

# THE STATUS OF THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LOLT) IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

## A QUANTITATIVE OVERVIEW



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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The Department of Basic Education (DBE) acknowledges the initial research undertaken on its behalf by the University of Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit (Wits EPU) on the status of the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in schools. The Department is particularly grateful for the work undertaken by Wits EPU in imputing the DBE's data on LOLT, which was drawn upon for much of the information in this report.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Mother tongue:** Refers to the language that a learner has acquired in his/her early years and which has normally become his/her natural instrument of thought and communication.

**Home language:** Refers to the language that is spoken most frequently at home by a learner.

**Language of learning and teaching (LOLT):** Refers to the language medium in which learning and teaching, including assessment, takes place.

**Bilingualism:** Refers to the ability to communicate effectively in two languages, with more or less the same degree of proficiency in both languages.

**Multilingualism:** Refers to the ability to speak more than two languages; or to be proficient in many languages.

**Code switching:** Refers to switching from one language of instruction to another language of instruction during teaching and learning.

**Dual medium of instruction:** Refers to the use of two media (languages) of instruction by a teacher in a lesson, switching from one medium (language) to the other, on a 50:50 ratio.

**Language learning areas:** Refers to any of the 11 official languages, other languages approved by the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), Braille and South African Sign Language, approved by UMALUSI.

**Language level:** Refers to the level of proficiency at which language learning areas are offered at school (e.g. home language, first additional language, second additional language).

**Language proficiency:** Refers to the level of competence at which an individual is able to use a language for both basic communication tasks and academic purposes.

**African language:** In the context of this report, the term refers to South Africa's nine official languages namely: isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

**Single medium of instruction:** Refers to the use of one medium (language) of instruction by a teacher in a class.

**Single medium school:** Refers to a school that uses one medium of instruction (language) for all learners in all grades.

**Parallel medium instruction:** Refers to teaching that takes place in two or more languages of instruction in separate classes in the same grade.

**Parallel medium school:** Refers to a school that practices parallel medium instruction in all grades.

**Preferred language of instruction:** Refers to the (preferred) language of instruction indicated by a learner at the time of registration.

**First additional language:** Refers to a compulsory language subject that learners have to study at that level.

**Second additional language:** Refers to a non-compulsory language subject that may be studied (by choice) by learners at that level.





## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>DBE:</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>EMIS:</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>GET:</b>	General Education and Training
<b>HoD:</b>	Head of Department
<b>LiEP:</b>	Language in Education Policy
<b>LLC 1:</b>	First additional language
<b>LLC 2:</b>	Second additional language
<b>LLC 3:</b>	Third additional language
<b>LOLT:</b>	Language of learning and teaching
<b>LURITS:</b>	Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System
<b>NCS:</b>	National Curriculum Statement
<b>PANSALB:</b>	Pan South African Language Board
<b>PED:</b>	Provincial education department
<b>SASA:</b>	South African Schools Act
<b>SGB:</b>	School governing body
<b>UMALUSI:</b>	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
<b>Wits EPU:</b>	University of Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit

# CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Introduction

Language is commonly described as the means by which a person learns to organise experiences and thoughts. It stands at the centre of the many interdependent cognitive, affective and social factors that shape learning (Thomas and Collier, 2001). Consequently, it is crucial to study how language is being used for teaching and learning purposes in the schooling system. Questions surrounding the use of the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in schools become particularly important in multilingual societies – especially for parents, educators and policy-makers.

Research on the association between mother-tongue education and scholastic achievement points to a good correlation between the two (Myburgh, Poggenpoel and Van Rensburg, 2004; Burkett, Clegg, Landon, Reilly and Verster, 2001; Kaphesi, 2000; Howie, Venter and Van Staden, undated). It has been found that bilingual children perform better in school when the school effectively teaches the children's home language and, where appropriate, develops literacy in that language (Cummins, 2001). By contrast, when children are encouraged to reject their home language, the development of that language stagnates and their personal and conceptual foundation for learning is undermined.

According to Myburgh et al. (2004), where learners do not speak the language of instruction, authentic teaching and learning cannot take place. It can be purported that such a situation largely accounts for the school ineffectiveness and low academic achievement experienced by students in Africa. It therefore becomes important to encourage the use of home language as the LOLT, especially in the earlier years of schooling.

The use of learners' first language as the LOLT would be in line with the Education for All goals. Learning in one's own language holds various advantages for the learner, including increased access, improved learning outcomes, reduced chances of repetition and drop-out rates, and socio-cultural benefits (World Bank, 2005).

## 1.2 Policy and legislative background

The language policy for schools is guided by principles derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996a) and the South African Schools Act (SASA) (RSA, 1996b).

The former Department of Education adopted the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) in 1997, and further clarified this policy in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of 2002.

### 1.2.1 *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*

The Constitution (RSA, 1996a) deals with the subject of language in a variety of inter-related ways. For the purposes of this report, however, only two important sections will be highlighted, namely the status of official languages in the country and the right of all to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice in public schools.

The founding provisions of the Constitution note the 11 official languages of the Republic of South Africa as being Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. However, although section 6(2) of the founding provisions prioritises the need to “elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages” as a form of redress, section 6(4) restrains this provision by stating that “without detracting from the provisions of subsection (2), all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably”. The latter clause has important implications for the determination of



language policy in schools – particularly in the context of recent debates on the status of English as a medium of instruction in schools.

Section 29(2) of the Bill of Rights, which forms part of the South African Constitution, is unequivocal about the right of all to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice in public education institutions. However, the exercising of this right is fettered by the state's ability to provide for this right only in a context where "that education is reasonably practicable". The Bill of Rights does, however, point to principles that should be considered in order to ensure effective access to, and effective implementation of this right, namely the need for equity, redress and practicability. The Bill of Rights also compels the state to consider all reasonable education alternatives to promote the exercising of this right, including the establishment of single medium institutions.

In effect, although the Constitution affords learners the right to learn in the language(s) of their choice, this right is tempered by the state's ability to practically provide for its implementation.

### **1.2.2 The South African Schools Act**

Section 6 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (RSA, 1996b) prescribes several preconditions in relation to the determination of language policy in public schools. Of great importance for this report is the power that the Act confers on school governing bodies (SGBs) to determine the language policy of a school, *albeit* subject to the Constitution, SASA and any applicable provincial law. Indeed, the interpretation of this section of SASA has been the object of significant legal contestation, as is evidenced by the number of court cases pertaining to this matter.

Of further significance, is SASA's holistic and inclusive approach to language policy, which has resulted in the inclusion of a clause that stipulates that "a recognised Sign Language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at a public school". It is therefore now common knowledge that, in the context of education, one speaks of 12 "official" languages, as opposed to the 11 stipulated in the Constitution.

### **1.2.3 The Language in Education Policy**

The underlying principle of the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) is to maintain the use of home language as the LOLT (especially in the early years of learning), while providing access to an additional language(s). The LiEP has the following stipulations:

- All learners shall be offered at least one approved language as a subject in Grades 1 and 2.
- From Grade 3 onwards, all learners shall be offered their LOLT and at least one additional approved language as a subject.
- All language subjects shall receive equitable time and resource allocation.
- Learners must choose their LOLT upon application for admission to a particular school. Where a school uses the LOLT chosen by the learner, and where there is a place available in the relevant grade, the school must admit the learner.
- Where no school in a school district offers the desired language as a medium of learning and teaching, the learner may request the provincial education department (PED) to make provision for instruction in his/her chosen language. The PED must make copies of the request and make it available to all schools in the relevant school district.



- The PED must keep a register of requests by learners for teaching in a language or medium that cannot be accommodated by schools.
- It is reasonably practical to provide education in a particular LOLT if at least 40 learners in Grades 1 to 6 or 35 learners in Grades 7 to 12 request it in a particular school.

In essence, the LOLT provided by a school depends to a large extent on the choices made by learners (or parents) in selecting their LOLT. The LiEP, read together with SASA, which confers certain rights on SGBs in determining the language policy of a school, places the emphasis on *choice*, rather than strong state intervention, as a basis for determining the policy pertaining to the LOLT in schools.

In summary, the LiEP attempts to promote both the use of learners' home languages in schools, as well as ensure that learners acquire an additional language of communication to facilitate the bridging of race, language and regional divides, while encouraging respect for others languages.

#### **1.2.4 The National Curriculum Statement**

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) prioritises the importance of additive multilingualism and promotes the need for African languages to be taught at schools. It stipulates that:

- all learners study their home language and at least one additional language as language subjects from Grade 1; and
- that all learners have studied an African language for a minimum of three years by the end of the General Education and Training (GET) band.

### **1.3 Court cases in relation to the language policy in schools**

#### **1.3.1 Introduction**

A significant number of cases in respect of language policy in schools were brought before the courts. These cases have important implications for the interpretation of laws and policies on language and, consequently, their implementation. The section below highlights the key points in relation to two landmark judgements.

#### **1.3.2 Court cases**

##### ***NR Nkosi versus Durban High School Governing Body***

- A parent of a Durban High School learner claimed that her son (and other learners whose home language was isiZulu) were discriminated against by being taught in isiZulu as a third additional language (LLC 3), as opposed to isiZulu being taught at a higher level.
- The parent testified that the school's language policy was discriminatory, since isiZulu learners were negatively affected with regard to their proficiency in isiZulu.
- The court found that offering Afrikaans as a subject at a higher level (LLC 2) as compared to isiZulu, constituted unfair discrimination (on the part of the school) against all learners in those grades whose home language was isiZulu.



- *The Court did not expressly order the school what to do, but instead it expressed passing remarks that the following be undertaken:*
  - o A serious commitment by the state to provide the capacity, in terms of resources, in order to enable every public school in KwaZulu-Natal to be in the position to provide isiZulu at LLC 1 level.
  - o The necessary commitment on the part of all affected stakeholders.
- Furthermore, the court was asked by the parent to find that the school should provide isiZulu at LLC 1 level. The court was not prepared to make such a finding because, to have done that, would in fact be treating the school (second respondent) as a *sui generis* (of its own kind) in that it would be expecting the second respondent to meet an ideal standard that no school in the province, or indeed in the country, meets. However, the court supported the notion that the Constitution is transformative.
- There was no specific implication for SGBs.
- The implication of this case is that schools are expected to familiarise themselves with the difference between fair and unfair discrimination when dealing with language issues. For instance, both Afrikaans and isiZulu were additional languages, but they were not offered at the same level and there was no evidence before the court as to the comparative number of learners with regard to the two subjects mentioned.

