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**Koketso Botlholo,**

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**CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNERS AND TEACHERS IN THE TEACHING  
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**ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates the challenges faced Setswana Home language teachers and Setswana home language learners in two high schools in Pretoria. These schools offer Setswana Home Language, this means that learners enrolled in these schools must do Setswana as home language. The problem is that learners who are enrolled in these schools are coming from all parts of Winterveldt , and from all languages and these schools do not offer all African languages. They only have Setswana. xiTsonga, Venda, Nguni and Southern Sotho students are forced to do Setswana as Home Language. These learners never acquired Setswana in their lives; this is their first encounter with it. They lack knowledge of Setswana, as much as they can understand it spoken. They cannot write and read it. In this situation teachers are expected to perform miracles in ensuring that these learners learn Setswana in a very short period. The study was conducted at two primary schools where 20 participants were selected from Grade 3 and two Setswana educators from each school. The study employed a qualitative method, two focus groups consisting of 5 learners each from each school and four Setswana educators were interviewed. Similarly, class observations, and text analysis were also used to collect the data. It was found that most learners do not pass Setswana. This poor scholastic result can be attributed and ascribed to Sepitori, especially Sepitori and also lacking prior knowledge of the language. It is evident that Sepitori pose a serious threat to language, Setswana in particular

because they interfere with the standard language. The study findings provided insights to the Department of Education about the challenges that Setswana L1 learners encountered that prevented them from excelling in Setswana HL at high schools due to lack of prior language knowledge. Based on the findings the following recommendations can be made: Schools that only offer Setswana as home language they must only enrol Setswana L1 learners, Teachers must not code switch to other languages in Setswana classes when learners do not understand.

**Keywords:** Language, Standard Language, Home Language, Teachers and African languages.

## Introduction

South Africa has 12 official languages and a multilingual population fluent in at least two. Alexander (2023) posit that IsiZulu, and isiXhosa are the largest languages, while English is spoken at home by only one in 10 people, most of them not white. During the apartheid era, African languages were not recognized, and were not promoted or developed to international standards. Although 25,3% of South Africans speak isiZulu at home (and 25,1% speak it outside the home), English has a superior status, even though only 8,1% of the population speaks it at home, and 16,6% speak it outside the home (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2018)

Developing and enhancing the use and status of indigenous languages in South Africa has proven to be a struggle. English is regarded as the official language for conducting business and for delivering education and is the most widely used formal communication language in South Africa. To reach the level and status of English, its main language competitor in South Africa, indigenous languages face various challenges related to developing its content and vocabulary. A great deal of research is necessary to develop primary language skills in indigenous (reading, writing and speaking). This study seeks to investigate the challenges faced by lecturers and students in the teaching and learning of indigenous languages in two

universities of technology aims to provide suggestions and recommendations that could improve the knowledge and status of indigenous language.

I have been teacher Setswana for almost 2 years, and during that time I have observed that teachers have different approaches to teaching indigenous languages, and use different methods based on their different knowledge, resources, values and competencies. Some code-switch, and some concentrate on how the content unfolds, while others employ a strategy that focuses purely on assessment criteria. These differences suggest that it is important to investigate the challenges faced by teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of indigenous languages in primary schools and to interrogate teachers' knowledge in indigenous languages, because knowledge is what seems to drive teaching in different directions. An educator's knowledge is very important for developing the skills and values that lead to learners achieving the intended learning outcomes. According to Smith (2012) educators must be highly experienced to help learners to understand the curriculum. This suggested that there was a need for a study that explores challenges faced by teachers, to help lecturers to improve their knowledge and skills. Koehler and Mishra (2009) build on Shulman's work, and classify knowledge into technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge. In short, they call this "technological pedagogical content knowledge" — simply known as TPACK. The TPACK framework suggests that knowledge is accumulated through experiences that involve concepts that are essential for teaching and learning. These concepts include hardware and software (technology in education), as well as ideological ware (human minds) (Khoza, 2015), indicating that educators' knowledge has a huge impact on learners' performance. If educators are highly competent, and if they have the required knowledge, their learners are likely to learn effectively, especially in the field of linguistics.

Winterveldt is a small township situated in Pretoria and has a large population. It is occupied by residents who speak all the South African indigenous languages, namely: English, Afrikaans, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Setswana, Sepedi, Sesotho, and Nguni languages (isiZulu, isiNdebele, and isiXhosa). Consequently, this convergence of all these language speakers situated in Pretoria has led to schools offering one language as Home language and learners from other languages do Setswana as Home Language and this learners turned to use Sepitori in class or formal situations because they do not understand the difference between Setswana and Sepitori because they are not Tswana speakers.

