

**THE IMPACT OF THE LANGUAGE BARRIER ON LESOTHO
DEMOCRACY: THE CASE OF MINORITY LANGUAGES**

BY

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MA (African Languages and Linguistics)

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
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DECLARATION

I, `Makananelo Mosotho, declare that this thesis, presented for the Degree of Master of Arts in African Languages and Linguistics, is entirely my own work and has not been submitted to any other educational institution before. All the sources that I have cited in the thesis are properly acknowledged and credited in the references.

.....

Signed

.....

Date

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this thesis has been read and approved as having met the requirements of the faculty of humanities, National University of Lesotho, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in African Languages and Linguistics.

Supervisor:

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Signed

Date

External Examiner:

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Date

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ABSTRACT

Regular multi-party elections are crucial in a democratic system, where an engaged and participatory citizenry is a hallmark of a thriving democracy. The current study aimed to investigate the impact of using mainly Sesotho as well as English during the 2022 Lesotho general elections on the participation of minority language speakers who do not fully understand both languages. To carry out this aim, a qualitative method was employed. Interviews were conducted with residents of Quthing and IEC officials, and a stratified random sample of 60 participants was selected from Basotho, Baphuthi, and Xhozas living in Quthing, as well as IEC officials. Stratified random sampling allowed for the representation of all ethnic groups in Quthing and IEC officials. Convenient sampling was also employed to select participants from the subgroups formed in stratified sampling as it provided readily available sources of data. To determine the effect of using mainly Sesotho as well as English on the participation of minority language speakers in the 2022 national elections, this study utilized the Critical theory along with the Sociological, Psychosocial, and Rational Choice models of voting behavior.

The majority of the data was analyzed thematically. The results revealed that the use of mainly Sesotho as the main language during the 2022 national elections hindered the participation of minority language speakers who did not fully understand Sesotho. It became evident that some individuals who spoke minority languages were hesitant to bring language assistants with them to the voting booths because they were afraid that their choice would not remain confidential. Others chose not to vote altogether, and one of the reasons for this was that they avoided activities that required them to communicate in Sesotho, as they disliked using this language. Additionally, some minority language speakers cast their votes with little knowledge about the elections because the use of Sesotho made information about the elections difficult to access. Incompetence in Sesotho also resulted in some people failing to persuade other members of their party to elect them to certain leadership positions within the party. Furthermore, the language barrier hindered minority language speakers from effectively communicating their needs to politicians who manage the resources of the country, which resulted in the needs of these communities remaining unaddressed.

The study suggests that the government of Lesotho should revise its election laws to include all indigenous minority languages spoken in the country. Additionally, the government should invest in creating linguistically accessible materials to ensure everyone can participate equally in elections. It is also recommended that the government should increase the representation of minority language speakers in parliament to encourage their engagement in the electoral process. Finally, Basotho should be encouraged to learn minority languages available in the country to improve inclusivity and eliminate the exclusion of individuals who speak minority languages in all national contexts.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	i
CERTIFICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
LIST OF CHARTS.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
CHAPTER 1	1
1.0. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	3
1.1.1. AIM OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	4
1.1.3. HYPOTHESIS	4
1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.	4
1.3. LITERATURE REVIEW.	5
1.3.1. LANGUAGE AND ITS ROLES IN HUMAN BEINGS	5
1.3.2. DEFINITION OF A MINORITY LANGUAGE	6
1.3.3. THE IMPACT OF THE LANGUAGE BARRIER ON PEOPLE’S LIVES.....	8
1.3.4. MINORITY LANGUAGES AND ELECTIONS AS A PREREQUISITE OF DEMOCRACY IN WESTERN COUNTRIES.....	9
1.3.5. MINORITY LANGUAGES AND ELECTIONS AS A PREREQUISITE OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES.....	11
1.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	14
1.4.1. MODELS OF VOTING BEHAVIOR	15
1.4.2. SOCIOLOGICAL MODEL OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR.....	15
1.4.3. PSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR	16
1.4.4. THE RATIONAL CHOICE MODEL	17
1.5. METHODOLOGY	17
1.5.1. DATA COLLECTION.	18
1.5.2. SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS.	19
1.5.3. SAMPLING	20