#### ***Hoërskool Ermelo versus the Head of the Mpumalanga Department of Education***

- The Head of Department (HoD) instructed the Principal of Ermelo High School, an Afrikaans medium school only, to admit 113 learners who could not be accommodated elsewhere [to be taught in English] for the 2007 academic year, which was contrary to the language policy of the school.
- The HoD also decided to withdraw the SGB's function of determining the language policy of the school with immediate effect.
- The HoD appointed an interim committee to change the language policy of the school from an Afrikaans medium school to a parallel medium school.
- The court decision went in favour of the school, thus setting aside the HoD's decision to withdraw the school's function of determining its language policy.
- The HOD appealed to the Constitutional Court, stating that the school was the only high school not filled to capacity.
- The Constitutional Court found that a HoD may, on reasonable grounds, withdraw a school's language policy.
- The power to determine the language policy in a public school must be exercised by the SGB, subject to the limitations that the Constitution and the Schools Act laid down, taking into consideration what is fair, practicable and enhances historical redress.
- The court ordered the HoD to file a report to the Constitutional Court, setting out the likely demand for Grade 8 English places at the beginning of 2010, as well as setting out the steps that the Department had taken to satisfy this likely demand for an English or parallel medium high school in the circuit of Ermelo.
- It further ordered the SGB of Ermelo to review and determine a language policy in terms of section 6(2) of the Schools Act and the Constitution.

- In conclusion, the judge stated that the power to determine a school's language policy was vested in the SGB. The judge emphasised, however, that this did not mean that the function to decide on a medium (language) of instruction in a public school is absolute, or that it was the exclusive preserve of the governing body.
- Section 6(2) of SASA makes provision that the SGB *may* determine the language policy of a school. The word “may” is used in this particular section and not the word “must,” which means that the power is not absolute.
- The HoD may only withdraw a function of an SGB “on reasonable grounds”. Again, the statute does not set any limitation beyond the requirement of reasonableness in withdrawing a function.

### ***1.3.3 Implications of court judgements for language policy***

The court judgements confirmed the importance of ensuring that learners be given the choice of their home language as the LOLT or as an additional language. In recognising the right of a learner to receive education in an official language or in a language of one's choice, the state is duty-bound to ensure effective access to the right to be taught in the language of one's choice. This duty is coupled with the obligation on the state to ensure that there are sufficient school places for every child living in a province, as well as with the duty to ensure that a public school admits learners without unfair discrimination against them in any way.

## **1.4 Purpose of the report**

The primary purpose of this report is to provide a trend analysis of language data for the period 1997/98 to 2007, which constitutes the years for which the data was available. Trend data reveals patterns and shifts in the status of the language in schools over time, and provides a useful basis for assessing the effectiveness of policy implementation.



## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research methods

The following research methods were adopted in the preparation of this report:

- Review of the literature [drawn largely from an internal report prepared by the Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit (Wits EPU) on behalf of the Department].
- A descriptive policy analysis.
- Summarisation of court records.
- Descriptive analysis of quantitative data obtained from the Department's Annual School Survey.

Given the purpose and the nature of this report, this chapter focuses on methodological issues related to the descriptive analysis of the quantitative data.

### 2.2 Descriptive analysis of quantitative data

#### 2.2.1 Data source

Data on the status of LOLT in schools, as well as on language subjects offered by schools, is collected annually by the Department's Education Management Information System (EMIS) via the Annual School Survey.

The Annual School Survey is a self-reporting tool responded to by school principals. It requires principals to provide the following aggregated language-related data (see Annexure A):

- The number of learners according to their home language.
- The number of learners learning in a particular LOLT, by grade.
- The number of learners enrolled for the first, second and third additional languages, by phase.

This report draws upon the data provided by schools on the above issues to provide a picture of the trends in the status of both LOLT and additional languages in schools.

However, given the relatively poor item response rates on the language questions in the Annual School Survey by some schools, it was not possible to use the "raw" data provided by schools for the report. The DBE therefore commissioned Wits EPU to impute the data, with a view to improving the quality thereof for the purpose of analysis. This report therefore draws on the data that was imputed by Wits EPU in 2007.

#### 2.2.2 Limitations

Due to the unavailability of data at individual learner level, the report provides limited cross-tabulated analyses across variables. Nonetheless, the existing school-level aggregated data does serve as an excellent source of basic information. In addition, the adoption of certain assumptions in this report made it possible to undertake a comparison across some variables.

Future reports of this nature will, however, be less likely to be hampered by the absence of individual learner data. The successful roll-out of the Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System (LURITS) by the national and provincial education departments will, in time to come, no doubt result in the availability of more appropriate data.

### ***2.2.3 A cautionary note regarding data quality***

Readers are cautioned about reading too closely into the actual data values presented in the report. It is advised that attention rather be paid to the broad patterns and trends revealed by the data.

There are two reasons to be prudent about the interpretation of the data values presented in the report. Firstly, the data is self-reported data by school principals and often not sufficiently verified at provincial level. It is quite probable therefore, that the data provided by schools may not be accurate. Secondly, the analysis of trend data for the period 1997/98 to 2007 may provide a somewhat distorted picture of reality, which is due to the lack of consistency in the standard of data quality obtained over this period. EMIS has shown a significant improvement in the quality of its data over recent years. Hence, a comparative analysis of the data for the period 1997/98 to 2007 needs to be interpreted with caution.

### ***2.2.4 Reporting on the data***

The data on the status of language in schools is reported upon in two chapters. Chapter 3 reports on language data at the level of aggregate learners, while Chapter 4 reports on data at school level.





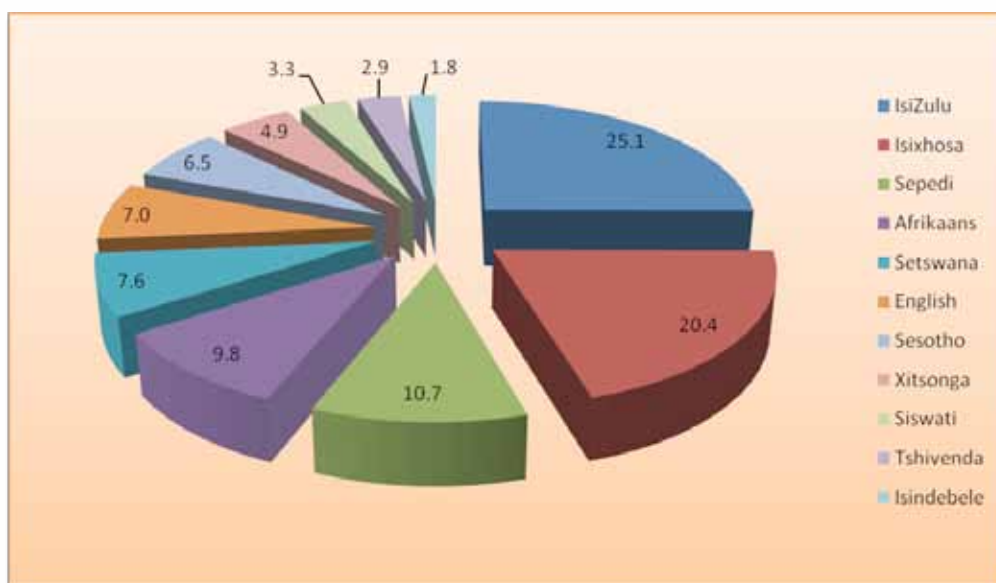
## CHAPTER 3: QUANTITATIVE OVERVIEW OF LEARNER DATA ON LANGUAGE

### 3.1 Home language of learners

Home language refers to the language that is spoken most frequently at home by a learner (DBE, 2010).

Figure 1 indicates that, in 2007, the majority of learners in the school system (25%) used isiZulu as their home language. This was followed by learners whose home language was isiXhosa (20%). Only 10% and 7% of learners reported having Afrikaans and English as their home languages respectively. isiNdebele (at 2%) and Tshivenda (at 3%) were the least spoken home languages by learners.

**Figure 1: Percentage of learners by home language: 2007**



Source: DoE: 2007 Annual School Survey

Table 1 shows the distribution of learners according to home language across grades, in 2007. It reveals that in most instances, the proportion of learners according to their home language is relatively consistent across all grades, except in the case of isiXhosa, where there was a significantly lower proportion of isiXhosa learners in Grade 12 as compared to those in Grade 1. A superficial reading of the data suggests the possibility of a greater problem of drop-outs amongst isiXhosa home-language learners in relation to other learners. However, this analysis needs to be verified, using data over a twelve-year period.