Sepitori is a pidgin language. In this regard, Pidgins and Creoles are languages that develop in situations where “groups of people, who do not share a common language, must communicate” with one another (Siegel 2005:143). These languages affect the learners’ subject performance, especially Setswana L1, because learners are exposed to these languages from birth, and parents communicate with their children using these SEPITORI (Sepitori & Tsotsitaal). Accordingly, they do not see the necessity of speaking standard Setswana. This does not only affect their Setswana performance at school but could also cause the extinction of the standard Setswana, which they must promote by communicating in it at home and schools. In the process, Sepitori and Tsotsitaal have become the first languages (L1) of many Winterveldt residents, resulting in this becoming a contributory factor to the learners’ poor performance in Setswana Home Language (HL) and the dying out of standard Setswana as a language in this area.

Gardner and Calteaux (1992:1) suggest that children who grow up in townships often learn this colloquial variety before acquiring a standard language, leading to various problems in the teaching of standard languages in schools. Gardner and Calteaux's views are similar because they both believe that being exposed to the colloquial language makes it difficult for one to be proficient in the acquisition of standard languages. Accordingly, where we live today plays a vital role in which language, we become competent.

Undoubtedly, learner’s competence in their mother tongues is decreasing due to these Sepitori. The government has tried to promote Black South African indigenous languages, but there does not seem to be any real progress. Many teachers are not equipped or trained to teach these languages, and mother tongue speakers of the indigenous languages provide little support to this matter (Schlebusch, 1994:98).

According to Ditsele (2014:224), “Sepitori simply means “the language of Pretoria. As such, it has not only become the lingua franca” in the townships, “but also serves as a marker of urbanisation and being “city-wise.” It is important to note that people who migrate to Pretoria adopt Sepitori to distance themselves from their rural backgrounds. Even speakers living outside the municipal borders try to learn” to speak Sepitori, not only because they seek to add it to their linguistic repertoires, but also to gain the concomitant positive social advantages such as urbanity, street wisdom, social recognition, and coolness.

Instead of rejecting the use of Sepitori, for learners of Setswana L1 who use a vocabulary that is used in one and not the other language, it may be more beneficial to encourage the cross-use

of such vocabulary. In other words, such vocabularies should be interchangeable in the two languages. Thus, it should be acceptable to adopt Sepitori-coined terminology into standard Setswana to achieve two objectives, namely, firstly, to address the challenge of having unnecessarily long phrases and secondly, to take advantage of the available single words that people use actively in their daily lives and to legitimise them by adopting and harmonising them into the standard varieties of the Setswana (Ditsele, 2014:224).

Some scholars have researched the rapid growth of Sepitori and how they bestow a high status and coolness on such speakers, how they should be accepted and adopted into standard Setswana. Even though Sepitori are rapidly growing, the dying of our indigenous Black South African languages especially, Setswana, must not be ignored. Setswana is declining slowly due to the rise of these two Sepitori of language. Instead of focusing on the rapidly growing Sepitori, more emphasis should be placed on the prevention of their influence on the Setswana performance of learners and, on the other hand, devise ways of promoting and enhancing the development of Setswana L1 so that it is promoted to maintain its official status.

Importantly, people appear to associate Tsotsitaal with criminal activities (Tshotetsi, 2016). The history of Tsotsitaal is linked to the development of gangs. In the 1930s, in the freehold townships of the western areas, youth gangs emerged because of the bleak economic prospects that young men faced in the townships. These gang members used a specific style inspired by, American films, magazines, comics, and fashions (Glaser, 2000). These gangs' style was expressed in their clothing, nicknames for individuals and gangs, and Tsotsitaal (Glaser, 2000:70). Tsotsitaal emerged in the Western native township, Sophiatown. At that time, it frequently consisted of a mixture of Afrikaans grammatical base, supplemented by a lexicon characterised by borrowings from the Bantu languages. Furthermore, Tshotetsi believes that Tsotsitaal made its way to Soweto after the Soweto uprising in 1976. In turn, Makhudu, in Mesthrie (2002:398) is of the opinion that tsotsitaal originated because of language contact within multilingual settings in the 19th-century South Africa. Accordingly, Tsotsitaal is associated with the townships.

The study aims to give an insight to the department of higher education about the challenges in teaching and learning indigenous languages in foundation face due to the influence of language of power (English) and teachers and learners lack of knowledge of these indigenous languages. Secondly, the study will teach about the cultural and linguistic aspects of

indigenous languages. The study is likely to assist improve the performance of indigenous languages and promote the use of these indigenous languages and maintain their status.

## Objectives

To achieve the aims mentioned above, the following objectives were realised, namely, to:

- Examine the challenges teachers and learners phase in teaching and learning Setswana at primary schools in Winterveldt.
- Determine the differences between the Sepitori and Setswana.
- Determine the roles that educators and learners can play learning Setswana.
- Explore ways of promoting the use of standard Setswana in schools so that it maintains its official status.

