holding, reiterating concepts, and forming group relationships" (p. 10).

Furthermore, Pluddemann (2018) observed that in a multilingual classroom, teachers frequently apply the question-and-answer method, and the teacher is then measured

all-knowing, and learners come to school to hear what the teacher has to teach them. Furthermore, it is stated in Namibia's Language Policy for Schools (MoE, 2003) that teaching strategies in the multilingual classroom should include a learner-centred approach, which allows learners to take the lead in their learning by interacting more with their peers as well as their teacher. Furthermore, Kavhura (2018) agrees that learning in a multilingual classroom is learner-centred because learners are likely to use their prior knowledge of the language, they are learning to learn a new language.

2.8.2 Translanguaging

The third viewpoint, referred to as the translanguaging viewpoint, has been established as both a viewpoint on language and a philosophy of language instruction (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Although the additive approach is thought to place too much emphasis on the number of distinct languages, the translanguaging view is supportive of multilingualism.

Garcia and Li (2014) assert that translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy can be applied in formally monolingual situations, such as language teaching. The utilisation of all the learners' linguistic resources on purpose enables for deeper cognitive involvement in language learning and the development of novel linguistics techniques. Even when it is implemented to improve the low-status language, the translanguaging viewpoint discourages the strong regulation of the use of one language education because it will still result in a separation of the language. Intentional translanguaging teaching, the author continued, offers learners the chance to be the source of knowledge that advances learning.

Translanguaging practices are frequently seen in situations where teachers and learners work to bridge the language gap between them. In monolingual settings, translanguaging helps facilitate the teaching-learning process by closing the

communication gap between teachers and learners (García & Li, 2014). It is evident in Sweden when three learners with different levels of multilingualism were the subjects of a Swedish study. The study discovered that all learners had a sense of their multilingual identity when the teacher used a translanguaging pedagogical strategy in conjunction with the learners' wish to apply their mother tongue or first language (Torpsten, 2018).

Cummins (2017) concurred that additive multilingualism advances a complete separation of language storage, which Garcia and Li (2018) criticised. Cummins (2017) however, offered the phrase "active multilingualism" in place of the translanguaging strategy. Despite the term's similarities to translanguaging, Cummins (2017) noted that it is crucial to take into account the learners' languages' resources and social symbolism. The author further postulated that active multilingualism can be a meaningful technique in a monolingual setting where learners speak a variety of languages to encourage reflection on the relationship between language and power and to heighten learners' metalinguistic awareness. Learners who have been exposed to multiple languages in school gain the advantage of comprehending how certain languages are related, such as the Bantu languages. They comprehend the influence of language as well.

2.8.3 Visual aids and non-verbal communication

To enhance comprehension and complement the language gap, monolingual teachers frequently employ visual aids, gestures, and other kinds of nonverbal communication. Visual tools, such as charts, diagrams, and graphic organisers, can enable learners comprehend and recollect what they are learning (Idris et al., 2020).

According to Florida middle school teachers, the most effective teaching technique for multicultural and multilingual learners is the employment of visuals such as

teaching aids and photographs (Allison & Rehm, 2007). Visuals are immensely valuable in the study of literature when educating learners whose first language is not English (Carrier, 2005; Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2003). Teachers employ pictures to communicate visual stimuli that all learners can comprehend (Curtis & Bailey, 2001). Furthermore, flexible materials and visuals engage a variety of senses and enable to make learning more meaningful, particularly for diverse learners who are tactile, kinaesthetic learners (Bruno, 1982; Curtin, 2006). This researcher strongly concurs that teaching aids enhance effective teaching; hence it is essential to examine if the Oshindonga teachers make use of visual aids to complement their teaching in a multilingual classroom.

2.8.4 Peer support and collaborative learning

Monolingual professors frequently promote collaborative learning environments where learners from various language backgrounds collaborate. Peer assistance, cooperative group activities, and peer tutoring can assist with language acquisition and provide additional chances for language practice (Cahyani et al., 2018).

Florida teachers identified peer tutoring as the second most effective strategy for working with learners from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds (Florida Department of Education, 2002). This strategy, which pairs two learners with different abilities and backgrounds, works extremely well in multicultural classrooms, particularly with English language learners and Hispanic and Native American learners, whose cultural values emphasise cooperation and mentoring (Saravia-Shore & Garcia, 1995; Snowman & Biehler, 2003). Kline (1995) further opined that when native English-speaking learners are paired with English-language learners, they become teachers and resources for one another, often relating to one another better than to a teacher. Furthermore, peer tutoring encourages communication, motivates

learners, and assists learners in reaching higher levels of achievement while fostering friendships between learners from various backgrounds (Saravia Shore & Garcia, 1995; Snowman & Biehler, 2003)

Educational researchers who study culturally responsive teaching strategies have recognised the academic and social benefits of peer tutoring for both tutor and tutee (Crandall, Jaramillo, Olsen, & Peyton, 2001; King, 1982; Webb, 1988). Peer tutoring enables the tutor develops management and personal skills, as well as confidence and self-esteem. It also permits the tutor to work one-on-one with a peer who is performing at a higher level of achievement, permitting for a new appreciation, and understanding of others who are different (Webb, 1988). Peer teaching actively engages tutees in learning by modelling the English language and enabling them to practice speaking in authentic, conversational situations. They receive immediate feedback, clarification, and modification as they interact, converse, listen, and share ideas. Collaborating with a peer has many advantages for young learners because learners with limited English-speaking skills are often hesitant and anxious to seek assistance from a teacher (Curtin, 2006).

2.8.5 Cooperative learning

A large body of research has indicated that cooperative learning is an instructional strategy that benefits all learners, but especially students from diverse backgrounds (Kline, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Slavin, 1991; Willis, 2007). It has been discovered that grouping learners from different cultural backgrounds into heterogeneous groups and instructing them to collaborate and cooperate on activities and problem-solving tasks promotes inter-ethnic friendships, develops cross-cultural understandings, and fosters teamwork while also improving literacy and language acquisition among linguistically diverse students (Crandall, 1999; Crandall, Saravia-

Shore & Garcia, 1995; Slavin, 1990; Snowman & Biehler, 2003). Jaramillo, Olsen, & Peyton, 2001; Saravia-Shore & Garcia, 1995; Slavin, 1990; Snowman & Biehler, 2003). Cooperative learning also enables learners of different backgrounds develop intellectual autonomy (Crandall, 1999). Additionally, since young learners are naturally curious about their peers, cooperative learning permits them to co-operate and collaborate with friends and potential friends. This method is considered “highly effective” for enhancing academic performance and communication skills in multicultural and multilingual classrooms (Buchs & Maradan, 2021).

2.8.6 Alternative modes of assessment

The use of alternative assessments in the classroom is a universally comprehensive teaching practice that is especially suitable for diverse students (Hodges, 2001). Middle school teachers in Florida emphasized the importance of using diverse assessment methods to effectively and accurately evaluate the progress of multicultural and multilingual learners. They considered alternative assessments essential, as these allow students to demonstrate their understanding in various ways and offer multiple opportunities for success. Researchers have asserted that assessment techniques must be relevant to and compatible with the cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and life experiences of all learners (Florida Department of Education, 2002). Paper and pencil tests, for instance, discriminate against learners from diverse backgrounds because they are unable to recognise their heritage, languages, and experiences (Banks & Banks, 1999; Pai & Adler, 2001; Saravia-Shore & Garcia, 1995; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). As a result, alternative assessment methods such as language games, role plays drama, puzzles, picture matching and many more have gained widespread acceptance because they enable English language

learners to demonstrate cognitive comprehension without relying immensely on language.

2.8.7 Learner-compiled portfolios

Learner portfolios are particularly effective for young adolescents in middle school classrooms (Robertson & Valentine, 2000), especially in multicultural, multilingual classrooms (Kline, 1995). The portfolio, which is a collection of samples representing a learner's work, permits for self-expression, holds the learner accountable as a learner for thoughtful decision-making, and assists the learner in developing self-awareness all of which contribute to the development of young adolescents (Robertson & Valentine, 2000). The portfolio enables diverse learners to showcase their work, share their cultural heritage while developing a sense of accomplishment. Portfolios, which can be employed in most classes and for projects that combine two or more subject areas, document learners' abilities, skills, and experiences. Portfolios, due to their adaptability, will be an imperative assessment tool for middle school teachers in their diverse classrooms (Kline, 1995).

2.9 Summary

The chapter reviewed the literature which is in alignment with the experience of teachers and learners in a monolingual medium of instruction in a multilingual classroom. The next chapter outlines the study's methodology.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methods adopted in this study to explore the experiences of teachers and learners in multilingual classrooms, focusing specifically on the use of Oshindonga as a medium of instruction. A qualitative phenomenological research design was adopted to comprehend how individuals attribute to their experiences in multilingual teaching classroom.

The chapter commences by detailing the population of interest and the purposive sampling method employed to select participants with relevant experience. It then outlines the data collection methods, which include semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and focus group discussions. The thematic analysis approach adopted to interpret the data, detailing how patterns and themes were identified. Ethical considerations are addressed to ensure that participants' rights were respected throughout the research.

3.2 Research approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. A qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives, its focus is on exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative method has the potential to uncover how and why people conducts things.

3.3 Research design

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research is a qualitative research design which focuses on the lived experiences of various individuals about a specific phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the current study, the focus was to examine the lived experiences of teachers and learners with regards to the phenomenon of ‘multilingual education’ with a specific focus on their challenges and, to provide suggestions on how multilingual education can be enhanced. For this reason, the researcher considered phenomenological design that is appropriate with the research questions of this study.

3.4 Population

The population under research in this study included all Junior Primary school teachers and learners who employ Oshindonga as a medium of instruction in multilingual classrooms in the eleven (11) selected schools in the Khomas Educational Region.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling methodology, was employed to ensure a methodologically sound selection of research participants. This technique was adopted due to its effectiveness in identifying persons with a breadth of expertise and experiences relevant to the research questions. The first step in the sampling method entailed the deliberate selection of three primary schools from a pool of 11 schools in the Katutura constituency. These schools were selected based on a single criterion: the use of Oshindonga as a medium of instruction in their multilingual

classrooms. By selecting schools that satisfied this condition, the researcher ensured that the schools selected were directly relevant to the research topic.