**Table 1: Percentage of learners by home language and grade: 2007**

Grade	Percentage of learners by home language											Total
	Afrikaans	English	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	
1	9.2	5.6	1.5	23.5	27.1	8.9	6.4	8.0	3.0	2.3	4.5	100
2	9.5	5.9	1.6	22.4	25.7	9.9	6.5	8.0	3.0	2.6	4.8	100
3	9.7	5.8	1.7	22.2	25.3	10.4	6.4	7.8	3.2	2.7	4.9	100
4	10.3	6.9	1.8	21.1	24.3	10.6	6.4	7.6	3.3	2.9	4.9	100

Grade	Percentage of learners by home language											
	Afrikaans	English	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Total
5	9.9	7.3	1.8	20.9	25.3	10.3	6.5	7.4	3.3	2.8	4.7	100
6	10.0	8.1	1.8	20.4	25.2	10.3	6.3	7.4	3.3	2.8	4.6	100
7	10.6	7.5	1.9	21.1	23.6	10.6	6.6	7.4	3.3	2.8	4.6	100
8	9.8	6.9	2	20.3	24.6	11.3	6.5	7.2	3.6	2.9	5.0	100
9	10.5	7.8	1.9	18.6	24.4	11.0	6.8	7.9	3.2	3.1	4.8	100
10	9.4	7.2	2.1	17.7	24.0	12.0	7.4	8.3	3.4	3.3	5.2	100
11	9.6	9.0	1.8	19.0	25.0	11.7	5.5	6.3	3.1	3.7	5.3	100
12	8.8	7.8	2.2	15.4	26.3	12.6	6.3	7.4	3.8	3.8	5.6	100

Source: DoE: 2007 Annual School Survey

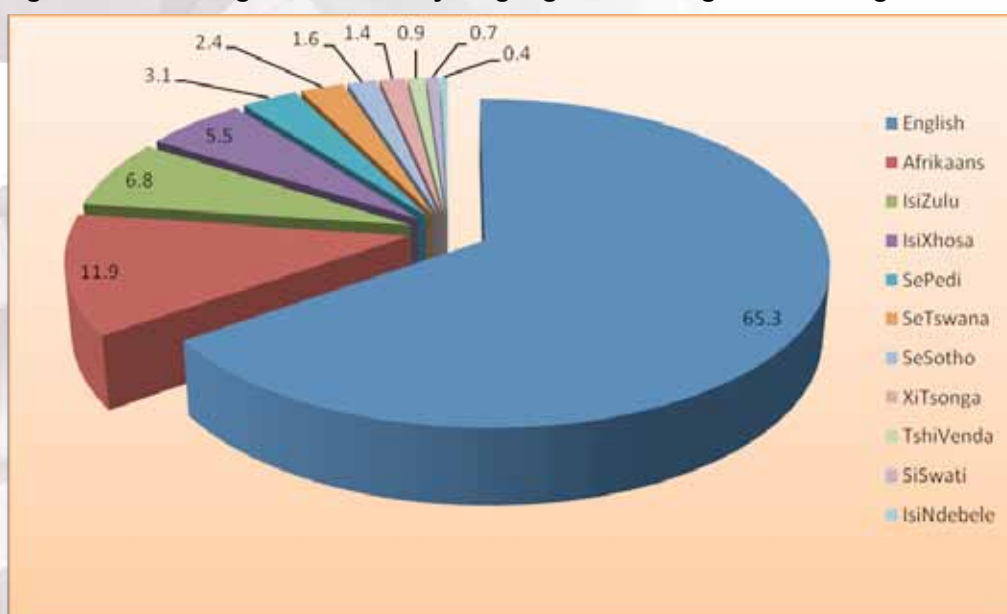
### 3.2 The overall LOLT of learners

LOLT refers to the language or medium of instruction via which learning and teaching (including assessment) for all subjects is facilitated. Any of the 11 official languages (plus Sign Language) may be used for this purpose. The LOLT in a school is determined by SGBs who select the LOLT of their schools in accordance with section 6(2) of the South African Schools Act.

Although the concept of LOLT sounds reasonably simple, in reality teaching and learning does not really take place in a single language. For example, anecdotal evidence points to instances where teaching and learning take place in one language, while assessment takes place in another. Alternatively, teaching and learning could take place in two languages in the same class via dual medium instruction.

The Annual School Survey is, however, not equipped to capture details of such nuances. Consequently, this report can only provide formal information on LOLT as reported by schools in the Annual School Survey.

**Figure 2: Percentage of learners by language of learning and teaching: 2007**



Source: DoE, 2007 Annual School Survey



Figure 2 shows the proportion of South African learners who were learning in a specific language (regardless of grade) in 2007. It indicates that the majority of learners *in the school system* (65%) in 2007 learnt via the medium of English. The second most common language of learning amongst learners was Afrikaans at 12%. In the case of African languages, isiZulu and isiXhosa were the most commonly used languages for learning and teaching at 7% and 6% respectively.

Although English and Afrikaans were the dominant languages of learning and teaching in the school system as a whole, the pattern is not the same in the Foundation Phase Grades, as may be seen from Tables 2, 3 and 4 below.

### 3.3 The LOLT of Grade 1 learners

Table 2: Percentage of Grade 1 learners by language of learning and teaching: 1998 to 2007

Percentage of learners by year										
LOLT	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Afrikaans	5.1	6.2	7.8	6.7	9.3	8.3	9.0	8.6	7.5	9.5
English	31.7	30.3	26.3	27.7	33.9	29.3	26.3	24.6	22.3	21.8
isiNdebele	1.0	0.6	0.2	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7
isiXhosa	16.2	18.3	39.4	28.2	14.9	16.0	16.0	16.3	15.9	16.5
isiZulu	17.0	19.3	12.9	15.1	15.1	23.1	22.8	23.4	24.1	23.4
Sepedi	8.7	7.2	1.3	5.9	6.7	6.2	7.5	8.0	9.4	8.3
Sesotho	5.7	5.7	4.6	5.7	5.7	5.1	5.0	4.8	5.0	4.7
Setswana	8.8	8.4	5.5	4.9	8.4	6.6	6.7	6.8	7.6	7.5
Siswati	0.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.8	1.9	2.1
Tshivenda	2.3	0.3	0.1	1.6	1.9	1.7	2.0	1.8	2.1	2.2
Xitsonga	3.5	2.6	0.4	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.8	3.0	3.4	3.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey

Table 2 indicates that, in 2007, the majority of Grade 1 learners (23%) learnt via the medium of isiZulu, followed by English (22%). Close to 17% of Grade 1 learners learnt via the medium of isiXhosa, while the corresponding figure for Afrikaans was 10% in 2007.

Despite the obvious discrepancies in the data shown in Table 2 for the period 1998 to 2007, the shifts in the pattern of LOLT provisioning in Grade 1 over the same period remain interesting. For instance, the proportion of Grade 1 learners learning via the medium of English declined significantly over this period, while the proportion of those learning via the medium of isiZulu and Afrikaans increased almost correspondingly.

The proportion of Grade 1 learners learning via the medium of Afrikaans almost doubled over this period, from 5% in 1998 to almost 10% in 2007. This increase, read together with the declining use of English as a LOLT amongst Grade 1 learners over this period, could mean that greater numbers of Grade 1 African home language learners are learning via the medium of Afrikaans as compared to English.

### 3.4 The LOLT of Grade 2 learners

Table 3 indicates that the LOLT of Grade 2 learners follows a similar pattern to that of Grade 1 learners, except that, in 2007, English overtakes isiZulu as the dominant LOLT of Grade 2 learners (at 24%), followed closely by isiZulu at 22%.

**Table 3: Percentage of Grade 2 learners by language of learning and teaching: 1998 to 2007**

Percentage of learners by year										
LOLT	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Afrikaans	5.7	6.8	8.9	7.8	10.8	9.0	9.3	9.5	7.9	9.6
English	35.3	35.7	31.2	30.5	37.6	33.8	29.9	27.3	24.6	23.8
isiNdebele	1.0	0.6	0.2	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8
isiXhosa	12.5	14.1	31.9	25.2	12.3	13.0	13.8	14.9	13.8	15.0
isiZulu	15.7	16.8	12.8	14.9	12.0	20.7	21.6	20.8	22.1	21.7
Sepedi	8.7	7.1	1.6	5.8	6.8	6.0	7.2	7.9	10.5	9.1
Sesotho	5.5	6.2	4.8	5.8	6.3	4.8	5.1	5.0	4.9	4.8
Setswana	9.6	9.0	6.9	4.6	8.1	7.1	6.9	6.8	7.7	7.4
Siswati	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.8	1.9	2.1
Tshivenda	2.4	0.5	0.1	1.2	2.0	2.0	1.8	2.2	2.2	2.4
Xitsonga	3.4	2.6	0.4	2.4	2.6	2.1	2.7	3.0	3.6	3.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey

As in the case of Grade 1, the use of English as a LOLT amongst Grade 2 learners, declined significantly over the period 1998 to 2007, from 35% in 1998 to 24% in 2007, while the use of Afrikaans and isiZulu as LOLTs increased simultaneously.

### 3.5 The LOLT of Grade 3 learners

In 2007, the LOLT of Grade 3 learners followed a similar pattern to that of Grade 2 learners, with the majority of these learners learning via the medium of English, followed by isiZulu. However, the proportion of Grade 3 learners learning via the medium of English was higher than for either Grade 1 or Grade 2 learners. While 22% of Grade 1 learners learnt via the medium of English in 2007, the corresponding figures for Grade 2 and Grade 3 learners are 24% and 28% respectively.

**Table 4: Percentage of Grade 3 learners by language of learning and teaching: 1998 to 2007**

Percentage of learners by year										
LOLT	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Afrikaans	6.7	7.3	10.0	8.1	10.4	9.9	9.4	9.3	8.4	9.9
English	40.9	40.6	36.0	36.5	44.7	38.1	35.5	33.3	29.1	27.7
isiNdebele	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8



Percentage of learners by year										
LOLT	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
isiXhosa	10.9	12.5	28.2	21.4	10.1	12.7	12.4	12.6	12.2	14.0
isiZulu	12.9	14.5	10.7	12.9	10.3	16.8	19.2	20.1	20.0	20.1
Sepedi	8.0	6.3	1.4	5.3	6.1	5.8	6.6	6.9	10.2	9.2
Sesotho	5.0	5.8	5.0	5.3	6.0	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.4
Setswana	9.4	9.1	6.8	5.0	7.1	6.5	6.8	6.7	7.1	6.8
Siswati	0.0	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.3	1.5	1.7
Tshivenda	1.9	0.4	0.1	1.6	1.5	2.0	1.8	1.8	2.4	2.4
Xitsonga	3.1	2.4	0.5	2.4	2.6	2.1	2.4	2.6	3.4	3.1
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey

As indicated in Table 4, the trend in data for the period 1998 to 2007 indicates that the proportion of Grade 3 learners, whose LOLT was English, declined from 41% in 1998 to 28% in 2007, while those learning via the medium of Afrikaans, isiZulu and isiXhosa, increased.

It may be concluded that the status of English as a medium of instruction amongst Foundation Phase learners declined significantly during the period 1998 to 2007, while that of isiZulu and Afrikaans increased almost correspondingly. Despite this shift, however, English remained the dominant medium of instruction amongst Grades 2 and 3 learners in 2007.