This section provided the context of this study, which included the background and the rationale, the aims and objectives, the population and the sample, the anticipated problems, the research methods, the language phenomena relevant to this study and the ethical issues in brief. The following section will discuss the theoretical framework and also review the literature related to the topic of study.

## Literature Review

In this section , the theoretical framework and the literature review related to the topic of this study are discussed. Local and international books, journals, newspapers, and other sources of various scholars were examined to investigate the different views and opinions on the same or similar topics that this study intended to explore.

This means that in this section, the researcher examined the role played by other researchers who studied the topic previously to investigate the influence of Sepitori and Tsotsitaal in other South African indigenous languages and not Setswana per se.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The Behaviourist Theory of Language Acquisition, The Social Integrationist Theory, and the Cognitive Theory were used as the framework to achieve the study aims and objectives.

### Behaviourist theory of language acquisition

All learning, whether verbal or non-verbal, takes place through the same underlying process. Learners receive linguistic input from speakers in their environment, and positive

reinforcement for their correct repetitions and imitations. As a result, language habits are formed (Lightbown & Spada 1993:23). The behaviourist theory accepts that "newborn children take in the oral language from other human good examples through procedures, including impersonation, rewards, and practice. Human good examples in a newborn child's life, condition, give, boosts and rewards," (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). At the point when a start learning the oral language or copies the sounds or discourse patterns, they are normally applauded and given recognition for their endeavours. In this way, recognition and fondness turn into prizes. Be that as it may, the behaviourist theory is examined for an assortment of reasons. If prizes play such a fundamental segment in language improvement, shouldn't something be said about the parent who is negligent or not present when the kid endeavours discourse? The question could be asked that if an infant's language learning is motivated by rewards, would the discourse attempts stop in the absence of rewards? (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). Different bodies of evidence against this theory incorporate "learning the utilization and significance of theoretical words, proof of novel types of language not demonstrated by others, and consistency of language obtaining in people" (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). The theory of language acquisition also applies in Winterveldt, where children hear and imitate the varieties of languages to which they are exposed, in this case, Sepitori and Tsotsitaal.

### **The Social Interactionist Theory**

The social interactionist theory states that a child's acquisition of language is influenced by the contact of several factors that are linguistic, physical, and social in nature (Moodley, 2013:33). The principle of verbal interaction is vital for language learning and shares the notion that "the environment plays a vital role in the growth" of language. Cognitive theories agree that language learning is a complex accomplishment involving the child's cognitive participation. According to this theory, social communication "expects that language securing is impacted by the collaboration of various elements – physical, semantic, psychological, and social" (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). This theory shares a considerable number of features with the other three theories.

From birth, children are surrounded by other people who speak with them. This correspondence has an impact on how the infant learns to speak his or her local language. Some contend that "nature" is completely in charge of how an infant learns a language, while others contend that "nurture" determines how an infant acquires his or her first language. Accordingly, social



interactionists contend that the way an infant learns a language is both organic and social (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004).

### **The Cognitive Theory**

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that children move through four stages of mental development. His theory focuses on understanding how they acquire knowledge and also on understanding the nature of intelligence (Badakar et al., 2017).

Malik (2019) suggests that Piaget's acquisition of language takes place within the context of a child's mental or cognitive development. He argues that a child must understand a concept before he/she can acquire the language form that expresses that concept. A good example of this is unevenness. "There will be a point in a child's intellectual development "when he or she can compare objects with respect to their size. This means that if you give the child several sticks, he or she could arrange them in order of their size. Piaget suggests that a child who has not yet "reached this stage would not be able to learn and use comparative adjectives like "bigger" or "smaller." Object permanence is another phenomenon often cited in relation to the cognitive theory" (Badakar et al., 2017).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Text analysis**

Text analysis was employed in the study where 5 participants, consisting of Grade 3 learners from each school, were given multiple-choice questions to complete, and then their responses were analysed to check if learners knew the differences between Sepitori and standard Setswana.

### **Interviews**

There was a focus group of 5 learners, one from each school and four teachers, two from each high school, who were interviewed to determine their knowledge about Sepitori and to test whether they could identify the possible interference of Sepitori in their speaking and written competences.

### **Observations**

During the observations, learners, were given a topic on which to do a presentation and a tape recorder will be used to collect the data. The researcher also observed a Setswana lesson to try and identify the challenges in teaching and learning Setswana.

### **Oral presentations and rubric**

The researcher also used oral presentation. Grade 3 learners were given a topic for an oral presentation in Setswana for a minute each. The presentations were assessed with a rubric by the researcher.

### **Writing task**

A writing task was used as a data collection tool. Grade 3 learners were given a topic on which to write a one-paragraph. Accordingly, their essays were analysed.

## **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **Essay findings**

All essays were read to identify the Sepitori (including phrases and clauses) and to establish the origin of such terms. Sepitori that were researched mainly emerged from Setswana, Northern Sotho, and isiZulu as it is a mixed language that developed from contact between these languages. As such, it is difficult to differentiate between these Sepitori and Standard Setswana. As is the case with Setswana, Sepitori also comprised adoptive phrases that were mainly: drawn from English and Afrikaans.