A total of three (3) teachers were purposively sampled from each of the three designated schools, making a total of nine (9) Junior Primary school teachers as participants in the study. The selection criteria for these teachers were informed by their direct involvement and experience of teaching in Oshindonga medium-multilingual classes. This experience rendered them uniquely qualified to deliver in-depth perspectives on the research phenomenon. The study included learners from Oshindonga medium-multilingual classrooms in addition to the teacher participants. A focus group discussion was conducted with these learners to acquire a variety of perspectives.

The selection of learners was conducted thoroughly and with great care. Learners were engaged from participating schools based on criteria such as their wish to participate in the research and their ability to speak Oshindonga. The goal was to ensure that the selected learners were not native Oshindonga speakers, allowing the researcher to obtain useful perspectives and non-biased experiences of non-native speakers in Oshindonga medium-multilingual classrooms.

3.6 Research and instruments

This study employed qualitative methods which included semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observation and focus group discussions. These instruments are prominent in data collection in qualitative studies. The semi-structured interviews were administered in this section. In addition, focus group discussion was employed to elicit perspectives from the learners. Focus group discussion is a qualitative research method where a small group of individuals

gathered to discuss a specific topic in an interactive setting. The discussion is typically moderated by a researcher who guides the conversation and ensures that all participants have a chance to contribute. This instrument provides rich and in-depth insights into people's thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014).

Moreover, non-participant observation administering the information sheet was employed to confirm and avoid bias. Non-participant observation is a research method in which the researcher collects data by observing participants in their natural settings without participating in the activities being observed (Given, 2011, p. 371). It is a valuable research method for gathering objective data on human behaviour.

Teachers from the selected schools were interviewed about their views, practices, and experiences of the use of Oshindonga as a medium of instruction in a multilingual classroom. An interview protocol was applied to gather teachers' data while a focus group discussion guide was administered to collect data from the learners. A focus group discussion is a type of group interview where a small group is guided by an interviewer in a loosely structured discussion of a topic of interest. The discussion is usually planned, and most moderators rely on an outline or moderator's guide to ensure that all topics of interest are covered (Mishra, 2016).

3.7 Data collection procedure

The researcher was granted permission from the University of Namibia, Ministry of Education Arts and Culture through the office of the Executive Director and the principals from the selected schools. Having been granted permission, the researcher visited the schools to arrange logistics well in advance. The study commenced with lesson observations in the Oshindonga medium of instruction classrooms. Three non-participant classroom observations were done per participating teacher focusing on

Oshindonga language. This was to examine how the medium of instruction is employed in the teaching and learning of this subject and observe how teachers and learners manage with the content. The observation tool was also administered to determine instructional strategies employed by the teacher to enhance effective teaching and learning.

Furthermore, three observations per class were spaced in such a way that they were conducted once per week in a specific classroom for forty (40) minutes per week. Interviews with teachers were conducted one-on-one. An interview for each specific teacher was scheduled after the last lesson observation and it took forty-five minutes to an hour. This avoided the effect of giving away some information in the interviews that teachers might want to implement in the lessons. On the other hand, a focus group discussion session was conducted with learners who are Oshindonga non-native speakers during break time and the interviews and focus group discussions were recorded to ensure a true reflection of the data collected during research by revisiting the recordings in case of lack of clarity. The interviews and focus groups for this study were conducted entirely in English, as all participants were fluent in English, ensuring effective communication and accurate capture of their responses. Therefore, translation was not needed during the data collection process. Parents of the children granted permission by signing the indemnity form. Interviews and focus group discussions took place at school after normal school hours to avoid disruption of classes.

Lastly, the discussion of the School Language Profile Questionnaire analysed the language setup of three schools: A, B, and C. It looked at what language was used for teaching; how many different languages learners spoke as well as the language skills

of teachers. All the three schools, use Oshindonga as the medium of instruction at the Junior Primary level, since many learners speak Oshindonga or related Oshiwambo dialects.

The language diversity among the learners varies across the schools: **School A:** Learners speak various languages like Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Afrikaans, KKG, Silozi, and Tjimbundu. **School B:** Mostly Oshindonga and Otjiherero speakers and **School C:** Mix of Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Rukwangali, Setswana, Silozi, and Shona. The language proficiency of teaching staff plays a significant role in addressing these needs: **School A,** has majority of the teaching staff fluent in Oshindonga and English (9 teachers), but the school has limited staff who are fluent in languages like Otjiherero and Oshikwanyama alongside English. **School B:** has the highest number of teachers fluent in Otjiherero and Oshikwanyama (3), while two (2) teachers are fluent in Oshindonga and English, and **School C:** has a similar profile, with teaching staff fluent in Oshindonga and English (3 teachers), Oshikwanyama and English (3 teachers), and Otjiherero and English two (2 teachers).

All three schools have an average of 41 learners per class. This size allows for a balance between individual attention and group learning, although it could still be challenging for teachers to address the diverse language needs of their learners effectively.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data was analysed thematically. This study followed thematic analysis, a qualitative method aimed at identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns across the dataset. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a widely used yet often rarely acknowledged approach in qualitative research. Given the wide amount of data

collected from the participants, thematic content analysis was employed to thoroughly categorising and identifying common themes, this process enables the researcher to interpret the findings easily. Interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and coded for transcription. The researcher applied codes such as short phrases that represented key themes from the data collected. The coding process was informed both by prior research questions and theoretical frameworks, as well as by emergent patterns identified directly from the data, this ensured that the analysis remained grounded in existing literature while also capturing new insights from participants' responses.

Themes were generated from interviews conducted with teachers and focus group discussions with learners, helping to assess their experiences within multilingual classrooms. Identified themes were categorised to establish patterns and commonalities between teachers' and learners' experiences. Additionally, Data from classroom observations schedule were also organised in themes, categorised, and analysed to find out the teaching and learning experiences of teachers and learners in the multilingual classrooms as well the strategies applied by teachers for teaching and learning.

To enhance the integrity of the findings, triangulation of interviews, classroom observations schedule, focus group discussions as well a review of the literature was applied.

The study used detailed analysis methods, like sorting data into themes and cross-checking information, to understand teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms. By sorting information into themes and double-checking details, it provided a clear and reliable understanding of how multilingual education works, and allowed a clear yet adaptable way to interpret the findings, ensuring accuracy and meaningful insights

of the data and provided a comprehensive understanding of multilingual education practices.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues need to be considered when conducting a research study. The researcher obtained ethical clearance certificate from the University of Namibia Decentralized Ethics Committee (DEC), and research permission letter from Postgraduate Support Services, as well as from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture through the office of the Executive Director as well as the principals from the selected schools in the Khomas region.

As part of the informed consent and voluntary participation, the following ethical consideration was observed; The researcher respected the human right of free choice by obtaining informed consent before any interviews were conducted. All participants were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point without facing any penalties or consequences was held. In addition, the researcher ensured that the data collected from the participants would not be available to outsiders. Participants were engaged anonymous concerning their responses in the study, instead, pseudonyms were applied to identify them. Parents of the children provided consent by signing the indemnity form.

3.10 Summary

Chapter 3 described the methodology employed, commencing with the research design, the sample, and sampling techniques. The instruments for data collection were also discussed. The researcher discussed the protocol of the research procedure, how the data were collected and analysed, how research ethics were applied and the protection of research participants. The following chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the lived experiences by teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom at the selected three schools and recommends effective strategies Junior Primary teachers can apply to mitigate challenges they encounter in their teaching and learning in the multilingual classrooms in the Khomas region. This chapter presents the results from transcribed interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with the learners as well as from the classroom observation.

Moreover, the chapter explores the understanding of multilingual classroom instruction per school, and the encounters of teachers and learners within a multilingual classroom setting with Oshindonga as the primary language of teaching. The chapter will continue to narrate strategies applied by Junior Primary teachers and learners to mitigate challenges, as well as the necessary support required to enhance multilingual education in this context. The data is organised based on the research questions and the resultant themes derived from the patterns that were identified in the data collected. The three research questions that guided the study are:

1. What are the experiences of teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom of Oshindonga as a medium of instruction?
2. What strategies do Junior Primary teachers and learners employ to mitigate challenges?
3. What support do Junior Primary teachers and learners need to enhance multilingual Education?

4.2 Participant Information (Teachers and Learners)

Table 1: Schools Language Contexts of Early Literacy Instruction

Grade	Non-Oshindonga speakers (learners)	Oshindonga Native speakers (learners)	Total # of learners per grade	Teacher's Mother Tongue
School A				
Grade 1	10	29	39	Oshimbandja dialect
Grade 2	10	29	39	Oshikwambi dialect
Grade 3	24	17	41	Oshimbalantu dialect
School B				
Grade 1	23	19	42	Oshindonga dialect
Grade 2	24	19	43	Oshikwanyama dialect
Grade 3	25	17	42	Oshindonga dialect
School C				
Grade 1	11	27	38	Oshindonga dialect
Grade 2	27	14	41	Oshindonga dialect
Grade 3	30	11	41	Oshikolonkadhi dialect
TOTAL	184	182	366	6

To investigate experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners in an Oshindonga medium in a multilingual classroom, it was deemed important to determine the teachers' and learners' mother tongues.

As can be observed in Table 1, out of nine (9) teachers, 4 are Oshindonga dialect speakers, whereas 5 are of other Oshiwambo dialects. The study discovered that out of nine teachers who were interviewed, only four are Oshindonga dialect speakers

whereas five teachers speak the dialects of Oshiwambo such as Oshimbalantu, Oshikwanyama, Oshikwambi and Oshikolonkandhi. After probing if they had received any training in mother tongue teaching, the findings indicated that four of the nine teachers have undergone training on how to teach in their mother tongue which is Oshindonga.

On the other hand, out 366 learners, 184 learners are non-Oshindonga speakers, while 182 are Oshindonga native speakers. This means that 49% of the learners are Oshindonga native speakers, whereas 51% are non-native Oshindonga speakers in the three selected schools in Khomas region.