### 3.6 The status of languages as a LOLT

Table 5: Percentage of learners by language of learning and teaching and grade: 2007

Percentage of learners by LOLT: 2007													
LOLT	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11	Gr 12	SA
Afrikaans	9.5	9.6	9.9	12.3	12.2	12.2	13.2	13.1	14.0	12.7	12.1	12.8	11.9
English	21.8	23.8	27.7	79.1	81.1	81.6	80.6	80.9	80.0	81.2	82.0	81.4	65.3
isiNdebele	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4
isiXhosa	16.5	15.0	14.0	3.1	2.5	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.5	5.5
isiZulu	23.4	21.7	20.1	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	6.8
Sepedi	8.3	9.1	9.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.1
Sesotho	4.7	4.8	4.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	1.6
Setswana	7.5	7.4	6.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.3	2.4
Siswati	2.1	2.1	1.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.7
Tshivenda	2.2	2.4	2.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.9
Xitsonga	3.1	3.3	3.1	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.4
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: DoE 2007 Annual School Survey



Table 5 indicates that, in 2007, 65% of learners in the school system learnt via the medium of English, while 12% learnt via the medium of Afrikaans and 7% learnt via the medium of isiZulu. In effect, close to 80% of learners in the school system learnt via the mediums of English and Afrikaans in 2007.

In 2007, English remained the dominant medium of instruction across Grades 2 to 12, followed by Afrikaans, isiZulu and isiXhosa. However, isiZulu overtook English as the dominant medium of instruction amongst Grade 1 learners in 2007.

Table 5 also indicates that learners tend to learn via the medium of African languages in the Foundation Phase, but via the medium of English or Afrikaans in the higher grades.

### 3.7 Learners learning in their home language

The LiEP and the NCS encourage schools to promote the use of home language as a LOLT, particularly in the early years of schooling.

Therefore, central to the analysis of the data on the home language and LOLT of learners, is the degree to which learners, particularly those in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases, are learning in their home languages.

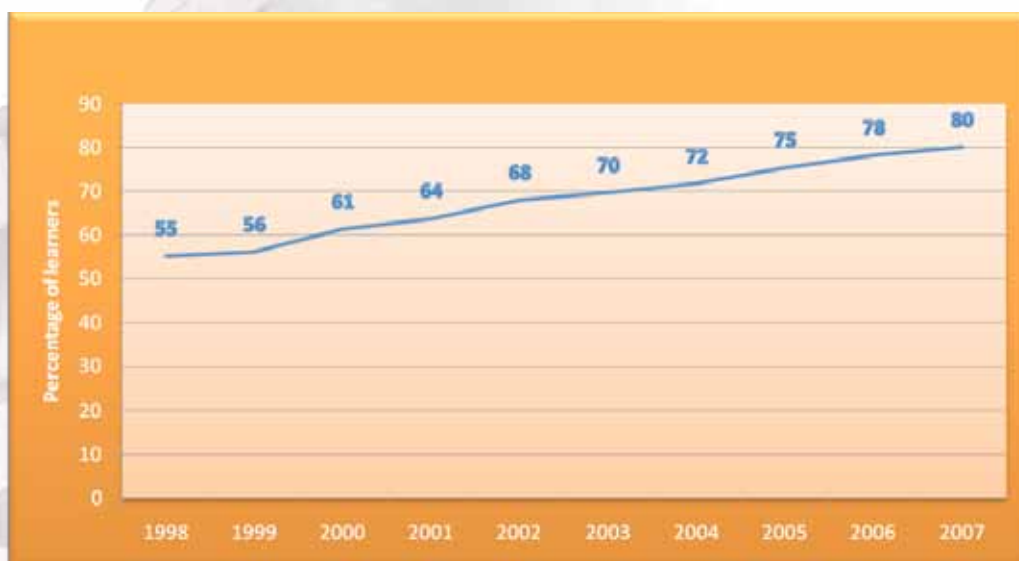
The report attempts to seek correspondence between learners' home languages and their LOLT, despite the unavailability of individual learner data on these variables. It does so by adopting the following assumptions:

- If an African home language speaker's LOLT is not their home language, their LOLT is probably English or Afrikaans.
- The LOLTs of all English and Afrikaans learners are probably their respective home languages.

#### 3.7.1 Learners learning in their home language: Foundation Phase

Figure 3 indicates that, in 2007, some 80% of Foundation Phase learners were learning in their home language. It also indicates a steady and significant increase in the proportion of Foundation Phase learners who have been learning in their home language since 1998. For instance, while only 55% of Foundation Phase learners' LOLT was their home language in 1998, this figure increased to 80% in 2007.

**Figure 3: Percentage of learners learning in their home language in the Foundation Phase: 1998 to 2007**



Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey

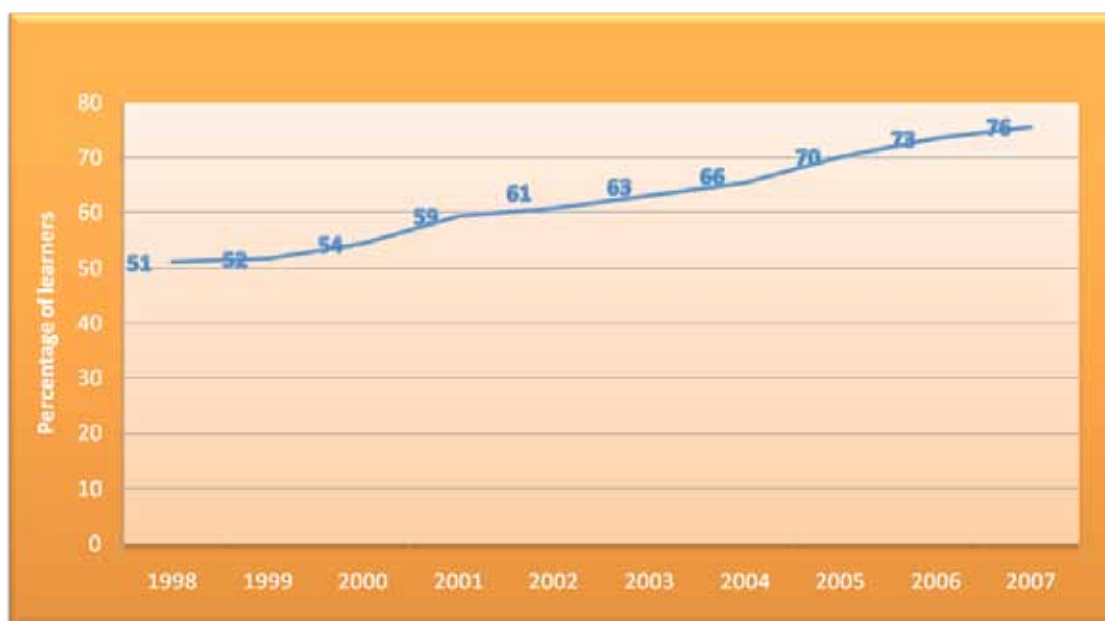


Figure 4 indicates the percentage of **African** home language learners who learnt in their home languages in the Foundation Phase for the period 1998 to 2007. It can be observed that 76% of African home language learners' LOLT was their home language in 2007.

Since 1998, the trend of this phenomenon indicates that significantly greater proportions of African home language learners were learning in their home language in 2007, compared to 1998.

Despite this significant shift (since 1998), close to 25% of African home language Foundation Phase learners' LOLT was not their home language in 2007.

**Figure 4: Percentage of African home language learners learning in their home language in the Foundation Phase: 1998 to 2007**



Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey

### 3.7.2 Learners by home language, LOLT and non-LOLT

This subsection summarises the relationship between the home language, the LOLT and non-LOLT of Foundation Phase learners in 2007.

*Please note: In Figure 5, Non-LOLT refers to the number of learners who are not learning in their home language.*

Figure 5 indicates the number of Foundation Phase learners according to their home language, the language in which they are learning (their LOLT), as well as their Non-LOLT.

Figure 5 indicates that, in 2007, while there were 307 511 Foundation Phase learners whose home language was Afrikaans, more than this number of learners (316 316) actually learnt via the medium of Afrikaans. This means that close to 9 000 Foundation Phase learners were learning via the medium of Afrikaans, even though their home language was not Afrikaans.

Similarly, close to 800 000 Foundation Phase learners were taught via the medium of English, while only 187 384 learners' home language was English. This means that more than 600 000 Foundation Phase learners (20%) did not learn via the medium of their home language in 2007 (as is shown in Figure 3).

**Figure 5: Number of learners by home language, language of learning and teaching and non-language**



Source: DoE: 2007 Annual School Survey

### 3.7.3 Learners learning in their home language: Intermediate Phase (trend over time)

Figure 6 indicates a significantly lower correspondence between home language and LOLT in the Intermediate Phase, compared to the Foundation Phase for the period 1998 to 2007.

In 2007, about 27% of Intermediate Phase learners were learning in their home language. The trend since 1998 (taking into account data discrepancies) indicates a moderate increase in the proportion of learners in the Intermediate Phase, learning in their home language.

**Figure 6: Percentage of Intermediate Phase learners learning in their home language: 1998 to 2007**



Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey



### 3.7.4 Learners learning in their home language: Intermediate Phase (by language)

Table 6 also indicates that a large proportion of Intermediate Phase learners, whose home language was neither English nor Afrikaans, were learning via the medium of these languages. However, an interesting pattern can be observed in the trend data for Afrikaans and English. It is evident that over recent years, more learners whose home language is *not* Afrikaans, are learning via the medium of Afrikaans, while fewer learners whose home language is *not* English, are learning via the medium of English.

**Table 6: Correspondence between home language and LOLT in the Intermediate Phase: 1998 to 2007**

Percentage of learners by home language and LOLT											
Year	Afrikaans	English	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga
1998	62.9	1214.0	8.5	1.5	7.6	7.3	5.5	14.3	0.0	7.5	7.6
1999	64.3	1157.3	2.1	2.0	3.5	7.3	4.3	5.9	4.7	1.5	6.4
2000	107.1	1479.5	8.1	2.2	4.1	8.0	2.2	7.6	7.3	16.5	7.1
2001	123.3	1097.3	11.3	1.2	2.6	8.1	1.9	5.2	13.0	14.0	10.3
2002	112.7	1655.7	11.2	2.0	3.7	4.9	2.1	4.5	8.3	4.4	5.6
2003	108.6	1402.8	6.5	11.7	8.8	6.8	2.8	6.4	4.1	5.5	5.2
2004	109.9	1369.0	1.8	11.7	5.9	5.0	4.4	9.5	3.6	3.7	6.6
2005	109.5	1235.1	10.1	10.7	4.8	9.4	4.8	8.1	15.5	7.5	7.3
2006	122.3	1148.1	7.4	10.7	8.5	7.2	4.9	5.6	18.5	4.6	6.1
2007	124.1	1115.3	18.1	12.5	4.9	9.8	6.4	7.1	11.0	9.5	13.6

Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey

## 3.8 Learners studying an additional language

Although the NCS calls upon schools to offer a language subject at the additional language level as from Grade 1, in practice this did not happen.