It was found that the majority of learners 85 % or wrote UCV terms in their essays. A minority of 15 % or 3 did not use Sepitori terms or rather they used Setswana terms. Of the three who did not write any Sepitori/Tsotsitaal terms in their essays, two were from school A, and one from school B. Based on the number of Setswana HL speakers in Winterveldt, one would have expected that these schools would have had the highest number of learners who did not use any Sepitori in their essays, but that was not the case as these schools had the lowest number of learners who used/wrote Sepitori in their essays.

The following table presents seven Sepitori that appeared in all the essays across the two schools. These terms which are not acceptable in the formal writing of Setswana, emerged from Northern Sotho, isiZulu, and Afrikaans.

**Table 1: Urban contact variety terms that appeared the most in essays.**

UCV terms	Number of appearances	Setswana	English
1 Byanong	15	Jaanong	Now
2 Nyaka	17	Batla	Want
3 Sgela	5	Sekolo	School
4 Kaosane	11	Kamoso	Tomorrow
5 Kgopela	11	Kopa	Ask
6 Botsisa	12	Botsa	Ask
7 Magata	5	Mapodisi	Police

There were cases where learners used Sepitori/Tsotsitaal terms (byanong) in one paragraph and Setswana one (jaanong) in another paragraph. This case suggested that they had acquired Sepitori and Setswana terms that are synonymous, but thought they were both acceptable in the formal writing of Setswana. Nkosi (2008) notes that learners do not know the difference between Sepitori and Northern Sotho; a solution to this is the suggestion made by Ditsele (2014:224) that Sepitori terms should be used to enhance the Setswana and Northern Sotho vocabulary. The data also suggested that the Setswana written by female learners is better in comparison with how or what the Setswana male learners write. This finding is supported by Xia (2013), who suggests that females pay more attention to using standard language than men do.

## INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Four teachers and Setswana Grade 3 learners from School A and School B were interviewed on their knowledge and understanding of the Sepitori and their influence on the written and spoken performance of Setswana Grade 3 learners. They were also asked in which language they preferred to communicate at school and at home, as a follow-up to the questions they were asked on the difference between Sepitori and Setswana. Some of these influences and differences were discussed in the literature review. These participants were selected because they are the most common ones. The questions were structured in such a way that Setswana

teachers and Grade 10 learners understood and could respond to them and that they were based on Sepitori and their influence on Setswana as discussed in the literature review.

### **Teachers findings (N=4)**

The following questions were posed to four teachers in face-to-face interviews. The four Grade 10 Setswana teachers that were interviewed comprised two from School A and two from School B, which were sampled, and the findings are also presented.

**Question 1: *Are there any other language that learners often speak other than Setswana in the classroom during the Setswana lesson? Give a reason.***

All four Setswana teachers responded that most learners started the lesson communicating in Setswana since this was a Setswana lesson; they also mentioned that when they became comfortable during the lessons, they started communicating using Sepitori and Tsotsitaal. T1 in school A reported that learners used Sepitori during the Setswana lessons, and they did not see anything wrong with this practice. T2 and T3 from School B shared that female learners used Setswana during the Setswana lessons, while male learners used Sepitori and Tsotsitaal during Setswana lessons more frequently than female learners. It is, therefore, evident that Setswana female learners paid more attention to standard languages in contrast with the Setswana male learners. This is because of the attitude they had towards the indigenous languages, and another reason was the influence of the environment in which they lived where Setswana was being influenced by the non-standard varieties that the community communicates in their everyday lives.

**Question 2: *In your opinion, do you think that learners previously acquired languages influence their learning Setswana.***

Three out of the four teachers believed that learners had previously acquired languages that influenced their learning Setswana. The main reasons they provided were as follows:

*“Yes, because language and society are inseparable; the language that we communicate in is influenced by the society we live in, Winterveldt is occupied by people who speak different languages, and as a result, they communicate using non-standard languages in order to understand each other. Learners from this area tend to acquire the non-standard language and use it in school, and this influences their learning Setswana” (T3 from School B).*

*“Absolutely, because learners learn Sepitori/Tsotsitaal as a first language and that makes it difficult for them to learn standard Setswana” (T2 from School A).*

*“I think learners previously acquired languages influenced their learning Setswana, because most learners from Winterveldt are not native Setswana speakers, in my class for instance I have isiZulu and Sepedi native speakers since the Sepitori emerge from these languages; these learners mostly use Sepitori in class, since their first acquired languages are not Setswana” (T1 from School A).*

The remaining teachers felt that the learners’ previously acquired languages did not influence their learning of Setswana because learners could learn more than one language and could be competent in it regardless of their acquired languages. (T4 from School B)

***Question 3: Do you think learners can be able to differentiate between standard Setswana and urban contact varieties (Sepitori)? Explain why.***

Three teachers felt that learners could not differentiate between standard Setswana and Sepitori; their reason was that when marking learners’ essays and during the oral presentations, they came across Sepitori and Tsotsitaal terms. This is because learners do not speak the standard language, so they would not understand the difference. These findings are supported by Tegegne (2015: 267) when he/she points out that many materials that are used in schools are prepared in the standard language and learners who speak the standard language, therefore, it is easier for them to read and understand the standard language and Sepitori. Teacher 3 From School B abstained from answering this question.