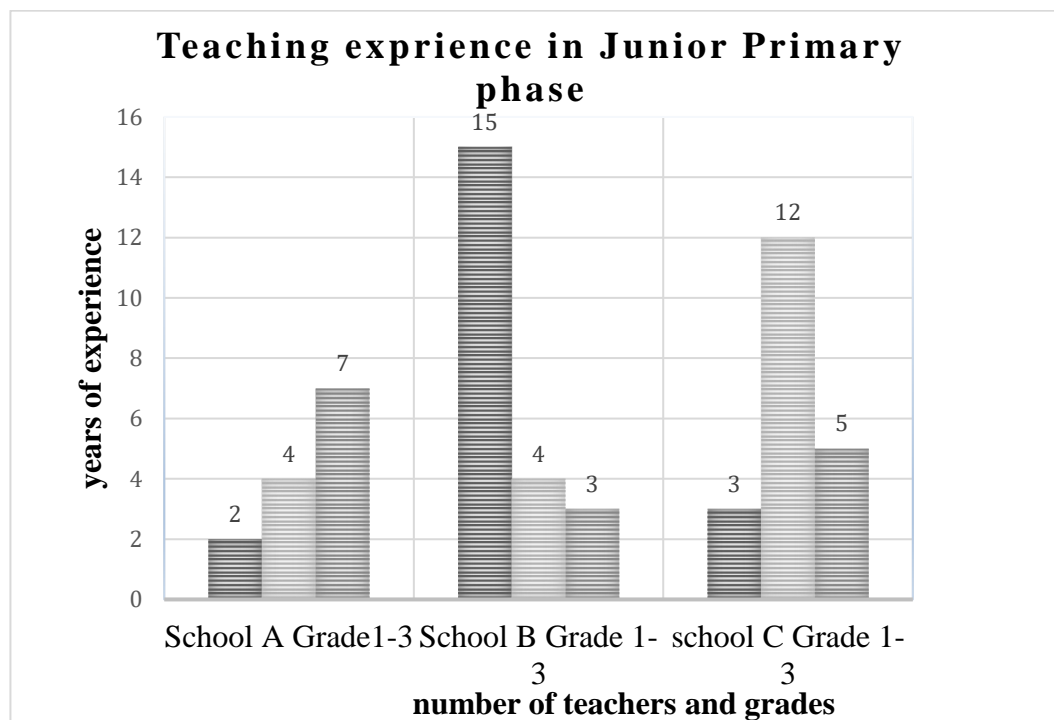


Figure 2 Teachers' teaching experience in Junior Primary school phase

Figure 2 illustrates that the participants were nine (9) in total, one teacher per grade. Eight (8) were female teachers and one (1) was male teacher, and all teachers had teaching experience in Junior Primary for a minimum of two (2) years to fifteen (15) years maximum.

4.3. Multilingual teaching experiences at the three Schools: A, B and C

4.3.1 Teachers perceptions of multilingual classroom teaching and learning at School A, B and C

Learners at school A derive from diverse language backgrounds. They employ their mother tongue or a home language as well as the language chosen at school as the medium of instruction. The teachers employ more than one language to explain the lesson and permit learners to express themselves in their home language during teaching and learning. “*Multilingual teaching means to speak different languages so that very learners can understand the lessons much better. It can also be said is the teaching that take place among learners of different languages*”, stated one teacher. Multilingual classroom teaching and learning is perceived by teachers as an inclusive practice whereby teachers create an inclusive classroom where language variety is celebrated and respected within the context of subject-specific content to enhance learners' language proficiency. They encourage learners to share their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, creating a sense of belonging among all learners, while celebrating the use of different languages.

In the context of multilingualism in the classroom, teachers at School B demonstrated cultural awareness. They knew that language is closely linked to cultural identity and appreciated the diverse backgrounds of their learners. As a result, they integrated cultural perspectives into their teaching, aligning them with the subject matter. Multilingual classroom instruction involves employing two or more languages as mediums of instruction. This approach assists learners effectively comprehend the lessons, especially when their mother tongue differs from the school's medium of instruction. This was clearly expressed by one teacher as she said: “*Multilingual*

teaching means to use two or more languages as a medium of instruction to help learners to understand the lesson better”.

Additionally, some teachers at School B perceived multilingualism as linguistic diversity. They comprehend that, learners derived from various linguistic backgrounds, with different levels of proficiency in both the medium of instruction language and their native languages. Therefore, these teachers employ a flexible approach, adopting multiple languages within a single class to accommodate the diverse language abilities of their learners.

In the context of multilingualism in classroom teaching and learning, there were divergent perspectives among teachers at School C. Some teachers perceived it mainly as linguistic diversity. They recognised that their learners derived from diverse linguistic backgrounds, with different levels of proficiency in both the school medium of instruction and their native languages. To address this, these teachers applied a flexible approach during lessons. They adopted different languages to cater for learners who may not fully comprehend the school’s medium of instruction, basically, they create a linguistic bridge to ensure comprehension for all learners. This is evident in one of the teachers who clearly stated that, *“My understanding of multilingual is the use of different languages in one lesson to help communicate with learners who do not understand the medium of instruction of the school and allows learners to use their home language to communicate during class teaching time”.*

On the other hand, there were teachers who emphasised cultural awareness. For them, language is intricately tied to cultural identity. They deeply valued and respected the cultural backgrounds of their learners. Therefore, they purposely integrated cultural

viewpoints into their teaching, aligning them with the subject matter. The teachers stressed that multilingualism in education involves not only addressing linguistic diversity but also recognising the cultural richness that language brings to the classroom. It's a dynamic interaction between language, culture, and effective teaching strategies.

4.3.2 Using Oshindonga medium in a multilingual classroom at School A, B and C

Teachers' experiences in teaching a multilingual classroom with Oshindonga as a medium of instruction was characterised by both positive and negative experiences at this school. Teachers at school A, indicated that learners who are Oshindonga speakers find it easier to understand and engage with lessons when taught in their mother tongue and this led to increased participation and a profound comprehension of the lesson content. The learners who are non-Oshindonga speakers failed to comprehend concepts presented in Oshindonga which is the medium of instruction at the school. The class observations confirmed that Oshindonga-speaking learners actively participated while non-Oshindonga-speaking learners had difficulty engaging, particularly with grammar concepts like pronouns at school A. The ones who speak Damara-Nama barely understand this language and failed to comprehend the subject content. They experience language confusion, and teachers had to put in extra effort to ensure that learners comprehend the lesson. Most learners who participated in the study indicated that they enjoyed learning in Oshindonga since they now understand it much better.

At School B, teachers observed interesting dynamics among their multilingual learners. Oshindonga-speaking learners assisted their peers who are not fluent in

Oshindonga. These helpful interactions involved explaining Oshindonga terms in English, creating a supportive peer-teaching environment.

However, there had been challenges too. Teachers at School B stated that some parents expressed concern when their children were taught by an Oshikwanyama speaking teacher. As a result, these learners started using Oshikwanyama more frequently than Oshindonga. For the teachers, this situation presents a time-consuming task, as they must teach in Oshindonga and then translate the same content into English (a practice known as code-switching) to bridge communication gaps. During class observation, the researcher noticed that learners who spoke Oshindonga participated fairly well, but those with other mother tongues struggled more to engage despite the peer teaching support.

Teachers at School C experienced the unique challenge of teaching in a multilingual classroom. To bridge communication gaps, they often switched between languages. Specifically, they taught in Oshindonga while concurrently translating the content into English. This practice known as codeswitching ensured that learners who did not understand Oshindonga could still follow the lesson. However, the class observation has notice that Oshindonga-speaking learners engaged well, while non-Oshindonga speakers struggled due to language barriers.

On the other hand, School C has made progress, because English and Oshikwanyama classes were recently introduced as additional mediums of instruction of the school. This development enabled teachers to provide more inclusive and effective education, catering to learners with different language backgrounds.

4.3.3 Strategies utilised by teachers to accommodate all learners in a multilingual classroom at School A, B and C

Some teachers at School A employ collaborative learning. They pair the learners who are Oshindonga native speakers with the non-Oshindonga speakers to encourage cooperation and teamwork among learners through peer teaching and collaborative learning activities such as group work, discussions, and peer teaching to enable learners to learn from each other's language and permitting learners to express themselves in any language. This strategy promotes collaboration and assists learners to build confidence in learning language skills as they work as a team. Code-switching and translanguaging is perceived to be the best strategies by all teachers as they translate everything from Oshindonga to English so that all learners understand, and learners can also use English to ask for clarity, as indicated by one teacher when sad: *“I use the best strategy to translate everything in English so that all learners understand, and they can also use English to ask for clarity, in doing so, no one is left behind.”* Additionally, the class observation revealed that all teachers at School A employed a whole-word approach to teaching, focusing on the recognition of complete words rather than breaking them down into smaller units (Syllable).

The teachers at School B adopted three effective strategies to navigate the multilingual classroom which are Code Switching and Translanguaging as well as Language Partnerships and Collaborative Learning. Teachers recognise that adopting both Oshindonga and English benefits all learners. Moreover, they smoothly switched between these languages during instruction, bridging language gaps and fosters understanding, by translating concepts from Oshindonga to English, they ensure comprehension for everyone, and learners can also request for clarification in English.

Teachers at school B also encouraged cooperation and teamwork among learners by pairing Oshindonga-native speakers with non-Oshindonga speakers. Through collaborative activities like group work, discussions, and peer teaching, learners engaged with each other's languages. This approach not only promotes collaboration but also enhances learners' confidence in language skills as they collaborate. Also evident in the data is that teachers demonstrated an understanding of the importance of teamwork and collaboration when one of them reported that: "*I encourage cooperation and teamwork among learners. I also assign productive class activities to the learners in Oshindonga.*"

At School C, teachers demonstrated effective strategies for teaching in a multilingual classroom. They frequently engaged in code switching and translanguaging shifting between Oshindonga and English during lessons to ensure that all learners could understand the lesson. This approach enabled them to bridge language gaps effectively. Additionally, one teacher emphasised the value of language development activities. These activities are intertwined into daily lessons and include exercises like vocabulary building, encouraging learners to retell stories in their own words, and organising group discussions or collaborative work. Although some teachers indicated positive strategies to mitigate challenges encountered in the Oshindonga medium in a multilingual classroom, however, the other two teachers indicated diverse experiences when they expressed that: "*There are no strategies in place, apart from working extra to try and accommodate the learners.*"

Remarkably, the class observation has observed that the use of Oshindonga was consistently enforced in the classroom throughout the lesson, vocabulary words were

left unexplained and there was no clear support given to non-Oshindonga-speaking learners, throughout the observation period.