Table 7 indicates that, in 2008 and 2009, less than 5% of learners actually studied a language subject at the additional language level in the Foundation Phase. This means that schools did not really implement the curriculum policy of introducing a language subject at the additional language level in the Foundation Phase. Moreover, it means that learners who are learning in their home language in the Foundation Phase, and who learn via the medium of English and Afrikaans from Grade 4 onwards (by far the majority in the system), do not study English or Afrikaans as a subject at an additional language level in the Foundation Phase.

For instance, in 2009, less than 1% of learners studied English as an additional language in the Foundation Phase, while only 1% of learners studied Afrikaans as an additional language. This despite the fact that the majority of learners in Grade 4 learnt via the medium of either English or Afrikaans, as is indicated in this report.

**Table 7: Number and percentage of learners studying an additional language in the Foundation Phase: 2008 and 2009**

Additional Language	2008		2009	
	Number of learners studying an additional language	% of learners studying an additional language	Number of learners studying an additional language	% of learners studying an additional language
<b>Afrikaans</b>	64 800	1.4	41 221	1.0
<b>English</b>	43 801	0.9	38 590	0.9
<b>isiNdebele</b>	1 167	0.0	374	0.0
<b>isiXhosa</b>	15 594	0.3	15 674	0.4
<b>isiZulu</b>	40 997	0.9	34 972	0.8
<b>Sepedi</b>	3 278	0.1	2 300	0.1
<b>Sesotho</b>	6 154	0.1	3 410	0.1
<b>Setswana</b>	4 323	0.1	4 258	0.1
<b>Siswati</b>	1 886	0.0	1 405	0.0
<b>Tshivenda</b>	952	0.0	855	0.0
<b>Xitsonga</b>	1 392	0.0	1 278	0.0

Source: DoE: 2008 and 2009 Annual School Survey

### 3.9 Discussion

A significant finding of the report is that, in 2007, some 80% of Foundation Phase learners were learning in their home language. This represents a significant shift since 1998, when only 55% of Foundation Phase learners were learning in their home language.

The immediate question that comes to mind when engaging with this finding, is that if, over the past decade, a significantly greater proportion of Foundation Phase learners have been learning in their home language, why is there no corresponding improvement in learning, especially in Grade 3, as one might have expected to see, given what is known about the relationship between learning in the home language and learning outcomes? More specifically, there needs to be an investigation into why the greater correspondence between home language and LOLT has not translated into improved learning outcomes; whether other factors affecting learner performance have a more greater influence than LOLT, or whether more is required than simply having learners learning in their home language.

This chapter shows that, while the majority of learners learn via the medium of an African language in the Foundation Phase, they usually learn via the medium of English or Afrikaans in the Intermediate Phase.

In addition, although the home language of the majority of learners in the country is isiZulu (25%), followed by isiXhosa (20%), Afrikaans (10%) and English (7%), the majority of learners in the *school system* learn via the mediums of English (65%) and Afrikaans (12%) respectively.





The dominance of English as the LOLT in the school system is a reflection of a combination of factors, namely parental preference, tradition and capacity. English is usually favoured as a LOLT for the following reasons:

- It is associated with economic growth.
- It is a global language.
- It is useful for future studies, as tertiary education tends to be offered in English.
- It is a common language in the working environment.

It is worthwhile to note though that, while English remains the dominant LOLT in the school system, the use of English as a medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase has declined over the past decade, while that of Afrikaans and African languages has increased over the same period.

## CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL LEVEL DATA ON LOLT

### 4.1 Background

The capacity of schools to facilitate teaching and learning in an appropriate language is a reflection of both access to, and the quality of the school system.

An insight into the extent to which schools offer LOLT in line with standards and expectations, undoubtedly contributes towards an understanding of the gap between policy and practice. This, in turn, is expected to influence the kind of interventions required to implement or review policy.

This section of the report poses the question: What languages of learning and teaching do schools offer and in what combinations, numbers and proportions?

Schools offer LOLT in a myriad of combinations. Some schools offer only one LOLT within and across each of their grades. Others offer two or more LOLTs, both within and across each of their grades. Even more schools offer more than one LOLT in the Foundation Phase, but limit themselves to offering a single LOLT, usually from Grade 4 onwards.

Historically, schools were categorised as single medium, parallel medium or dual medium, depending on the ways in which they offered LOLTs. However, there are two problems pertaining to the use of these categories. Firstly, these categories do not adequately reflect the new context of schools, which is characterised by many new combinations of LOLT offerings. Secondly, the concepts themselves have undergone a change in meaning over the years and are therefore open to interpretation.

This chapter provides a simple profile of schools according to the ways in which they offer LOLTs. It adopts a system of classifying schools in accordance with the number of LOLTs offered within and across grades. The terminology used to classify schools in accordance with the various LOLT categories was obtained from the Department's *Dictionary of Education Concepts and Terms* (DBE, 2010).

### 4.2 Single medium schools

The following subsection provides an overview of single medium schools. Single medium schools are defined as schools that use only one medium of instruction for all learners in all grades (DBE, 2010).

For the purposes of this report, Afrikaans single medium schools are regarded as schools that offer only Afrikaans as their LOLT in every grade and class. These schools do not offer any other language(s) as a LOLT. A similar approach applies to English single medium schools.

Table 8 reflects the total number of single medium schools by LOLT for the period 1998 to 2007. Much of the data in this table reflects inconsistent trends over time and should therefore be read with caution. The data does, however, provide a useful reflection of the status of single medium schools in the country and how this situation has changed over time. An additional factor to consider when looking at Table 8, is the decline in the total number of schools in the country since 1998, as a result of the closure of smaller schools. The reduction in the number of single medium schools could therefore be attributed to this phenomenon, rather than to language policy shifts in schools.

In 2007, there were close to 6 000 single medium schools in the country. The majority of these were English medium schools by far, followed by Afrikaans medium schools (see Table 8).



The number of English single medium schools increased significantly between 1998 and 2007 (from about 3 000 in 1998 to more than 4 000 in 2007), while the number of Afrikaans single medium schools declined somewhat during the same period (from 1 227 in 1998 to 1 174 in 2007). The decline in the number of Afrikaans single medium schools may be attributed to a shift towards parallel medium instruction in these schools (as is indicated in Figure 7), and does not reflect a reduction in the status of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools.

Of interest is the modest increase in the number of African language single medium schools since 1998. Table 8 shows evidence of a minor but visible increase in the number of isiZulu, Sepedi, Setswana and Xitsonga single medium schools.

**Table 8: Number of single medium schools by LOLT: 1998 to 2007**

LOLT	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Afrikaans</b>	1 227	1 252	1 218	1 199	1 210	1 189	1 160	1 171	1 173	1 174
<b>English</b>	2 991	3 821	3 046	3 752	3 444	3 906	3 975	4 033	4 122	4 342
<b>isiNdebele</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>isiXhosa</b>	35	28	25	25	19	19	20	21	18	29
<b>isiZulu</b>	20	16	16	14	11	11	13	15	16	41
<b>Sepedi</b>	2	2	2	1	1	4	6	5	3	8
<b>Sesotho</b>	22	8	7	7	4	3	2	1	0	0
<b>Setswana</b>	4	5	4	1	3	2	1	2	2	22
<b>Siswati</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Tshivenda</b>	0	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Xitsonga</b>	1	2	1	2	2	3	4	4	2	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 302</b>	<b>5 136</b>	<b>4 319</b>	<b>5 003</b>	<b>4 696</b>	<b>5 139</b>	<b>5 183</b>	<b>5 254</b>	<b>5 338</b>	<b>5 643</b>

Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey

Figure 7 reflects the shift in the percentage of English and Afrikaans single medium schools for the period 1997 to 2007.

Figure 7 indicates that, in 2007, some 17% of all schools in the country were English single medium schools, while close to 5% of the schools in the country were Afrikaans single medium schools.

The proportion of English single medium schools increased from 14% in 1997 to 17% in 2007, while the proportion of Afrikaans single medium schools decreased by less than 1% over the same period. However, the latter is offset by the increase in the number of Afrikaans parallel medium schools in the country, as reflected in Table 9.

**Figure 7: Proportion of English and Afrikaans single medium schools: 1997 to 2007**



Source: DoE: 1997 to 2007 Annual School Survey

### 4.3 Parallel medium schools

Parallel medium schools are schools that offer two or more mediums of instruction in different classes in the same grade for all grades in the school (DBE, 2010). Therefore, a parallel medium school would offer at least two LOLTs in each of its grades.

In 2007, there were close to 13 000 parallel medium schools in the country. This translates into approximately 51% of schools in the country being categorised as parallel medium.

The total number of parallel medium schools in the country increased from 9 436 in 1997 to 12 958 in 2007.

Most parallel medium schools in the country offer either English or Afrikaans, in combination with other languages, as their medium of instruction. This report therefore examines the phenomenon of parallel medium schools in the context of English and Afrikaans.

#### 4.3.1 English parallel medium schools

For the purposes of this report, English parallel medium schools are regarded as schools that offer two or more mediums of instruction in different classes in the same grade for all grades in the school, with English as the school's consistent LOLT offering.

Figure 8 reflects the proportion of schools in South Africa that may be regarded as English parallel medium schools for the period 1997 to 2007.