***Question 4: What is the possible interference of Sepitori in speaking and writing Setswana by Grade 10 learners?***

Two teachers T1, from School A and T3, from School B, felt there was no interference with regard to Sepitori in speaking and writing in Setswana of Grade 10 learners. They provided the following reasons:

*“There is no interference of Sepitori in speaking and writing Setswana, yes, these Sepitori are growing, but they don’t interfere in learning Setswana. I have learners in my class who come from families where both parents are not Tswana and communicate using Sepitori/Tsotsitaal, but they excel in writing and speaking Setswana” (T1 from School A).*

*“No, I don’t think there are inferences of Sepitori in writing and speaking Setswana. Learners choose which language they use for example when we were just having an informal conversation with learners in class they use informal or Sepitori terms, but when it comes to oral presentations or essay writing they use formal/ Standard language. This proves that there is no interference of Sepitori in writing and speaking Setswana” (T3 from School B).*

The remaining two teachers T2, from School A, and T4 from School B, felt that there was possible interference of Sepitori in speaking and writing Setswana and also cited some examples.

*“The possible interference of Sepitori can be on the loan words, there are many loan words from Afrikaans and English that are accepted and used in Setswana some of the words that are loan words are there in Setswana, but most learners prefer using loan words instead of Setswana words, for instance, learners prefer to use loan words (lefenstere) instead of Setswana word (letlhabaphefo.” (T2 from School A).*

*“This interference of Sepitori includes grammatical errors. Learners do not follow Setswana grammatical rules when writing and speaking due to these Sepitori, for instance, they use the wrong concords or the wrong conjunctions, and some learners code-switch between Setswana and these Sepitori” (T4 from School B).*

***Question 5: How can learners be made aware of the difference between the Sepitori of languages and Setswana?***

T2 and T4 stated that learners are aware of the difference between Sepitori and Setswana. T2 said that learners knew the difference; they just chose to be ignorant and use UCV terms anyway. T4 felt learners knew the difference because when they communicated in an informal setting, they used the standard language.

T3 felt that learners could be made aware of the difference by penalising them when they use UCV terms instead of Setswana terms, *“I used to not penalise them, I only show and highlighted the correct words in Setswana. We can also encourage learners to read more Setswana books.”*

T1 suggested that learners should be given multiple choice tests to test their knowledge of the difference between these Sepitori and Setswana and they should also be educated on the Setswana terms that are allowed or rather accepted in formal writing and during oral presentations.

***Question: What can be done to promote the use of Setswana in schools and maintain its official status?***

Three teachers discussed ways of promoting the use of the Setswana language and maintaining its official status. One teacher felt there was nothing that could be done to promote the use of Setswana in schools and thought there was no need to maintain its official status.

*“I think we should minimise the use of Sepitori in schools this will reduce the influence on Setswana and also promote the use of Setswana and maintain its official status. We cannot afford to lose our beautiful indigenous language because if we lose it, we lose our culture since cannot separate language and culture” (T3 from School A).*

*“There are certain ways to promote the use of Setswana and promote its official status, for instance, we can educate learners and teachers on the importance of Setswana and encourage them to read more Setswana books. Also, during parent meetings, communicate in Setswana with parents, and also appeal to parents to use Setswana when communicating with learners both in informal and formal settings. Letters to parents and staff should be written in Setswana and, lastly, penalise learners who use Sepitori terms in class. If we practice these ways, our language will maintain its official status” (T2 from School A).*

*“I think if Setswana HL is given the same treatment and attention as other subjects like maths, physics, life sciences and accounting, it will promote the use of Setswana, for example, these subjects are given eight hours or more per week and Setswana is given four hours or less per week, so this simply means Setswana is not taken seriously.”*

*“Nothing can be done to promote the use of Setswana in school, Setswana is already influenced by Sepitori and a bit of Tsotsitaal, most learners and students prefer using Sepitori or English to communicate instead of trying to maintain its official status. I think we should focus on accepting the use of these Sepitori because most learners who do not use Setswana, as a home language, in school are not Batswana and also language is dynamic, [so] we should make peace with the development of Sepitori.”*

**Learners Findings (N=10)**

In total, ten Grade 10 learners were interviewed, five from School A (south of Winterveldt) and five from School B (west of Winterveldt). This was done in focus groups of five each, where both the schools used for sampling were represented.