4.3.4 Challenges encountered by teachers in a multilingual classroom at school A, B and C

The three teachers at school A, indicated that: “indicated that: *“learners who are non-Oshindonga are really struggling to make a difference between the Oshindonga medium of instruction and their mother tongue, and this is really affecting their grades more especially in reading and writing”*. Learners often mixed their mother tongue with Oshindonga. The teachers similarly also struggled to communicate effectively with the learners, who have limited proficiency in Oshindonga as they (teachers) cannot translate some words from Oshindonga to English mainly regarding language structure components. They perceive this limitation as affecting their teaching and learner’s participation. The observation also highlighted some challenges faced by the teachers at school A. They struggled with time management and language barriers, particularly when explaining vocabulary and grammar concepts like pronouns.

Two of the teachers expressed that, teaching in a multilingual classroom is time consuming as it often requires additional time and effort to differentiate instruction and provide support to learners who are learning Oshindonga, moreover, they expressed that this is very challenging given the demands of a typical school day.

One of the three teachers remarked that: she was trained to teach in Oshindonga and the training was mainly focusing on the use of Oshindonga and English, but it did not include the use of other languages which she experienced in her classroom.

Meanwhile, two teachers expressed that they were never trained to teach in Oshindonga language.

The teachers at School B encountered some challenges related to language in their multilingual classroom such as Language barriers and assessment challenges.

Language Barriers: Learners experienced challenges in achieving fluency in Oshindonga both in reading, writing, and speaking the language. Additionally, one teacher expressed that: *“The biggest challenge I have is that most of the learners mix different languages together, both in writing and speaking which complicate communication”*.

Assessment Challenges: Two of the teachers at this school specifically accentuated assessment difficulties. Assessing learners’ progress and learning outcomes proved challenging, especially in reading, writing, and oral communication assessments. The diverse linguistic backgrounds of learners made it intricate to assess their language skills effectively. The class observation revealed that these challenges extended to the teaching process as well. Teachers struggled to explain and provide examples for key language concepts, such as pronouns and verbs, which added to the complexity of language learning. Learners had difficulty identifying these concepts in sentences, and many struggles with reading and writing tasks, particularly dictation.

The teachers at School C experienced significant language-related challenges in their multilingual classroom. Learners struggled with fluency in Oshindonga reading, writing, and speaking. Moreover, learners often mixed their mother tongue with Oshindonga and even reverted to their home languages, which posed challenges for the teachers who did not understand the learners’ home languages, this was evidence as one teacher stated that: *“My biggest challenge is that, learners speak and write in their home languages and I don’t understand some of their work”*. Furthermore, teaching in multilingual context presents time constraints, because the teaching process involves

not only delivering the lesson in Oshindonga but also translating and explaining the entire content in English for non-Oshindonga speakers. This extra effort demands additional time and energy from the teachers. From the class observation, it was noted that learners faced difficulties with language concepts like pronunciation and distinguishing between words and sentences. Teachers also struggled with time management and maintaining focus on the lesson, especially without teaching aids, which could have supported both language learning and engagement.

4.3.5 Lack of Mother Tongue fluency and training at School A, B and C

One of the three teachers mentioned that her training primarily emphasised teaching in Oshindonga and English, but it did not include the use of other languages that she encountered in her classroom, as she stated: *Yes! I was trained to teach in Oshindonga and the training was mainly focusing on the use of Oshindonga as a subject and English, it did not include the use of other languages.* In contrast, the other two teachers openly remarked that they were never specifically trained to teach in Oshindonga.

At School B, there was only one teacher who had received training to teach Oshindonga. This teacher emphasised the importance of using the mother tongue during the Junior Primary phase. However, two other teachers reported that they had not received any training specifically in the Oshindonga language.

Among the three teachers at School C, one teacher stated “*Yes, we were taught all subjects in English except the Oshindonga module and that make it difficult because most of the terms we know the mainly in English and not in Oshindonga language*”. This language gap posed challenges for her, as many concepts were more familiar to her in English than in Oshindonga. Remarkably, the other two teachers had never

received formal training to teach Oshindonga in a multilingual classroom. This lack of preparation highlights the need for better support and training for teachers experiencing the challenges of teaching in a multilingual classroom.

4.3.6 Lack of confidence in teaching Oshindonga in a multilingual classroom at School A, B and C

When asked about their confidence in teaching Oshindonga in a multilingual classroom, the three teachers at School A expressed variable perspectives:

Confident Teacher: One of the teachers felt confident because she had taken the initiative to learn certain words and phrases in her learners' home languages. She also practiced correct pronunciation and reading of those phrases, as she remarked: *“Yes: in the end one gets to know a certain word or a phrase how it is pronounced and read the same but different meaning”*.

Uncertain Teachers: The other two teachers, however, did not feel confident or comfortable teaching in a multilingual setting. Their reasons of being uncomfortable included, the challenge of translating concepts from Oshindonga to English and sometimes failed to clearly explain the term from Oshindonga to English.

They shared their concerns that this language transition might impede learners' comprehension of subject content, as well as limited vocabulary and expressive ability in Oshindonga among their learners, making nuanced discussions challenging. The teachers wished to include all learners effectively, even if it meant stepping outside their comfort zone.

In School B, the three teachers expressed their lack of confidence in managing a multilingual classroom where Oshindonga serves as a medium of instruction. They experienced challenges because learners often have limited proficiency in

Oshindonga, leading to language barriers among themselves. As a result, learners often mix different languages when speaking and writing. Furthermore, the teachers resorted to relying on translation from Oshindonga to English rather than expressing ideas directly in Oshindonga. Also evident in the data is that both teachers expressed their lack of confidence in teaching in the multilingual when one of them reported that: *“I’m not comfortable: because in most cases, studying new languages can shift the focus of the learners. It can also limit learners’ ability due to longue barriers. If it works better for the learners, they mostly end up mixing different languages together as they speak or write”*.

At School C, all three teachers reported a common sentiment: they lacked confidence when teaching in a multilingual classroom. The challenge originated because non-Oshindonga learners sometimes failed to comprehend the lesson as well as the material employed. Despite this, the teachers are actively implementing strategies such as using sentence strip for learner responses and organising paired discussions. However, one teacher expressed that: *“I’m not comfortable at all because the language barriers hinder my teaching as well as the learning process and it is time consuming to translate the teaching into different languages”*. These barriers impede both teaching and learning. The teachers find themselves frequently translating lessons from Oshindonga to English, rather than directly expressing ideas in Oshindonga. This process is time-consuming and adds difficulty to their already demanding roles.

4.3.7 Learners perceptions of multilingual education at School A, B and C

The learners in School A reported that they are really embracing Oshindonga as their medium of instruction because they had a better comprehension now, and they are connecting with the language and benefiting from it.

Many learners at School B expressed a preference for languages other than Oshindonga. This preference derived from the notion that their mother tongues included Afrikaans and Khoekhoegowab. Unfortunately, their parents are unable to assist them with schoolwork in Oshindonga.

Learners from School A expressed challenges in understanding lessons conducted only in Oshindonga, particularly in subjects demanding complex vocabulary or abstract concepts and suggested that it would be better if the teaching could be in English and maybe have Oshindonga as a subject for the sake of learning another language.

4.3.8 Teacher training needs at School A, B and C

Teachers from School A, expressed that there is a need for teachers' training to ensure proficiency in both Oshindonga and another language or languages used in schools. Best practices in teaching in multilingual settings capturing effective multilingual teaching strategies and methodologies need prioritising rather than training teachers to teach solely in Oshindonga. There is a distinct need for multilingual support that includes translations, visual aids, and opportunities for learning Oshindonga alongside the native languages.

Teachers at School B emphasised the importance of organising learners into separate classes based on their mother tongues. In other words, they recommend creating distinct classes for learners who speak Oshikwanyama, Otjiherero, Khoekhoegowab, Silozi, and Rukwangali. This approach recognises the linguistic diversity within the learner's unique language background and aims to provide more effective language instruction

Teachers at School C recognised the importance of additional training and workshops to effectively manage their multilingual classrooms. Specifically, they expressed a need for guidance on directing this complex environment. One practical step they recommended was providing an English-Oshindonga dictionary within the school. Such a resource would be vital for assisting non-Oshindonga learners, allowing them to bridge language gaps more effectively.

4.3.9 Learners' Needed Support at School A, B and C

Learners at School A found it challenging to comprehend lessons taught fully in Oshindonga, in particular, complex vocabulary or abstract concepts. As a solution, they recommend that instruction be mainly in English, with Oshindonga offered as a separate subject to encourage language learning.

Learners from School B reported that they appreciated teachers who presented explanations in both Oshindonga and English. This approach has improved their comprehension and engagement during lessons, as it enables them to switch to the language, they are more comfortable with, which is English.

The learners at School C, emphasised the key role of parental involvement in their language learning journey, particularly when Oshindonga is not spoken at home. Their perspective indicated that if teachers could deliver lessons in the languages they use at home, such as Otjiherero, Khoekhoegowab, or English, they would feel more connected, informed and understanding will never be a matter because they are fluent in those familiar languages.

4.6. Summary

The chapter presented and interpreted the results. The data revealed that only few teachers are native speakers and qualified to teach Oshindonga. The data also revealed

that almost 51% of the learners from the selected schools in Khomas region are non-Oshindonga speakers. The next chapter discusses and provides conclusions for the study.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's findings on the experiences of teaching and learning Oshindonga medium in a multilingual classroom in Khomas region. The main aim of the study was to explore the experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners in an Oshindonga medium in a multilingual classroom in Khomas region of Namibia. The sub-goals of this study are to:

- Reflect on the understanding of multilingual classroom teaching and learning.
- Examine the positive and negative experiences of teachers and learners in employing Oshindonga medium in a multilingual classroom.
- Investigate strategies that can assist in mitigating challenges encountered in the Oshindonga medium in a multilingual classroom.
- Investigate the challenges encountered by teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom.