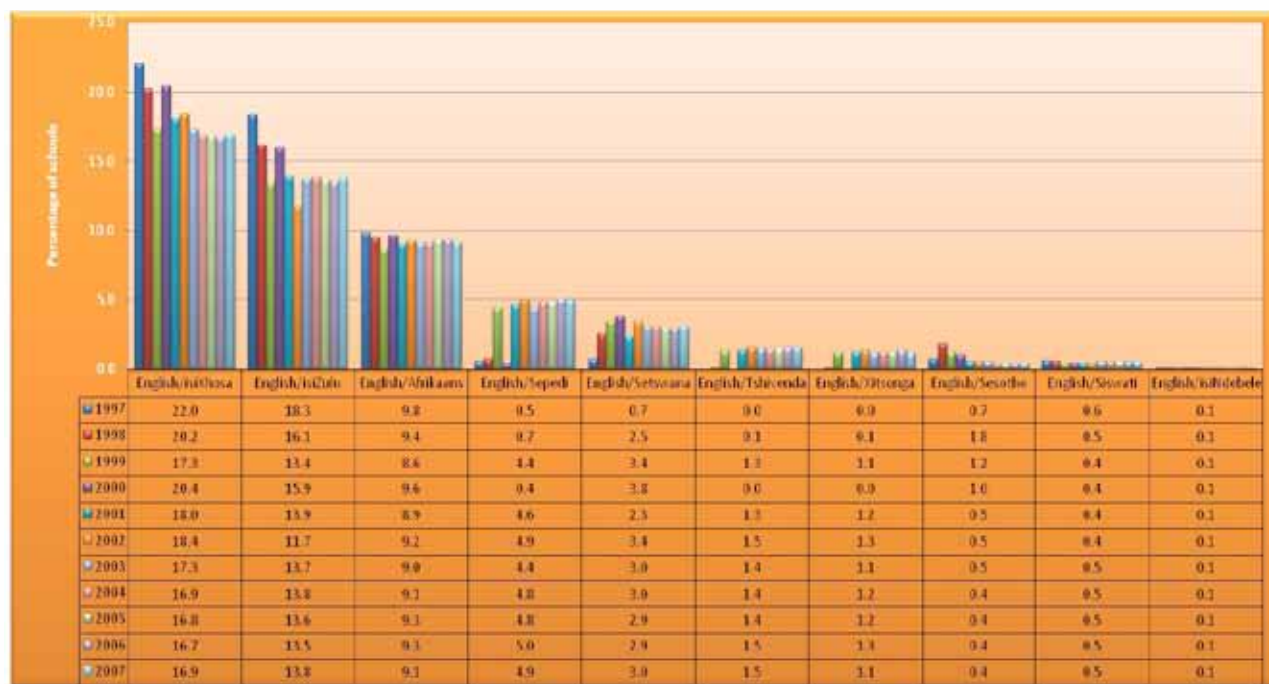
In 2007, isiXhosa and isiZulu were the dominant languages, combined with English, in parallel medium schools. Close to 17% of schools in the country were English/isiXhosa parallel medium schools; while close to 14% were English/isiZulu parallel medium schools. About 9% of schools in the country were English/Afrikaans parallel medium schools in 2007.



However, Figure 8 points to a decline in the proportion English/isiXhosa and English/isiZulu parallel medium schools over the period 1997 to 2007. English/isiXhosa parallel medium schools declined in proportion from 22% in 1997 to 17% in 2007, while English/isiZulu medium schools declined from 18% in 1997 to 14% in 2007 (with fluctuations in between the years). The decline in the number of English/isiZulu parallel medium schools could probably, to some extent, be explained by the increase in the number of isiZulu single medium schools, as indicated in Table 8.

It is perhaps of interest to note is that the proportion of English/Afrikaans parallel medium schools remained constant at approximately 9% for the period 1997 to 2007 (see Figure 7).

**Figure 8: Proportion of English parallel medium schools by LOLT: 1997 to 2007**



Source: DoE: 1997 to 2007 Annual School Survey

#### 4.3.2 Afrikaans parallel medium schools

For the purposes of this report, Afrikaans parallel medium schools are regarded as schools that offer two or more mediums of instruction in different classes in the same grade for all grades in the school, with Afrikaans as the school's consistent LOLT offering.

Table 9 indicates that, in 2007, there were over 2 300 Afrikaans parallel medium schools in the country, with English as the dominant language, combined with Afrikaans, in such schools. The data indicates that there are hardly any Afrikaans/African language parallel medium schools in the country. The number of Afrikaans/English parallel medium schools appears to have increased over the period 1997 to 2007 (with unaccounted for fluctuations in between).



**Table 9: Number of Afrikaans parallel medium schools by language and year: 1997 to 2007**

Year	Afrikaans/ English	Afrikaans/ isiNdebele	Afrikaans/ isiXhosa	Afrikaans/ isiZulu	Afrikaans/ Sepedi	Afrikaans/ Sesotho	Afrikaans/ Setswana	Afrikaans/ Siswati	Afrikaans/ Tshivenda	Afrikaans/ Xitsonga
1997	1 779	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1998	2 058	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1999	2 303	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0
2000	2 143	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
2001	2 261	1	2	0	2	0	3	0	0	0
2002	2 242	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
2003	2 328	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
2004	2 343	0	5	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
2005	2 377	1	5	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
2006	2 378	0	6	3	1	0	3	0	0	0
2007	2 326	1	6	2	2	0	1	0	0	0

Source: DoE: 1997 to 2007 Annual School Survey

#### 4.4 Schools by LOLT

This section provides an overview of the number of schools that offer a particular LOLT in any grade.

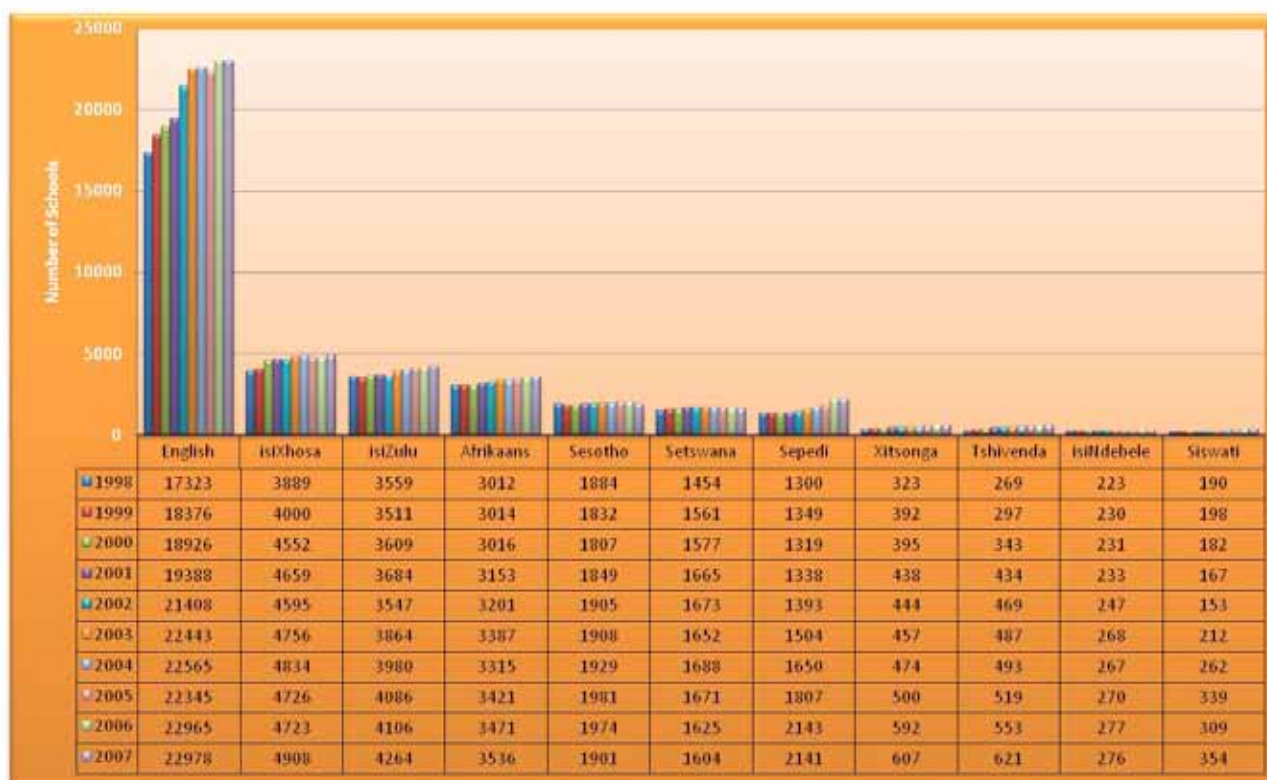
Figure 9 indicates that, irrespective of consideration of grade, the majority of schools offer English, isiXhosa, isiZulu and Afrikaans as LOLTs.

In 2007, close on 23 000 schools offered English as the LOLT in a grade, while close on 5 000 schools offered isiXhosa and isiZulu as a LOLT in a grade. More than 3 500 schools offered Afrikaans as a LOLT in a grade in 2007.

Not surprisingly, relatively smaller numbers of schools offered Siswati, isiNdebele, Tshivenda and Setswana as LOLTs in 2007 (perhaps in combination), reflecting issues such as demographics, choice of school and the capacity of schools to offer African languages as LOLTs.

It is evident from Figure 9, however, that in general, the number of schools that offered all African languages as LOLTs increased between 1998 and 2007. This increase is particularly significant in the case of Tshivenda and Xitsonga.



**Figure 9: Number of schools by LOLT: 1998 to 2007**

Source: DoE: 1998 to 2007 Annual School Survey

## 4.5 Discussion

This chapter notes that, in 2007, there were 6 000 single medium schools and 13 000 parallel medium schools in the country. The balance of the schools (approximately 6 532) was neither single medium nor parallel medium. This means that these schools offered different LOLTs across their grades. In such instances, it is common for schools to offer, for example, English/isiZulu in the Foundation Phase and then offer only English as the LOLT from Grade 4 onwards. These kinds of schools have been referred to by some as *transitional* schools.

There has been an increase in the number and percentage of English single medium schools in the country since 1998, and a decline in the number and percentage of Afrikaans single medium schools over the same period. However, the latter is offset by the increase in the number of Afrikaans parallel medium schools.

Of note is the modest increase in the number of African language single medium schools since 1998. However, the number of schools that offer African languages as LOLTs (especially Tshivenda and Xitsonga) increased significantly between 1998 and 2007.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This is an important study, especially considering the fact that “language is not everything in education, but without language everything is nothing in education” (Wolf, 2006).