***Question 1: What is the difference between urban contact varieties (UCV) and Setswana?***



The majority of learners, 90% or nine out of ten, felt there is no difference between Sepitori and Setswana. The remaining learners thought there are differences. Accordingly, a respondent substantiated her argument based on the following reasons.

- *Sepitori are not standardised, so they are not allowed to be used in formal settings, you get penalised when you use Sepitori instead of Setswana.*
- *Sepitori are not official, and Setswana is an official language.*

***Question 2: What can be done to promote the use of Setswana in schools and maintain its official status?***

There was a 50/50 response to this question; 50% of the learners felt that something could be done to promote the use of Setswana in school and discussed different ways of maintaining its official status.

*“There are several ways of promoting the use of Setswana, for instance; we can have monthly Setswana awards to encourage us to speak Setswana at all times in class and during lunchtime outside class and also at home with our parents and friends. We can also read more Setswana books in school. If we practise this effectively, we can also maintain its official status” (LM2).*

*“We can promote the use of Setswana in schools by at least having more Setswana writers; we have few Setswana writers; everyone who becomes a writer these days chooses to write in English. We can also learn the importance of Setswana and its roots to help maintain its official status” (LF7).*

*“There are a few ways of promoting the use of Setswana in schools and helping maintain its official status. These include having native Setswana speakers as our teachers. Our Setswana teachers are not native Setswana speakers; they even use Sepitori examples in formal Setswana classes” (LF1).*

*“We can promote the use of Setswana if we limit the use of Sepitori in school or stop communicating in Sepitori at all” (LF9).*

*“I think the use of Setswana can be promoted by having Setswana competitions in schools, such as essay writing competitions or Setswana spelling bee competitions” (LF8).*

The remaining 50% or five out of the ten learners felt nothing could be done to promote the use of Setswana in schools and thought there was no need to maintain its official status. Below are their responses.

*“There is nothing that can be done to promote the use of Setswana in schools. Setswana already receives the attention it deserves, and Setswana is not a language to be promoted. It is not that important” (LM3).*

*“I think there is no need to promote Setswana use or even try to maintain its official status because Setswana is just an indigenous language; it is not a lingua franca and not the language of power” (LM4).*

*“We cannot try to promote the language that is already dead; we cannot ignore the growth of Sepitori; our focus must be on the growth of Sepitori, not trying to promote the use of a dying language” (LM5).*

*“There is no need to promote the use of Setswana and maintain its official status, we should pay more attention to the languages that are developing like Sepitori and the likes of Tsotsitaal” (LF10).*

*“Language is dynamic; we should focus on the language or varieties that are developing and not on promoting Setswana. The generation that is born now are exposed to Sepitori/Tsotsitaal; I think they should just accept Sepitori and Tsotsitaal for use during Setswana lessons, in essays and during presentations” (LM8)*

This finding is supported by Ditsele (2014) when he argued that Sepitori terms are used to enhance the Sepedi and Setswana vocabulary.

### ***Question 3: In which language can you best express yourself? Explain***

Four learners responded that they could express themselves the best in English, and they felt comfortable with using English to communicate. Below are their responses.

*“I can best express myself in English because English is a lingua franca; when communicating in English, there is no need for you to explain or say the same thing twice” (LF1).*

*“English is the language I am comfortable communicating in because English is the language of power, and it has the status” (LF7).*

*“I can express myself best in English because English is the language of the literate and the educated; when you communicate in English, people respect you” (LF8).*

*“I prefer communicating in English because of the power and status it yields” (LM4).*

Four learners, however, indicated that they could communicate best in Sepitori and Tsotsitaal, as can be seen in their responses below:

*“I can best express myself in Sepitori and Tsotsitaal because I am from Pretoria and those are the languages I was born into and the languages that we use at home” (LM5).*

*“Sepitori and Tsotsitaal are the languages I can best express myself in because they are spoken in my society; everyone in my area uses Sepitori and Tsotsitaal to communicate” (LM6).*

*“Sepitori and Tsotsitaal because they are cool. When you communicate using them, you are regarded as cool and many people from the hood respect you wantshwara’ (LM10).*

*“I can best express myself ka Sepitori ka gore Sepitori se tsentsha bantwaneng, and it is the language I acquired from birth and gape Sepitori ke stele” (LM9).*

The remaining two learners indicated they could best express themselves in Setswana (LF2 and LM3), both from School A (North of Winterveldt).

*“I can best express myself in Setswana, and I prefer using Setswana to communicate because it is the standard language, and I am proud of it, I also do not want it to die” (LF2).*

*“Setswana is the language I can best express myself with because it is my native language and both my parents are Batswana, I speak it at home, at school, and with my friends” (LM3).*

***Question 4: Can you differentiate between Setswana and UCV? Give an example.***

An overwhelming majority, 70 % or seven out of ten learners, felt there is no difference between Setswana and Sepitori, and were surprised that that question was asked.