5.2. Challenges encountered by teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom

The study revealed substantial negative experiences such as ‘forcing’ learners from other ethnic groups to learn in Oshindonga which they can barely understand. Furthermore, translating lessons from Oshindonga to English languages was time-consuming for the teacher, and learners' grammatical faults delayed the teaching and learning process even further. Moreover, the data also revealed that teachers had trouble teaching learners who are not Oshindonga native speakers, and this affects the

learners' performance. Teachers respectively indicated that learners who are Oshindonga native speakers tend to perform better than non-Oshindonga speakers. This means that the Oshindonga medium does not only favour the native speakers but has a long-term effect on the non-Oshindonga native speakers' academic performance. This is because the Oshindonga medium as a language of teaching in the long term becomes dominant, marginalising the learners of other languages, resulting in the stigmatisation of learners who speak languages other than the Oshindonga medium of instruction. Furthermore, findings indicate that most teachers were not native speakers of Oshindonga and that poor training in mother tongue teaching contributed to a lack of fluency in the mother tongue, negatively influencing instruction quality. Teachers reported feeling uneasy when teaching Oshindonga in a multilingual classroom, particularly in areas like reading and writing, which were seen as significant impediments in teaching and learning. In the same vein, it also emerged from the data that non-Oshindonga-speaking learners had difficulty comprehending lessons, instructional materials, and written activities. They struggle to communicate/express themselves in the non-native language, resulting in irritation and subsequently communication challenges. This finding is supported by the fact that data generated through focus group discussions with learners revealed the deep rootedness of learners' experiences in multilingual classrooms. It is also clear that learners in multilingual settings find it challenging to adapt to a new cultural setting as often required when learning a non-native language. One needs to master cultural norms, habits, and social practices as part of language and practises

Even though, the Namibian language policy discussion document of 2003 advocates for a mother tongue medium of instruction in the Junior Primary phase (Grade 0-3), the researcher contends that it failed to consider Namibia's diversified multilingual

and multicultural society. This is an issue of monitoring the implementation of the policy as not many schools make provision for a variety of languages to be offered as medium (s) of instruction at one school. The data indicated that it increased teachers' workload as they must translate Oshindonga lessons to English language for non-Oshindonga native speakers each time a lesson is presented, which is also time-consuming. Consequently, non-Oshindonga learners' cognitive development is limited. Consequently, Alimi, Tella, Adeyemo, and Oyeweso (2020) emphasised that the use of native language as a medium of instruction in all subjects not only reverses a long-standing indifferent attitude toward native languages but also greatly strengthens the status and produces favourable outcomes in each learner's performance, it also promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills in such learners.

All nine teachers from the selected schools in the Katutura circuit reported challenges regarding the instruction of Oshindonga in a multilingual classroom. The study disclosed that the most prevalent challenge encountered by non-native Oshindonga speakers was differentiating between the language of instruction and their mother tongue as learners speak and write in their home languages. This has a significant impact on their academic performance, particularly in the domains of reading and writing. An additional impediment was that learners compose and express themselves in their native languages, thereby impeding teachers' comprehension of their assignments. This finding is similar to that of Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021) who illustrated that implementing translanguaging strategies to teach reading in a multilingual early-grade setting was accompanied by challenges, including a discrepancy between the language of instruction and the native languages of the dominant learners within the classroom.

These difficulties are attributed to the following variables, among others, the notion that outside of school, a significant number of learners in multilingual classrooms have limited exposure to Oshindonga. This may impede their ability to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed academically in Oshindonga-medium of instruction.

Insufficient teacher support: A considerable number of teachers in multilingual classrooms lack the requisite training to instruct using Oshindonga. Furthermore, they lack the necessary resources and materials to assist learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Numerous multilingual classrooms employ a monolingual curriculum, which entails the instruction of learners solely in the language of instruction through which they obtain their native tongue. This can potentially pose challenges for non-native Oshindonga speakers in terms of accessing and comprehending the material.

The study pointed out that multilingual classrooms need strategies to mitigate the challenges experienced by teachers and learners.

This study revealed that none of the teaching staff who participated in this study underwent training in teaching in a multilingual classroom. This indicates that more teachers are expected to receive training in (their mother tongues) the local languages for them to deliver quality work in schools that accommodate different language speakers of the multilanguage context in Namibia. Teachers also must be prepared on how to manage classroom settings that renders themselves to multilingualism (multilingual classrooms). Plunddermamm (2018) cautions that lack of fluency in the mother tongue particularly in oral and writing negatively affects the quality of teaching in a mother tongue, hence educators and teachers must be trained to teach in a multilingual/multicultural classroom. This finding correlates with Shihako and

Shaimemanya (2020) who recommend that teachers should receive appropriate training to enable them to teach in the learners' mother tongue (L1) as well as in the second language (L2) should this not be their language. When teachers are trained to teach in their mother tongues, it will reduce their workload, rather than translating each lesson into other second languages.

Most of the teachers indicated that they were not confident with the prospect of teaching Oshindonga in a multilingual setting. The teachers' lack of confidence may stem from their insufficient training to instruct Oshindonga in a multilingual setting. Teachers may also lack confidence in their capacity to assist learners in comprehending their material, particularly when inquiries are directed in Oshindonga. Teacher training in multilingual teaching is required, specifically regarding the teaching of Oshindonga in a multilingual classroom. This training would equip teachers with the knowledge and abilities necessary to teach Oshindonga in a multilingual environment.

In addition, this study's findings indicate that teachers in multilingual classes have a significant time constraint regarding translating teachings. This assertion is substantiated by the remarks provided by three teachers all of whom expressed experiencing difficulties in adhering to deadlines while translating from Oshindonga to other languages, particularly English. The imposition of time constraints in multilingual classrooms potentially impedes the quality of teaching and learning. For instance, teachers may experience time constraints that impede their ability to provide comprehensive explanations of subjects to their learners. Furthermore, learners may encounter a scarcity of time to engage in sufficient practice of the newly acquired language skills.

However, there exist several ways that teachers may employ to minimise the amount of time dedicated to translating lessons within classes that consist of multiple languages. One pedagogical approach that can be employed is translanguaging, wherein learners are encouraged to utilise their entire linguistic repertoire to facilitate communication and enhance their learning experience. This practice can be timesaving as it eliminates the need for teachers to undertake the task of translating all instructional materials.

Additionally, one more effective approach that teachers can employ is the utilisation of differentiated instruction. This entails offering pupils varying degrees of assistance based on their individual needs. In instances where learners encounter difficulties with the language of education, it may be necessary for the teacher to provide additional support. Conversely, learners who possess a higher level of proficiency in the language of instruction may be capable of engaging in independent or small group work.

Moreover, teachers can leverage technology as a tool for facilitating translation. It can assist in translating both written content and spoken language. Moreover, it is worth noting that certain textbooks and supplementary educational resources are accessible in many other languages. This study's findings indicate that teachers in multilingual classrooms face a notable challenge in the form of time consumption.

The results of this study further point out that teaching Oshindonga in a multilingual classroom presents a formidable challenge. The teachers expressed a lack of self-assurance regarding teaching Oshindonga, and they also noted that the process of translating lessons and evaluating learners who struggle with comprehending Oshindonga is a time-intensive task. Furthermore, the participants in the research

encounter challenges regarding acquiring proficiency in the grammatical aspects of the Oshindonga language.

The conclusions align with prior studies conducted on multilingual education. An investigation conducted by Walker and Benson (2013) revealed that optimal learning outcomes are achieved when learners are taught and evaluated in a language that they comprehend and are proficient in. This implies that teachers in classrooms with multiple languages should employ pedagogical approaches such as translanguaging and customised instruction to assist learners with diverse linguistic requirements.

The consequences of this study's findings extend to teacher training and school policy as well. Teacher training programmes must integrate pedagogical approaches that cater to the needs of multilingual classrooms, as well as provide teachers with effective techniques to manage the impediments posed by grammatical errors and assessment. Furthermore, educational institutions must grant teachers the provision of individualised teaching tools and opportunities for training in translanguaging. More importantly, policymakers must formulate policies that endorse the implementation of multilingual education and allocate adequate resources to facilitate the effectiveness of teachers.

Challenges experienced by learners in the three selected schools are evident that learners had complications in mastering grammatical skills. The findings of the study also revealed that learners had challenges with the application of irregular verbs and other grammatical skills. The students also indicated challenges regarding the learning of phonics and always committed grammatical errors when speaking.

5.3 Strategies to facilitate teaching and learning of Oshindonga in a multilingual classroom context

This section summarises strategies for overcoming difficulties in teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom, as it emerged from the findings. They are as follow:

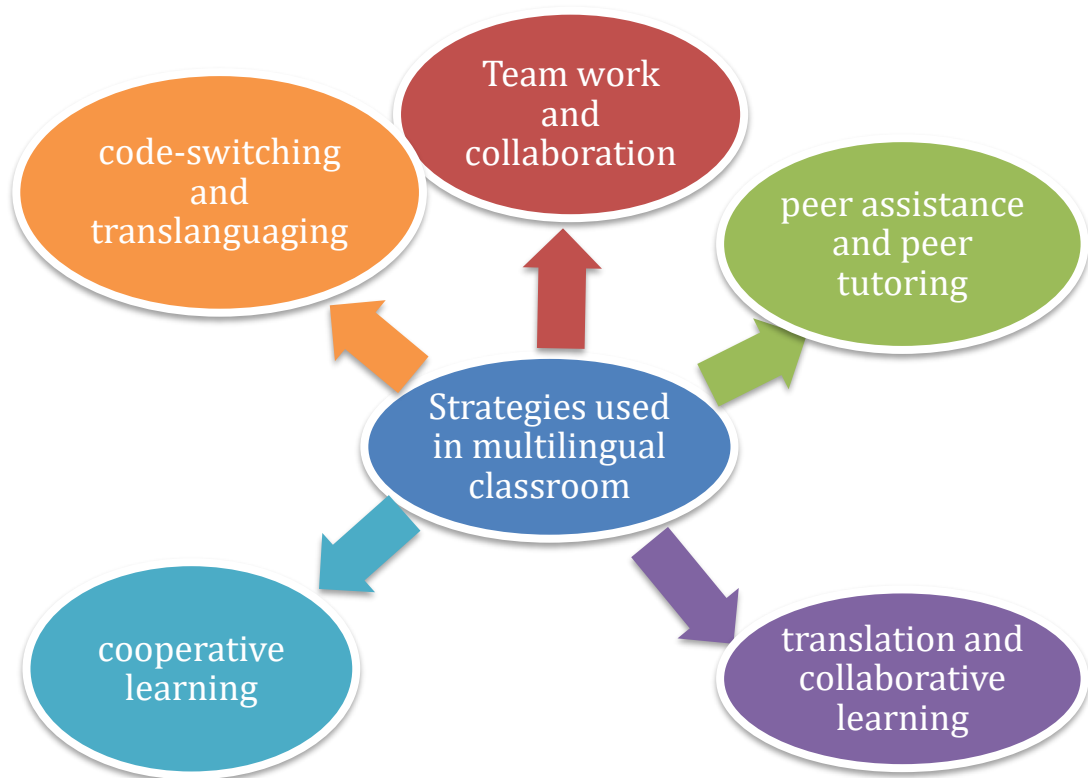


Figure 3 Strategies used in multilingual classroom

The finding shows that one of the most essential methods mentioned by all teachers was teamwork. **Teamwork** can assist learners in supporting and learning from one another. Teachers can also apply **collaborative teaching approaches** to convert materials into multiple languages and create a more inclusive school environment.