This report provides a quantitative overview of the status of language in schools, including changes in trends in language provisioning over the past decade. It is limited in scope, as it does not provide textured and nuanced insights into how language issues manifest themselves in schools. Nonetheless, the report does provide a useful framework to facilitate an understanding of the structural issues related to language in education.

The findings of this report can be summarised as follows:

- There is an inconsistency between LiEP and the NCS with regard to the grade in which a language subject should be introduced at an additional language level.
- The home languages of the majority of learners in the country are isiZulu and isiXhosa respectively.
- Between 1998 and 2007, there was a significant increase in the percentage of Foundation Phase learners who learned in their home language.
- The majority of Foundation Phase learners learn in their home language (80%), but the 20% that do not translates into 600 000 learners.
- The majority of learners do not learn in their home language from Grade 4 onwards. English and Afrikaans are the dominant LOLTs after Grade 3.
- The majority of learners do not study English or Afrikaans as a subject (at either home language or additional language level) in the Foundation Phase, even though they learn via the medium of English or Afrikaans from Grade 4 onwards.
- The number and percentage of African language single medium schools increased modestly over the past decade.
- Although the number of Afrikaans single medium schools declined over the past decade, there was a corresponding increase in the number of Afrikaans parallel medium schools over this period.

The report recommends the following:

- The LiEP and NCS should be streamlined to promote a common purpose and emphasis.
- The policy on African languages should be stated with greater clarity.
- In the Foundation Phase, teaching and learning material should be made available in all languages.
- Teacher training and development programmes should include issues related to language.



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# ANNEXURE





Table 1: Number and percentage of learners by home language and grade: 2007

Grade	Afrikaans	English	IsiNdebele	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga	Total
1	108022	65220	17311	275263	317271	104053	75302	93868	34830	26854	52936	1170930
%	9.2	5.6	1.5	23.5	27.1	8.9	6.4	8	3	2.3	4.5	100
2	98114	61137	16222	231411	265498	102545	67568	82854	31459	26632	49702	1033142
%	9.5	5.9	1.6	22.4	25.7	9.9	6.5	8	3	2.6	4.8	100
3	101375	61027	17723	232663	265914	109653	66894	81374	33904	28428	50981	1049936
%	9.7	5.8	1.7	22.2	25.3	10.4	6.4	7.8	3.2	2.7	4.9	100
4	110959	74443	19647	227350	261248	114074	68744	81528	35432	31054	52385	1076864
%	10.3	6.9	1.8	21.1	24.3	10.6	6.4	7.6	3.3	2.9	4.9	100
5	101164	74100	18263	213158	257771	105283	65819	75395	33272	28474	47736	1020435
%	9.9	7.3	1.8	20.9	25.3	10.3	6.5	7.4	3.3	2.8	4.7	100
6	99102	79561	17979	200969	248080	101216	61868	72501	32385	27564	45148	986373
%	10	8.1	1.8	20.4	25.2	10.3	6.3	7.4	3.3	2.8	4.6	100
7	93884	66886	16517	187810	210006	94047	58714	65970	28993	24661	41110	888598
%	10.6	7.5	1.9	21.1	23.6	10.6	6.6	7.4	3.3	2.8	4.6	100
8	89344	62504	18362	184564	223985	103247	58912	65298	32484	26243	45116	910059
%	9.8	6.9	2	20.3	24.6	11.3	6.5	7.2	3.6	2.9	5	100
9	98053	72640	17876	173224	227271	102233	63113	74039	30198	29322	45239	933208
%	10.5	7.8	1.9	18.6	24.4	11	6.8	7.9	3.2	3.1	4.8	100
10	102442	77947	22669	192873	261507	130531	80511	90237	37227	36168	56508	1088620
%	9.4	7.2	2.1	17.7	24	12	7.4	8.3	3.4	3.3	5.2	100
11	59735	56134	11141	118883	156331	73137	34611	39360	19411	23325	32846	624914
%	9.6	9	1.8	19	25	11.7	5.5	6.3	3.1	3.7	5.3	100
12	77070	68719	19394	135149	230675	110292	55315	65375	33400	33724	48786	877899
%	8.8	7.8	2.2	15.4	26.3	12.6	6.3	7.4	3.8	3.8	5.6	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1139373</b>	<b>820396</b>	<b>213124</b>	<b>2373544</b>	<b>2925831</b>	<b>1250428</b>	<b>757442</b>	<b>887882</b>	<b>383031</b>	<b>342481</b>	<b>568546</b>	<b>11662078</b>
RSA	9.8	7	1.8	20.4	25.1	10.7	6.5	7.6	3.3	2.9	4.9	100

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey

**Table 2: Number and percentage of learners in grade 1 by LOLT : 1998 to 2007**

Year	No/%	Afrikaans	English	IsiNdebele	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga
<b>1998</b>	Number	53333	329062	9869	168030	176147	90358	58771	91329	0.0	23966	35876
	%	5.1	31.7	1.0	16.2	17.0	8.7	5.7	8.8	0.0	2.3	3.5
<b>1999</b>	Number	55284	271897	5270	164132	172988	64740	51301	75201	9876	2941	23588
	%	6.2	30.3	0.6	18.3	19.3	7.2	5.7	8.4	1.1	0.3	2.6
<b>2000</b>	Number	73897	248481	2040	372604	121763	12627	43245	52330	9594	688	3570
	%	7.8	26.3	0.2	39.4	12.9	1.3	4.6	5.5	1.0	0.1	0.4
<b>2001</b>	Number	60995	251416	7690	256014	137406	53310	52029	44505	9756	14119	19812
	%	6.7	27.7	0.8	28.2	15.1	5.9	5.7	4.9	1.1	1.6	2.2
<b>2002</b>	Number	86523	316704	5928	138769	140875	62496	52841	78561	10245	17438	23787
	%	9.3	33.9	0.6	14.9	15.1	6.7	5.7	8.4	1.1	1.9	2.5
<b>2003</b>	Number	106526	378070	8267	205629	297166	79528	65083	84830	13052	21917	28233
	%	8.3	29.3	0.6	16.0	23.1	6.2	5.1	6.6	1.0	1.7	2.2
<b>2004</b>	Number	118240	345666	8723	209728	298761	98022	65981	88195	16216	25817	36154
	%	9.0	26.3	0.7	16.0	22.8	7.5	5.0	6.7	1.2	2.0	2.8
<b>2005</b>	Number	107150	307475	9364	203885	292144	99979	60011	85052	22779	22799	36825
	%	8.6	24.6	0.8	16.3	23.4	8.0	4.8	6.8	1.8	1.8	3.0
<b>2006</b>	Number	86356	255977	8856	181963	276913	107427	57400	86965	21522	24569	38814
	%	7.5	22.3	0.8	15.9	24.1	9.4	5.0	7.6	1.9	2.1	3.4
<b>2007</b>	Number	111217	255541	8666	193722	274017	97017	55598	88179	24990	25197	36480
	%	9.5	21.8	0.7	16.5	23.4	8.3	4.7	7.5	2.1	2.2	3.1

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey



Table 3: Number and percentage of learners in grade 2 by LOLT : 1998 to 2007

Year	Languages	Afrikaans	English	IsiNdebele	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga
1998	Number	52693	324886	9582	115278	144440	80436	50674	88504	0.0	21719	31570
	%	5.7	35.3	1.0	12.5	15.7	8.7	5.5	9.6	0.0	2.4	3.4
1999	Number	58830	310766	4866	122297	146140	62118	53982	78173	5723	3931	22853
	%	6.8	35.7	0.6	14.1	16.8	7.1	6.2	9.0	0.7	0.5	2.6
2000	Number	81220	284254	1828	290713	116911	14542	43262	62511	6278	799	3887
	%	8.9	31.2	0.2	31.9	12.8	1.6	4.8	6.9	0.7	0.1	0.4
2001	Number	57543	226038	6382	187191	110318	43232	43171	34454	6748	8750	17648
	%	7.8	30.5	0.9	25.2	14.9	5.8	5.8	4.6	0.9	1.2	2.4
2002	Number	79684	276756	4437	90930	88386	49955	46102	59552	6336	14612	19478
	%	10.8	37.6	0.6	12.3	12.0	6.8	6.3	8.1	0.9	2.0	2.6
2003	Number	100165	375147	7427	144700	229862	67117	53507	78666	8798	21865	23756
	%	9.0	33.8	0.7	13.0	20.7	6.0	4.8	7.1	0.8	2.0	2.1
2004	Number	101839	328489	6379	152088	238058	79607	56574	76134	11471	20058	29197
	%	9.3	29.9	0.6	13.8	21.6	7.2	5.1	6.9	1.0	1.8	2.7
2005	Number	108099	311445	9038	169526	237142	90091	57237	77951	21039	24772	34074
	%	9.5	27.3	0.8	14.9	20.8	7.9	5.0	6.8	1.8	2.2	3.0
2006	Number	82436	254891	8031	143353	229419	109033	51142	79435	19483	22884	37420
	%	7.9	24.6	0.8	13.8	22.1	10.5	4.9	7.7	1.9	2.2	3.6
2007	Number	99857	247599	8170	156463	225613	94777	50314	77538	22006	24775	34023
	%	9.6	23.8	0.8	15.0	21.7	9.1	4.8	7.4	2.1	2.4	3.3
Total	Number	822366	2940271	66140	2E+06	1766289	690908	505965	712918	107882	164165	253906
	%	8.6	30.6	0.7	16.4	18.4	7.2	5.3	7.4	1.1	1.7	2.6