Two learners were however able to tell the difference between Sepitori and Setswana with reference to the following responses and some examples.

*“There are differences between Sepitori and Setswana; the first difference is that Setswana is standardised, and UCs are not. Secondly, Setswana terms are used in formal writing and are used during oral presentations and Sepitori can only be used in informal settings, for instance, in a formal setting, you can use the Setswana word (batla) and the UCV term (nyaka) in an informal setting; they both mean the same thing.” (LF1)*

*“The difference between Sepitori and Setswana is that Sepitori are used by educated and illiterate people whereas Setswana or the standard language is used by educated and literate people.” (LF2)*

LM3 abstained from answering the question.

**Question 5: Do you think learning Setswana is important? Explain.**

Most learners (80 %, or eight out of ten learners,) felt that it is not important to learn Setswana or any other Bantu languages, for that matter. Below are their responses:

*“It is not important to learn Setswana because it is not the language of power. No one will respect you for speaking Setswana or any other indigenous languages for that matter.” (LM6)*

*“I don’t think it is important to learn Setswana because, language is dynamic, and I think English is the only language that is static. Setswana changes every day, and there are many varieties that are more similar to Setswana, so that makes it difficult to learn Setswana or the standard varieties of a language.” (LF8)*

*“I don’t think it is important to learn Setswana, because I am not a Motswana, I just do Setswana as an HL because there is no Xitsonga school in Winterveldt, and I am a Tsonga speaking person.” (LF2)*

*“It is not important to learn Setswana because it is only spoken by a few people”. (LF4)*

*“It is not important to learn Setswana because of where it is originated, despite the fact that it is an official language, it is a foreign language we all know that Setswanas come from Botswana, and not South Africa.” (LM5)*

*“I don’t think it is important to learn Setswana because Setswana doesn’t have the status.” (LM7)*

*“It is not important to learn Setswana because Setswana is being replaced by Sepitori and other Sepitori; those who are born in this generation are born into Sepitori and the language that they acquire first is Sepitori.” (LM10)*

The remaining two felt it is important to learn Setswana because of the following reasons:

*“Well, for me, I think it is important because I love it, and besides loving it, it is important to learn Setswana for communicative purposes.” (LM9)*

*“It is important if you want to continue with it to become a professional teacher of it.” (LF1)*

### Oral Presentation Findings (N=10)

Learners were given a topic on which to do an oral presentation; each of the ten learners was recorded when presenting to identify UCV terms, clauses, and phrases to establish the language from which such terms were driven.

The majority of learners (80 %, or 8 out of 10) spoke or rather used Sepitori terms during their presentation, albeit to varying degrees. This means that a small minority (20%, or 2 out of 10) did not use UCV terms during their presentation; both came from School A (south of Winterveldt). High-frequency UCV terms, which are not acceptable in formal Setswana presentations, were drawn from Afrikaans, Sepedi, and Southern Sotho. These findings are supported by Matubatuba (2001:253) when he asserts that Sepedi and Southern Sotho are inseparable from Setswana. Nkosi (2008), in her study on Northern Sotho HL learners, found that Sepitori terms cannot be separated from Sepitori terms that are accepted in formal writing and speaking. Table 4.2 presents 15 UCV terms with high frequencies across the two schools.

**Table 2 High frequency of UCV terms**

UCV terms	Frequency	Setswana	English
<b>Monyako</b>	15	Mojako	Door
<b>Tsotsi</b>	15	Senokwane	Criminal
<b>Banyana</b>	15	Basetsana	Girls
<b>Batswadi</b>	13	Batsadi	Parents
<b>Byang</b>	13	Jaang	How
<b>Thaba</b>	12	Itumela	Happy
<b>Nyaka</b>	11	Batla	Want
<b>Tseba</b>	11	Itse	Know
<b>Dintshang</b>	11	Go diragalang?	What is going on?
<b>Flopo</b>	10	Bothata	Problem
<b>Techere</b>	9	Morutabana	Teacher
<b>Prinspala</b>	8	Mogokgo	Principal
<b>Fru</b>	8	Meso	Morning
<b>Katjeko</b>	8	Gompieno	Today
<b>Chelete</b>	6	Madi	Money

Besides this high frequency of UCV terms, some learners used loan words. Raubenheimer (1983:101) suggests that loaning words became an integral part of language development and enrichment a long time ago and is regarded as a natural phenomenon. Table 4.3 presents five loan words that learners used during their presentations.