In addition to teamwork, other strategies, such as **peer assistance**, **translation**, and **collaborative learning**, can be used alongside collaboration to mitigate challenges experienced by educators teaching in a multilingual classroom. Peer support, for

example, enables learners to seek assistance from other learners who speak the same language. Translation can assist learners in comprehending information that is not in their native language. Moreover, collaborative learning can permit learners to work together on activities and learn from one another.

The study identified four successful inclusive classroom strategies: **cooperative learning, peer tutoring, visual learning, and alternative modalities of teaching and assessment**. These strategies may assist in the creation of a more inclusive learning and conducive environment for every learner, regardless of linguistic background.

This implies that teachers prepare in a range of manners for teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom. As stated earlier, teamwork, peer support, translation, and collaborative learning are all successful teaching approaches to mitigate impediments and generate a more inclusive learning environment for all learners.

Additionally, one of the significant findings of the study was that teachers had a profound comprehension of the concept multilingualism. All nine teachers reported that in multilingual classrooms, learners bring diverse linguistic backgrounds with them to school. Learners spoke languages like Oshindonga, English, Afrikaans, Oshikwanyama, Otjiherero, Khoekhoegowab, Silozi, and Rukwangali. The teachers embraced this richness, recognising that each language forms learners' identity and cognitive growth. The concept was largely perceived as the application of more than one language in a teaching setting mainly by code switching and translanguaging as well as translating the Oshindonga lesson into English at times for better comprehension to the non-Oshindonga learners.

Clyne (2017) defines multilingualism as the ability to employ more than one language or competence in several languages. Moreover, Clyne (2017) postulates that multilingualism can employ more than two languages for communication. In this case, teachers of Oshindonga medium in multilingual classrooms employ Oshindonga language to teach and translate the same content in English to fully accommodate and assist the learners who are not Oshindonga speakers to interact with other learners in the Junior Primary phase. In the same vein, UNESCO (2020) defines multilingual education as a type of education that adopts two or more languages as mediums of instruction. Moreover, it starts in the mother tongue and translates to other languages, such as regional, national, or international languages in education. The concept of multilingualism is imperative to this study because it offers teachers the ability to create classroom environments that foster social interaction and cultural development in learners.

It is significant to note that the Oshindonga medium is adopted in multilingual classrooms where learners are non-Oshindonga native speakers. Such a setting is also visible with other languages, such as English or Afrikaans, as found in Murray's (2016) study. Murray contends that multilingual learners are allowed to consciously adopt more than one language while engaging with text and drawing on the linguistic resources at their disposal. In this study, code-switching was reported by five teachers in the previous chapter to improve comprehension. The teachers code switched into English language which they comprehended effectively.

Chapter four demonstrated that most teachers employed code-switching in some capacity. This finding aligns with previous investigations that revealed that code-switching to be an organic and efficacious method of communication between

instructors and learners in multilingual classrooms (García & Wei, 2014). In addition, participants disclosed employing translanguaging as an instructional technique. For instance, teachers explicitly mentioned their commitment to treating all languages in the classroom equally and being always kind and supportive by ensuring learners comprehend through explanations in both English and the language of the learners in which the teacher is fluent in.

Translanguaging is an instructional methodology that acknowledges and appreciates the multilingualism of its learners. Moreover, it encourages learners to learn and communicate using their entire linguistic range. It has been demonstrated that translanguaging in multilingual classrooms effectively promotes language acquisition and academic achievement (García & Wei, 2014).

There are numerous reasons why code-switching and translanguaging should be implemented in multilingual classrooms. It begins by contributing to the development of a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for all learners. Learners are more likely to actively participate and engage in the learning process when they have the confidence to utilise their native languages in the classroom. Furthermore, by using code-switching and translanguaging, learners can enhance their linguistic proficiency in both the instructional language and their mother tongue. Learners can further develop their pre-existing knowledge and abilities by acquiring new concepts in their native tongue. Thirdly, translanguaging and code-switching can assist learners with the development of their critical thinking abilities. Finally, Learners gain enhanced comprehension of semantic subtleties and competent communication across diverse contexts through the ability to compare various languages (Shihako & Shaimemanya, 2020).

Teachers operating in multilingual classrooms may consider both code-switching and translanguaging to be beneficial pedagogical tools. The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers can foster a more supportive and inclusive learning environment, advance language acquisition, and cultivate learners' critical thinking abilities by implementing these strategies.

5.4 Support provided by teachers, fellow learners, and parents to learners who struggle with comprehending Oshindonga.

In each of the three schools, the teacher provided explanations for some aspects of the curriculum in the English language. In contrast, School C employed a teaching approach where the teacher only delivered certain aspects of the class in English, whereas School B adopted a method wherein the teacher provided translations of select vocabulary terms and thereafter elucidated them in English. This implies that teachers in Schools B and C might be assuming that learners possess a higher level of English comprehension than they actually possess.

Learners from all three schools also expressed that they engaged in self-help and peer assistance by seeking guidance from both their teachers and peers. This implies that individuals engaged in the learning process exhibit qualities of resilience and resourcefulness, demonstrating a willingness to assist one another in the pursuit of knowledge acquisition. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that learners ought not to be completely dependent on their endeavours and the endeavours of their fellow learners to acquire knowledge. Therefore, educators must offer precise and focused assistance to learners who lack comprehension of the language employed for instructional purposes.

The study's findings from all three selected schools indicated that parents offered minimal or negligible support to their children in their Oshindonga academic activities. This implies that a considerable number of parents may lack the necessary abilities or means to provide adequate support for their children's educational development. Schools must offer parental support to facilitate the academic success of their children.

It was significant to note that, the results of the study uncovered several significant themes about the improvement of multilingual teaching and learning. The identified themes encompass the **language of instruction**, wherein learners in School A and School B exhibit a preference for English as the language of instruction and proposed the inclusion of Oshindonga as a distinct subject. Conversely, learners in School C emphasised the utilisation of their most proficient languages, such as their native tongues. **Teacher training** is an essential component that has significant influence, as educators in all three schools emphasised the necessity of being adequately prepared in the field of multilingual teaching. Furthermore, they acknowledged the potential benefits that might derive from having teachers who possess multilingual capabilities, thereby providing further support in this regard. The **learner placement** techniques, as suggested by teachers in School B and School C, the segregation of students should be prioritised according to their respective native languages to mitigate language-related misunderstanding. Furthermore, the significance of **instructional materials** and **resources** in native languages is underscored by teachers at School C. The results of this study accentuate the complex language interactions that occur in classrooms with many languages, emphasising the importance of customised strategies to address the specific requirements of both learners and teachers in these settings. The perceptions expressed by both learners and teachers in

their recommendations offer valuable suggestions for enhancing the quality of education in these contexts.

5.8 Summary

This chapter discussed the research findings thematically through the research questions. The chapter also pointed out that embracing linguistic variety and advocating strategies such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, visual learning, alternative modalities of teaching and assessment, code-switching and translanguaging enabled teachers and learners mitigate language impediments in a multilingual classroom. The next chapter presents the study's summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

6.1. Summary

This research investigated the experiences of Junior Primary teachers and learners in an Oshindonga-medium multilingual classroom, with a particular emphasis on the challenges teachers encounter when teaching Oshindonga to pupils from various linguistic origins. The study revealed that most teachers were not native Oshindonga speakers and that poor training in mother language teaching contributed to a lack of fluency in Oshindonga, negatively influencing instruction quality. Teachers reported feeling not confident when teaching Oshindonga in a bilingual setting, particularly in areas like reading and writing, which were seen as significant impediments. Furthermore, translating lessons from Oshindonga to other languages was time-intensive for teachers, and learners' grammatical errors delayed the teaching process even further.

With regards to the strategies employed by teachers to mitigate challenges in a multilingual classroom, the study indicated codeswitching as a common approach employed by teachers to assist students from various language settings. Most participants reported applying **code-switching** to enhance comprehension, particularly by switching to a language that learners comprehended better, which was often English. This method was perceived as a valuable tool for bridging the gap between Oshindonga and learners' native languages, resulting in more effective teaching and learning.

Moreover, teachers reported challenges in educating students from other ethnic groups who were not native Oshindonga speakers, resulting in language misunderstanding

and potentially negative effects on students' academic performance. A positive indication was when Oshindonga native speakers outperformed non-Oshindonga speakers when taught in their mother-tongue, agreeing with studies that support the benefits of native language instruction on academic attainment.

Language support and instructional practises that consider the learners' multilingual backgrounds are critical to improving their experiential and academic success.

Finally, the outcomes of the study revealed knowledge into the challenges of teaching in a multilingual classroom when employing Oshindonga as the medium of instruction. Teachers experienced a variety of difficulties because of their lack of mother tongue fluency, linguistic confusion, and time-consuming translation efforts. However, solutions such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, visual learning, alternative modalities of teaching and assessment as well as code switching have evolved as a helpful approach to addressing these issues and creating a more inclusive and effective learning environment. Despite the positive impact of teaching in the mother tongue to Oshindonga native speakers, the study also emphasised the importance of considering Namibia's linguistic variety when adopting language policies. Educators and policymakers may establish an educational environment that respects linguistic variety and encourages academic success for all learners by understanding both the challenges and the rewards.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Teacher Training in Mother-Tongue

Teacher training institutions should provide complete training on successful teaching approaches in a multilingual classroom to all instructors, regardless of native language. Training in local languages should be prioritised since it can improve

communication and understanding between teachers and learners. Peltzer-Karpf (2020) encouraged policy-makers to make provision for workshops and seminars that focus on integrating indigenous languages effectively into the curriculum while maintaining educational standards.