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey

**Table 4: Number and percentage of learners in grade 3 by LOLT : 1998 to 2007**

Year	No/%	Afrikaans	English	IsiNdebele	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga
<b>1998</b>	Number	60980	371064	8862	99261	116996	72296	45045	85583	0.0	17682	28540
	%	6.7	40.9	1.0	10.9	12.9	8.0	5.0	9.4	0.0	1.9	3.1
<b>1999</b>	Number	63212	351897	4124	108825	125982	54475	49886	79101	5168	3366	21168
	%	7.3	40.6	0.5	12.5	14.5	6.3	5.8	9.1	0.6	0.4	2.4
<b>2000</b>	Number	98148	351800	1805	275062	104979	13748	48760	66870	5068	851	5132
	%	10.0	36.0	0.2	28.2	10.7	1.4	5.0	6.8	0.5	0.1	0.5
<b>2001</b>	Number	69351	312377	5878	182982	110871	45081	45530	42795	6379	13457	20716
	%	8.1	36.5	0.7	21.4	12.9	5.3	5.3	5.0	0.7	1.6	2.4
<b>2002</b>	Number	74599	322389	4115	72458	73926	43800	43252	51111	5208	10763	18383
	%	10.4	44.7	0.6	10.1	10.3	6.1	6.0	7.1	0.7	1.5	2.6
<b>2003</b>	Number	98552	377718	6158	125940	167089	57119	47218	64022	6934	19465	21300
	%	9.9	38.1	0.6	12.7	16.8	5.8	4.8	6.5	0.7	2.0	2.1
<b>2004</b>	Number	101215	383208	5447	134286	207121	70814	50382	73406	8290	19560	26023
	%	9.4	35.5	0.5	12.4	19.2	6.6	4.7	6.8	0.8	1.8	2.4
<b>2005</b>	Number	101222	360910	7640	136855	217526	74956	50347	72672	13708	20009	28267
	%	9.3	33.3	0.7	12.6	20.1	6.9	4.6	6.7	1.3	1.8	2.6
<b>2006</b>	Number	88902	308624	7943	129729	212038	107820	51153	75120	16211	25332	35920
	%	8.4	29.1	0.7	12.2	20.0	10.2	4.8	7.1	1.5	2.4	3.4
<b>2007</b>	Number	105242	294384	7982	148502	214067	97729	46632	72515	17944	25273	33494
	%	9.9	27.7	0.8	14.0	20.1	9.2	4.4	6.8	1.7	2.4	3.1
<b>Total</b>	Number	861423	3434371	59954	1E+06	1550595	637838	478205	683195	84910	155758	238943
	%	9.0	35.7	0.6	14.7	16.1	6.6	5.0	7.1	0.9	1.6	2.5

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey



Table5: Number and percentage of learners, by Language of learning and teaching and grade, in 2007

2007														
Number / %	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	SA	
Number	111217	99857	105242	135881	126891	123554	119773	122766	134628	142058	108679	82589	1413135	
%	9.5	9.6	9.9	12.3	12.2	12.2	13.2	13.1	14.0	12.7	12.1	12.8	11.9	
Number	255541	247599	294384	874402	846156	823453	732782	760034	771124	911112	739585	524993	7781165	
%	21.8	23.8	27.7	79.1	81.1	81.6	80.6	80.9	80.0	81.2	82.0	81.4	65.3	
Number	8666	8170	7982	3604	3342	3181	2820	1296	1113	1094	981	521	42770	
%	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	
Number	193722	156463	148502	34416	25725	20124	17693	15203	13753	15020	10856	9454	660931	
%	16.5	15.0	14.0	3.1	2.5	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.5	5.5	
Number	274017	225613	214067	17074	10687	10063	8818	10141	10783	12867	10230	7087	811447	
%	23.4	21.7	20.1	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	6.8	
Number	97017	94777	97729	12681	9413	9286	8617	8788	8851	11531	9326	6620	374636	
%	8.3	9.1	9.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.1	
Number	55598	50314	46632	5362	3762	3515	3385	3982	4722	5412	3635	2130	188449	
%	4.7	4.8	4.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	1.6	
Number	88179	77538	72515	6791	4789	4598	5206	5463	6543	6681	4365	2155	284823	
%	7.5	7.4	6.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.3	2.4	
Number	24990	22006	17944	4205	3591	3353	2777	1021	979	1029	1069	566	83530	
%	2.1	2.1	1.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.7	
Number	25197	24775	25273	3560	2521	2194	1944	4031	4389	5404	5512	3476	108276	
%	2.2	2.4	2.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.9	
Number	36480	34023	33494	7646	6262	5808	5551	6224	6674	8757	7327	5190	163436	
%	3.1	3.3	3.1	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.4	
Number	1170624	1041135	1063764	1105622	1043139	1009129	909366	938949	963559	1120965	901565	644781	11912598	
%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey



**Table 6: Correspondence between home language and LOLT in the foundation phase, from 1998 and 2007**

Year	Afrikaans	English	IsiNdebele	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga
1998	48.9	501.1	51.0	61.8	60.8	74	60.0	82.1	0.0	15.5	54.3
1999	53.4	425.8	23.8	66.3	67.0	63.0	64.2	99.2	20.2	12.1	49.1
2000	85.6	558.4	20.4	65.0	60.2	89.5	72.3	95.2	25.8	35.2	25.8
2001	67.7	489.3	42.5	79.9	61.4	54.9	71.2	80.6	28.4	67.5	48.8
2002	101.8	635.2	45.5	57.6	58.2	62.8	72.5	94.0	31.1	73.1	53.6
2003	97.6	573.7	41.0	61.4	74.2	65.3	73.5	95.3	29.1	78.2	51.2
2004	99.2	517.7	34.7	63.9	80.4	73.2	73.7	95.4	34.5	75.0	59.1
2005	97.9	500.9	45.0	65.8	83.3	76.5	72.8	92.9	54.9	78.0	63.0
2006	104.3	474.6	42.0	64.9	83.7	94.0	71.7	94.2	55.4	84.6	70.8
2007	102.9	425.6	48.4	67.5	84.1	91.5	72.7	92.3	64.8	91.9	67.7

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey

**Table 7: Correspondence between home language and LOLT in the intermediate, from 1998 to 2007**

Year	Afrikaans	English	IsiNdebele	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga
1998	62.9	1214.0	8.5	1.5	7.6	7.3	5.5	14.3	0.0	7.5	7.6
1999	64.3	1157.3	2.1	2.0	3.5	7.3	4.3	5.9	4.7	1.5	6.4
2000	107.1	1479.5	8.1	2.2	4.1	8.0	2.2	7.6	7.3	16.5	7.1
2001	123.3	1097.3	11.3	1.2	2.6	8.1	1.9	5.2	13.0	14.0	10.3
2002	112.7	1655.7	11.2	2.0	3.7	4.9	2.1	4.5	8.3	4.4	5.6
2003	108.6	1402.8	6.5	11.7	8.8	6.8	2.8	6.4	4.1	5.5	5.2
2004	109.9	1369.0	1.8	11.7	5.9	5.0	4.4	9.5	3.6	3.7	6.6
2005	109.5	1235.1	10.1	10.7	4.8	9.4	4.8	8.1	15.5	7.5	7.3
2006	122.3	1148.1	7.4	10.7	8.5	7.2	4.9	5.6	18.5	4.6	6.1
2007	124.1	1115.3	18.1	12.5	4.9	9.8	6.4	7.1	11.0	9.5	13.6

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey



Table 8: Number of Single medium schools by language, from 1998 to 2007

Year		Afrikaans	English	IsiNdebele	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Siswati	Tshivenda	Xitsonga
1998	Number	1227	2991	0	35	20	2	22	4	0	0	1
	%	5.6	13.7	0	0.2	0.1	0	0.1	0	0	0	0
1999	Number	1252	3821	0	28	16	2	8	5	0	2	2
	%	4.7	14.3	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2000	Number	1218	3046	0	25	16	2	7	4	0	0	1
	%	5.4	13.6	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2001	Number	1199	3752	0	25	14	1	7	1	0	2	2
	%	4.7	14.8	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2002	Number	1210	3444	0	19	11	1	4	3	0	2	2
	%	5	14.2	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2003	Number	1189	3906	0	19	11	4	3	2	0	2	3
	%	4.6	15.2	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2004	Number	1160	3975	0	20	13	6	2	1	0	2	4
	%	4.5	15.4	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005	Number	1171	4033	0	21	15	5	1	2	0	2	4
	%	4.6	15.7	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	Number	1173	4122	0	18	16	3	0	2	0	2	2
	%	4.6	16.1	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	Number	1174	4342	1	29	41	8	0	22	0	2	24
	%	4.6	17	0	0.1	0.2	0	0	0.1	0	0	0.1

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey

**Table 9: Parallel Medium schools, by Language, from 1998 to 2007**

	English/ Afrikaans	English/ Isindebele	English/ IsiXhosa	English/ IsiZulu	English/ Sepedi	English/ Sesotho	English/ Setswana	English/ Siswati	English/ Tshivenda	English/ Xitsonga
<b>1998</b>	2058	26	134	3519	162	394	553	106	29	26
<b>%</b>	9.4	0.1	0.6	16.1	0.7	1.8	2.5	0.5	0.1	0.1
<b>1999</b>	2303	31	163	3577	1178	323	907	110	334	293
<b>%</b>	8.6	0.1	0.6	13.4	4.4	1.2	3.4	0.4	1.3	1.1
<b>2000</b>	2143	25	157	3561	84	213	845	100	8	11
<b>%</b>	9.6	0.1	0.7	15.9	0.4	1.0	3.8	0.4	0.0	0.0
<b>2001</b>	2261	27	163	3545	1178	120	587	99	321	301
<b>%</b>	8.9	0.1	0.6	13.9	4.6	0.5	2.3	0.4	1.3	1.2
<b>2002</b>	2242	22	166	2841	1193	116	817	86	363	305
<b>%</b>	9.2	0.1	0.7	11.7	4.9	0.5	3.4	0.4	1.5	1.3
<b>2003</b>	2328	29	173	3532	1144	117	774	118	359	278
<b>%</b>	9.0	0.1	0.7	13.7	4.4	0.5	3.0	0.5	1.4	1.1
<b>2004</b>	2343	29	173	3543	1231	111	762	118	352	305
<b>%</b>	9.1	0.1	0.7	13.8	4.8	0.4	3.0	0.5	1.4	1.2
<b>2005</b>	2377	29	175	3475	1240	109	756	122	367	309
<b>%</b>	9.3	0.1	0.7	13.6	4.8	0.4	2.9	0.5	1.4	1.2
<b>2006</b>	2378	29	174	3462	1291	102	753	122	375	323
<b>%</b>	9.3	0.1	0.7	13.5	5.0	0.4	2.9	0.5	1.5	1.3
<b>2007</b>	2326	26	296	3528	1246	97	761	125	374	293
<b>%</b>	9.1	0.1	1.2	13.8	4.9	0.4	3.0	0.5	1.5	1.1

Source: DOE, Annual School Survey



## Notes

## Notes