**Table 4.3: Loan Words**

<b>Loaned terms</b>	<b>Original terms</b>	<b>Language from</b>	<b>loan</b>	<b>Setswana terms</b>
<b>Matiriki</b>	Matric	English		Marematlou
<b>Tafole</b>	Tafel	Afrikaans		Lebati la bojelo
<b>Poleiti</b>	Plate	English		Sejanaga
<b>Tura</b>	Duur	Afrikaans		Tlhotlhagodimo
<b>Patella</b>	Betal	Afrikaans		Duela
<b>Bereka</b>	Werk	Afrikaans		Dira
<b>Afota</b>	Afford	English		Bokgoni jwa go duela
<b>Polane</b>	Plan	English		Leano
<b>Flopa</b>	Flop	English		Dira phoso
<b>Kereya</b>	Kry	Afrikaans		Fitlhela

### **Multiple choice test findings (N=14)**

Text analysis was also employed in this study, accordingly, ten Grade 10 learners, five from each school, were given a multiple test to complete, and then their tests were analysed to check whether learners knew the difference between Sepitori and Setswana. The multiple choices were created in a way that Grade 10 Setswana learners understood and could complete.

An overwhelming majority of the learners (70%, or 7 out of 10) failed the multiple-choice test, which means that only 30% or 3 out of 10 passed the multiple-choice test. Of the three that passed the multiple-choice test, two came from School A and one from School B. Even though of the 30 % of the learners who had passed, no one got more than 55 % for their tests. Based on these findings, it is evident that learners could not identify UCV terms, and what is more, they could not differentiate between the Sepitori and Setswana.

According to the data, it is evident that Sepitori had a significant influence on the written and spoken outputs of the learners and most learners and teachers could not differentiate

## **Discussion**

The first aim of this study was to prove that Sepitori do have an influence on Setswana, especially at school with regard to the writing and speaking of Grade 10 learners, because the UCV terms as used by people from Pretoria are written, and some are pronounced like the Setswana terms, for example, *byala* (alcohol) *banyana* (girls), *techere* (teacher), *plane* (plan) and *bereka* (work). These UCV terms are static because they sound like Setswana words and influence the usage of words in the standard language, but at the same time, they are dynamic because their meanings are known and comprehensible to the people of Pretoria only. The static and dynamic elements of Sepitori as far as the teaching and learning of Setswana are concerned as was confirmed by both teachers and learners.

Secondly, this study attempted to indicate that Setswana dominates Sepitori and Tsotsitaal, as the latter language, namely, Tsotsitaal, is based on both Afrikaans and isiZulu. This statement does not rule the fact out that other languages, such as Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho and isiZulu are used in Sepitori, but in this investigation, most of the vocabulary is written and pronounced as Setswana words. All the deliberations in this study show that these Sepitori are currently based in Setswana, which is why they have such a strong influence.

As much as Sepitori have a positive influence, they also have a negative influence. Firstly, it affects the language acquisition of urban children. The child acquires a colloquial language naturally, this has an effect when learners are faced with tasks and assignments where the knowledge of Standard Setswana is required. In this regard, learners from two schools at Winterveldt were given a multiple-choice test task and an essay to write. It was found that most learners did not pass these Setswana tasks. This poor scholastic result can be attributed and ascribed to Sepitori, especially Sepitori and Tsotsitaal. It is evident that Sepitori pose a serious threat to the standard language, Setswana in particular because they interfere with the standard language.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions the following recommendations can be made:

- More research should be done on the challenges in teaching and learning Setswana at Pretoria.
- Learners and teachers must be taught the difference between standard language and Sepitori.
- Workshops must be organised for Language teachers and curriculum developers on the importance of African indigenous languages.
- The government and the Department of Education must employ or rather hire native Setswana speakers to teach Setswana HL at Winterveldt.
- Schools that only offer Setswana as home language must only enrol Setswana L1 learners and also schools must cater for at least 4 indigenous languages.



## **Conclusion**

According to the data, it is evident that Sepitori had a significant influence on the written and spoken outputs of the learners and most learners and teachers could not differentiate between Setswana and Sepitori. It was unreasonable to keep these Sepitori away in Setswana classrooms since learners and some teachers ordinarily speak Sepitori and Tsotsitaal at school, regardless of the subject they taught.

These Sepitori are spoken by anybody, anywhere and in any form. The standard language, which educated and literate people speak, is used in schools, in the media, and in formal settings. All eleven South African languages, namely, English, Setswana, isiZulu, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, isiNdebele, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiSwati, Afrikaans and isiXhosa, have the same status and recognition in the sense that no language is dominant over the other. All of them are regarded as official languages and nothing is said about these Sepitori. However, it is important to note that there is a difference between the spoken and written language; while the spoken language is informal, the written language is formal. The spoken language influences the written language in the sense that a person normally writes what he/she actually speaks, in the spoken language that does not apply the grammar or the syntax rules of the language. The vocabulary of learners and some teachers contains UCV terms, and when used in sentences, are relevant to the meaning of these Sepitori, thus demonstrating the fact that Sepitori contain Setswana terms, and this influences Setswana.

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