6.2.2. Support for Non-Native Speakers

It is recommended that additional assistance and resources should be provided to teachers who are not native Oshindonga speakers. Language competence classes, mentoring programmes, and collaborative teaching approaches with experienced native-speaking instructors could all be part of this support. Supporting non-native speakers will enhance their confidence and efficiency in a bilingual classroom.

6.2.3 Translanguaging Strategies

Where appropriate, the study encourages the application of translanguaging strategies such as code-switching and language awareness activities to minimise the gap between Oshindonga and other languages spoken by learners. This can improve understanding and learning results by permitting students to apply their linguistic talents. It is also encouraged that teachers in multilingual classrooms be open to learning different Namibian languages so as to be conversational and be able to assist learners by translanguaging in the learners' respective mother tongues and not only in English.

6.2.4. Curriculum Adaptation

A flexible and adaptive curriculum that considers learners' linguistic variety should be developed. To make the learning process more inclusive, the multiple languages spoken in the classroom can be employed. A culturally relevant curriculum will increase learners' involvement and understanding.

6.2.5. Assessment Support

A variety of assessment methods to accommodate students from different languages should be employed. This could include allowing students to respond in their native language or providing extra time for learners during assessment, this will provide a fair and accurate assessment of learners' abilities. Töttemeyer (2019) postulated that it is imperative to implement regular assessments and evaluations to monitor both teacher performance and learners progress in Oshindonga language acquisition in the multilingual Education.

6.2.6. Encourage Professional Development

Professional development opportunities for teachers to improve their code-switching skills should be provided. Workshops, training sessions, and materials focusing on successful code-switching tactics can help teachers employ this strategy with greater confidence and efficiency. Improving teachers' code-switching abilities will improve their capacity to support classroom comprehension and communication.

6.2.7. Multilingual Pedagogies

Multilingual pedagogies that account for learners' language diversity should be adopted. Code-switching and translanguaging procedures can be employed by teachers to minimise the gap between Oshindonga and other languages spoken by students, resulting in improved comprehension and communication. Multilingual pedagogies will create a conducive learning environment for all students.

6.2.8. Support from Advisory Services

This training should concentrate on ways to assist non-Oshindonga speakers, manage language challenges, and promote a conducive learning environment. Teachers will

be able to negotiate the problems of teaching in a diverse linguistic context if they are equipped with the required abilities.

6.2.9. Language Policy Revision

Policymakers (NIED) are advised to review the language policy to mitigate the challenges generated by Namibia's diverse linguistic landscape. The strategy should consider flexible approaches that recognise the relevance of mother tongue education while also recognising the necessity for inclusivity. An enhanced language policy will encourage a balanced approach to classroom language instruction, supporting inclusive practices, bilingual education where appropriate, and provides continuous professional development for teachers.

6.2.10. Community Engagement

School managers should work with parents and the local community to promote the value of mother tongue education while encouraging support for multilingual education. Collaboration with the community can assist in the development of a constructive attitude towards linguistic variety in education. Community participation will enhance the link between home languages and classroom learning (Shihepo, 2021).

6.2.11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy-making body (NIED) should monitor and assess the impact of employing Oshindonga as a medium of instruction in a multilingual classroom regularly. Data collection on student performance, language development, and overall learning experience can assist in identifying areas for improvement and inform future decisions. Continuous evaluation will enable evidence-based decision-making and policy improvement in the field of language in education.

By implementing these recommendations effectively, teachers, policymakers, and communities will be able to solve the obstacles, capitalise on the strengths, and establish a friendly and successful learning environment for all learners in a multilingual classroom.

To sum up, teachers and policymakers can strive towards creating an inclusive and successful learning environment by recognising and appreciating the challenges and opportunities presented in a multilingual classroom that employ Oshindonga as the medium of instruction. Embracing linguistic variety and advocating mechanisms such as code-switching can enable teachers mitigate language impediments and enhance the overall educational quality for all learners in Namibia's diverse and multicultural culture.

6.3 Possible strategies that could be implemented as contribution to the new knowledge include the following;

6.3.1 Crafting materials and resources for Oshindonga language study by means of developing tools that support language acquisition across various skills such as:

- ❖ Alphabet and Phonetics: introducing the Oshindonga alphabet and pronunciation rules over visual aids and voice recordings.
- ❖ Vocabulary Building: Creating thematic vocabulary lists with words translation and related usage examples.
- ❖ Reading and Writing Materials: Develop reading passages and writing exercises in Oshindonga to build comprehension.

6.3.2 Facilitating learners' utilisation of Oshindonga in social and academic settings:

This can be achieved through role-playing and dialogues by engaging learners in role-plays and dialogues to practise Oshindonga in real-life scenarios as well as encouraging peer interaction in Oshindonga to promote language practice and mutual support.

6.3.3 Promoting Oshindonga usage within the household and community:

Family Engagement and Community Events: this entails engaging and encouraging families to use Oshindonga in day-to-day conversations and activities with learners as well as organising cultural events where Oshindonga is applied and celebrated.

This will foster community pride and language development.

6.3.4 Creating and executing an inclusive multilingual curriculum that caters to the requirements of every learner

By differentiating instruction and providing support and scaffolding to meet the needs of learners with varying proficiency levels in Oshindonga.

These strategies can foster more inclusive and supportive learning environments for all learners in multilingual classrooms by addressing these challenges.

6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Long-Term Effects of Multilingual Education: This study recommends that future scholars should conduct a long-term study to investigate the long-term impact of implementing multilingual pedagogies in a multilingual and multicultural settings. Moreover, they should examine how these pedagogies affect learners' language development, academic achievement, and overall educational results over time.

Longitudinal research will provide imperative data into the viability and efficacy of multilingual approaches to improving learning experiences.

Teacher Preparation and Support: In addition, scholars should research the teachers needs in multilingual classrooms, especially those who are not native speakers of the language that is chosen as medium of instruction. Examine the efficacy of various support mechanisms, such as mentoring programmes and language proficiency courses, in increasing teachers' confidence and ability to teach in a multilingual society. This research can inform targeted treatments and programmes for professional growth for educators working in a variety of linguistic environments. Future research can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of effective techniques and policies in multilingual classrooms, ultimately improving educational quality and encouraging inclusive learning environments in linguistically diverse circumstances by addressing these research gaps.

6.5. Conclusion

The study provided knowledge on the multiple challenges that instructors experience in a multilingual classroom where Oshindonga is employed as the medium of instruction. These difficulties originate from teachers' lack of fluency in their native language, along with an absence of training, which impedes successful teaching to students from varied linguistic backgrounds. The challenges learners encounter in distinguishing between the language employed for instruction and their mother tongue, in particular, reading and writing, contribute significantly to the challenges encountered in the learning process.

Among the solutions applied to solve these issues, code-switching emerged as a popular and useful tool used by junior primary instructors. Moreover, code-switching

enables teachers to accommodate the linguistic diversity of their students while also improving comprehension. Educators establish a friendly and inclusive learning environment that supports effective teaching and learning by switching to the language that learners best comprehend, which is often English. This technique bridges the communication gap between the medium of teaching (Oshindonga) and the learners' native languages, resulting in a more successful educational experience.

However, the study also revealed that there are both positive and negative experiences with employing Oshindonga as a medium of instruction in a multilingual classroom. While the Namibian language policy promotes mother tongue instruction in the junior elementary period, the study emphasises that implementation may be difficult in a linguistically varied and multicultural country. Linguistic misunderstanding can result from a linguistic gap between learners' home languages and the medium of instruction, which can have an impact on academic achievement.

Nonetheless, the benefits of teaching Oshindonga to native speakers are visible in their enhanced academic achievement, demonstrating the value of training in one's home language. To address these challenges and capitalise on the benefits of using Oshindonga as a medium of instruction, it is critical to implement multilingual pedagogies, provide comprehensive teacher training, review language policies, engage with the community, and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: WKC0004

Date: 03 April 2022

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralized Ethics Committee (DEC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the **School of Education (Windhoek & Khomasdal Campuses) Decentralized Ethics Committee**.

Title of Project: Experiences of Junior Primary Teachers and Learners in an Oshindonga medium multilingual classroom in Khomas Educational Region.

Researcher: Eveline Ndatilifa

Student number: 201103613

Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the ethics committee. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the ethics committee
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the ethics committee (through the Chairperson) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by the ethics committee
4. The ethics committee retains the right to:
 - i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

The ethics committee wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Job U. Hengari'.

Dr Job U. Hengari (Chairperson, Windhoek & Khomasdal Campuses DEC)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Davis Mumbengegwi'.

Prof. Davis Mumbengegwi (Head, Multidisciplinary Research)

APPENDIX 2: RESEACH PERMISSION LETTER

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH SERVICES

Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation & Development

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia

340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneers Park, Office F223 - Fblock, Second Floor

☎ +264 61 206 4673; E-mail: kmbulu@unam.na; URL: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Date: 18/05/2022

Student Name: Eveline Ndatilifa

Student Number: 201103613

Programme: MASTERS IN EDUCATION

Approved Research Title: Experiences of Junior Primary Teachers and Learners in an Oshindonga medium multilingual classroom in Khomas Educational Region.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

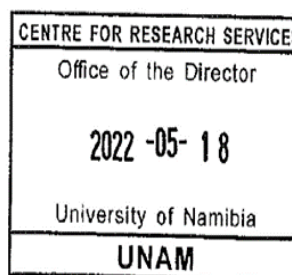
I hereby confirm that the above-mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

The proposal adheres to ethical principles as per attached Ethical Clearance Certificate. Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AEE', is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. AEE Shikongo
Head: Postgraduate Support Services
Tel: +264 61 206 3129
E-mail: aeshikongo@unam.na



APPENDIX 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Please take a few minutes and answer the following questions. This interview aims to find out the challenges you face in teaching in a multilingual classroom. Your response will support my study a lot. Thank you for the time and effort you put into this task.

How many years have you been teaching now?

.....

Section A

1. What is your understanding of multilingual teaching?

.....

2. Were you trained to teach in your mother tongue Oshindonga? Tell me more about what your training entailed.

.....

3. Were you trained in multilingual teaching?

.....

4. Are you comfortable /confident with teaching in a multilingual classroom? Please elaborate.

.....

5. Do you have any problems interpreting the syllabus in your mother tongue (Oshindonga)? Please elaborate.

.....

6. Can you read, write, speak and understand the language of instruction fluently?

.....

7. Do you have enough materials in the mother tongue (Oshindonga)? What do you do to improve your situation?

.....

8. When you look back at the way you were trained, what do you think teacher training should have prepared you for about teaching a multilingual class?

.....

9. What challenges do you experience in teaching a multilingual classroom with Oshindonga as a medium of instruction?

.....

10. What strategies do you, Junior Primary teachers and learners use to overcome those challenges?

.....

11. How do you assist/support children from different mother tongues, in your classroom? (whose mother tongues are not Oshindonga)? Also specifically how do you handle children from different Oshiwambo dialects e.g., Oshikwanyama, Oshikwambi, Mbalantu etc.?

.....

12. What support do you feel Junior Primary teachers need to enhance multilingual education?

.....

13. How would you describe the language situation at your school? Please give details of any recent developments (last three years) about medium of instruction, learner work according to home language etc.

.....

APPENDIX 4: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

Date:

School: A B C D E (Circle)

Teacher: 1 2 3 4 5 6 (Circle)

Number of learners in the classroom: Boys: Girls:

Number of minority children: Majority children:

Mother Tongue (s) of minority children:
.....

Syllabus information

1. Does the teacher have the Oshindonga syllabus? Yes

No

2. Does the teacher have the Oshindonga lesson plan? Yes

No

3. How is the CA done?

.....

The focus of the observation

1. School background Urban

2. Grade to be observed Grade 1 2 3

3. Lesson observed

Actively participating	Fairly participating	Poorly participating
------------------------	----------------------	----------------------

Children with other MT

Actively participating	Fairly participating	Poorly participating
------------------------	----------------------	----------------------

8. Challenges experienced by the teacher during the lesson.

.....

9. Challenges experienced by the learners during the lesson

.....

10. Classroom management/ how the teacher manages the classroom

.....

APPENDIX 5: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH CHILDREN

1. What language do you speak at home? / What language (s) do your parents speak?

.....

.

2. When did you start learning Oshindonga and why did you choose to be in the Oshindonga classroom? Are your parents happy that you are learning your subjects in Oshindonga?

.....

3. Do you like learning in Oshindonga? Tell me more about what you like.

.....

4. Can you read, write, speak and understand Oshindonga?

.....

.

5. Do you have any difficulties/challenges in learning in the Oshindonga medium?

.....

6. Do you feel that you fully understand the lessons?

.....

7. How does the teacher support/assist you when you do not understand?

.....

8. How do you help yourself or one another? Do other children also support you?

.....

9. How do your parents support you?

.....

10. What do you want the teacher or the school to do to improve your learning in a multilingual classroom?

.....

11. Anything else you would like to say?

.....

APPENDIX 6: SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of the school:

.....

2. School contact number:

.....

3. Total number of learners at the school:

.....

4. Average number of learners per class:

.....

5. Medium (s) of instruction of the school at Junior Primary:

.....

6. Number of classes per grade in the school:

Pre-grade	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3

7. Number of teaching staff with the following home languages?

Oshindonga	Otjiherero	Oshikwanyama	KKG	Afrikaans	Others

8. How many learners in each grade have the following as a home language?

Languages	Pre-grade	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Oshindonga				
Otjiherero				
Oshikwanyama				
KKG				
Afrikaans				
Others: (Specify)				

9. How many teaching staff are fluent in the following combination?

Oshindonga and English	Otjiherero and English	Oshikwanyama and English	KKG and English	Afrikaans and English

APPENDIX 7: TEACHER'S CONSENT FORM



Introduction

I am Eveline N Ndatilifa pursuing a master's in education from the University of Namibia. My study aims to examine and document as well as find best practices for teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom.

Type of Research Intervention.

Answering the interview questions will not take more than 20 minutes.

Participant Selection

It is very important to hear the experiences lived by teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom and suggest effective strategies JP teachers can apply to overcome challenges they encounter in their multilingual classrooms with Oshindonga as a medium of instruction.

Voluntary Participation

The teacher will be free to participate in the interview questions. The teacher will be free to participate in answering the interview questions while being voice recorded or not.

Procedures

Any time of the interview questions, the teacher may stop or ask for clarification if the questions are not clear.

Duration

The interview will take +- 20 minutes.

Risks

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Benefits

Your answers as the teacher will be of great help to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in implementing best practices to teach and learn in a multilingual classroom.

Reward

The interview questions will be completed immediately after class hours so that not much expenses will be involved for the teacher to travel up and down. Words of encouragement and gratitude will be expressed to all the teachers who will participate.

Confidentiality

Whatever will be completed in the interview questions will be kept confidential. No information will be shared without the consent of the teacher and no name of the teacher will be used.

Sharing the Results

No results will be shared without the consent of the teacher involved and the identity of the teacher will be revealed because there will be no names mentioned in the final document.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

The teacher will have the right to withdraw at any time from the questionnaire and no reason will be asked for withdrawal. The rights of the teacher will be always respected.

Who to Contact

If there are any questions or clarity to be given I may contact Ms. Eveline N. Ndatilifa on the following details, cell number +264 814386150, email address endatilifa@gmail.com

This research has been reviewed and approved by the relevant Ethics Review Committee at the University of Namibia, which is the committee whose task is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. The committee reports to the University's Centre for Research Services. If you wish to contact the Centre, please call +264 61 206 4673 or send an email to research@unam.na.

CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked, have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Name of Participant (print)

Date (day/month/year)

Signature of Participant

APPENDIX 8: PARENTS' CONSENT FORM



Parent's Consent Form for the Participation of Minors in a Research Study

EXPERIENCES OF JUNIOR PRIMARY TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IN AN OSHINDONGA MEDIUM MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM: IN THE KHOMAS EDUCATIONAL REGION

Your child is invited to participate in a research study to be conducted by Eveline Ndatilifa a Master in Education student from the University of Namibia. The study aims to examine and document as well as find best practices for teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom.

The purpose of this study is to unpack experiences lived by teachers and learners in a multilingual classroom and suggest effective strategies JP teachers can apply to overcome challenges they encounter in their multilingual classrooms with Oshindonga as a medium of instruction.

If you allow your child to participate in this study, they will not be interviewed or expected to perform any other task that is not part of their school timetables. Classes will not be interrupted as the teacher will carry on with her duties as normal. Your child will only be part of video recordings during focus group discussions. The video will not be seen by anybody else except the researcher. Video recordings will be stored securely and only the researcher Ms. Eveline Ndatilifa will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be kept for the period of the studies (1 year) and then erased after studies have been completed.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or withdraw from participation at any time. You can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty. This research study will take place during regular classroom activities; however, if you do not want your child to participate, they will be excluded from focus group discussions.

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, it will guide policymakers when drafting the curriculum.

Before, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher Eveline Ndatilifa at + **264 814386150** or send an email to **endatilifa@gmail.com** for any questions or if you feel that you have been harmed.

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at +**264 061 2063061**; or **pclaassen@unam.na** if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.

Signature

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow your child to participate in the study. You will be given a copy of this document. _____

Printed Name of Child: _____

Signature of Parent(s) or Legal Guardian

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX 9: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PERMISSION LETTER



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Enquiries: Mr. G. Munene
Tel: +264 61 -293 3202
Fax: +264 61- 293 3922
Email: Gibson.Munene@moe.gov.na
File no: 13-29-1

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

Ms. Eveline Ngondumbo Ndatilifa
P O Box 724114
Khomas Grove
Windhoek

Dear, Ms E. N. Ndatilifa,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN KHOMAS REGION

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated, 13 May 2022 seeking for permission to conduct academic research in the abovementioned regions for your Masters Degree studies which is focusing on: "*How Learners Learnt Oshindonga in Multilingual Classrooms Where Oshindonga as a Medium of Instruction is Used.*"


Permission has been granted to you. However, you have to seek for further clearance from the Khomas Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture to ensure that:

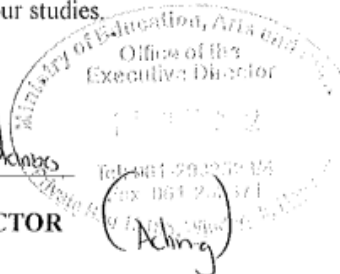
- staff members' normal work is not disrupted during your interviews;
- participation is voluntary;
- Parental consent should be granted by the parents / guardians of all participants in this research;

Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr G. Munene on the above provided contacts at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of your research findings at the above indicated details.

We wish you the best in conducting your research and the Ministry looks forward to hearing from you upon completion of your studies.

Yours sincerely,


Sanet L. Steenkamp
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



All official correspondence must be addressed to the Executive Director

Page 1 of 1

APPENDIX 10: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION PERMISSION LETTER



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 4356 Private Bag 13236 Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251
WINDHOEK

29 June 2022

For Attention: Ms. Eveline N Ndatilifa

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WINDHOEK, KHOMAS REGION

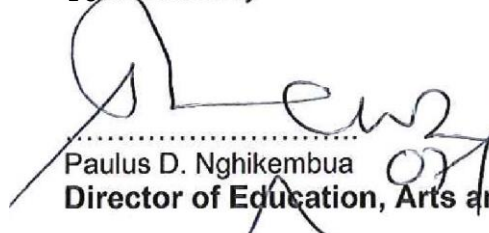
Your letter dated 27 June 2022 on the above topic is hereby acknowledged.

Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research on "How Learnt Oshindonga in Multilingual Classrooms Where Oshindonga as a Medium of Instruction is Used" in Windhoek, Khomas Region under the following conditions:

- ❖ The Principal of the selected school to be visited must be contacted in advance and agreement should be reached between you and the Principal,
- ❖ the school programme should not be interrupted.
- ❖ The teachers and students who will take part in this exercise will do so voluntarily. The Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture should be provided with a copy of your thesis/ findings.

We wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely


Paulus D. Nghikembua
Director of Education, Arts and Culture