1.5.4.	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.	21
1.6.	ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY.....	21
CHAPTER 2	22
2.0.	INTRODUCTION.....	22
2.1.	The history and formation of the Basotho nation	22
2.2.	A brief description of Lesotho.....	26
2.3.	MINORITY LANGUAGES IN THE QUTHING DISTRICT.....	27
2.4.	CONCLUSION.....	29
CHAPTER THREE	31
3.0.	INTRODUCTION.....	31
3.1.	THE LANGUAGES WHICH WERE USED IN QUTHING DURING THE 2022 ELECTION PROCESSES.	31
3.2.	CONCLUSION.....	51
CHAPTER 4	52
4.0.	INTRODUCTION.....	52
4.1.	The voting behaviour of Quthing residents in the 2022 national elections.	52
4.1.1.	The language barrier.....	55
4.1.2.	Politicians' Unfaithfulness.....	59
4.1.3.	Names did not appear on the voter's list.	61
4.1.4.	The reasons provided by the participants who voted last year.....	62
4.2.	Languages that were used in election-related information sources.....	71
4.3.	The impact of the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 national elections on the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing.	73
4.3.1.	Violation of fundamental rights and freedoms.....	74
4.3.2.	Lack of access to information.	76
4.3.3.	Exclusion.	78
4.3.4.	Demotivation.	79
4.4.	The role of accessible language in elections as a prerequisite of democracy.....	80
4.4.1.	Accessible language is a valuable tool for politicians.	81
4.4.2.	Accessible language facilitates election participation.	83
4.4.3.	Accessible language leads to a more democratic government.	86
4.5.	CONCLUSION.....	88
CHAPTER 5	89
5.0.	Introduction.	89

5.1. Summary of the study.....	89
5.2. Recommendations.....	93
5.2.1. Reformation of the laws that monitor the elections in Lesotho.	93
5.2.2. The government should invest in linguistically accessible elections.	94
5.2.3. Improving the representation of minority language speakers in parliament.....	95
5.2.4. Basotho should also learn minority languages available in the country.	95
REFERENCES.....	96
APPENDICES.....	104
APPENDIX 1.....	104
APPENDIX 2.....	104
APPENDIX 3.....	110
APPENDIX 4.....	111

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 The map of Lesotho.

Figure 2 Reasons provided by participants who did not vote.

Figure 3 Reasons provided by participants who voted.

Figure 4 The impact of using only Sesotho and English during the 2022 national elections.

Figure 5 The role of accessible language in elections.

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1 Ethnic groups and the villages of respondents in Moyeni.

Chart 2 Ethnic groups and the villages of respondents in Mount Moorosi.

Chart 3 Election-related information sources.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Languages used by the election related information sources.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION.

Lesotho has been a democratic country since 1966, transitioning from authoritarian rule to a multi-party democracy, as explained by Monyane (2009). According to Gay and Mattes in 2003, democracy is a form of government where citizens have a say in how their country is governed through their elected representatives. Likoti (2009) further clarifies that the central idea of democracy is popular participation in decision-making. Through elections, democracy allows people to choose their preferred leaders. Chanchai (2015) reiterates that democracy is essentially elections. Lindberg (2006) adds that the process of electing officials into power is a fundamental feature shared among modern democracies, despite varying perspectives on what constitutes a true democracy. Matlosa in 2005 emphasizes that regular multiparty elections are important for vibrant democratic governance. However, it is crucial to note that elections alone do not make a country a democracy. Matlosa (ibid) further explains that the primary functions of multiparty elections are to increase political participation by citizens in the governance process and to establish a parliament that truly represents the political stakeholders in a given country. Charlotte (2022) recognizes that while elections are often seen as necessary for democracy, true democracy goes beyond just holding periodic elections. One reason for this is that certain groups of people are sometimes prevented from exercising their constitutional rights and responsibilities through the electoral process, which can derail the goal of building a democratic society.

Kasimi (2020:126-136) also notes, “A democratic country is not possible without justice, equality, and the right of expressing ideas”. Similarly, Erdmann (2022) also believes that in a democratic dispensation, everyone should have an equal say in determining the laws governing them. Another scholar who recognizes the importance of equality in democracy is Dristy (2021). He considers equality as a basis of democracy because it promotes equal treatment and rights for all individuals. Additionally, Dristy (ibid) argues that justice is necessary for equality to be put into practice. According to Lawrence (2022), justice is one of the major goals of a democratic constitution since the absence of justice signals a lack of democracy. Lawrence (ibid) warns that injustice in a country

may deprive citizens of their constitutional rights, such as freedom of expression. Following Kasimi (2020), Dumas (2022) also recognizes the importance of freedom of expression as it enables citizens to voice their opinions, demand changes, and access information. Section 14 (1) of the Constitution purports that, as a democratic country, Lesotho guarantees the freedom of expression to its citizens.

For effective communication, it is necessary to have a common language that can be used to exchange information. Bhasin (2021) argues that a shared language is essential for people to understand each other, and without it, a language barrier can occur. This barrier can create problems in various industries such as healthcare, aviation, maritime, business, and education, as pointed out by Abuarqoub (2019: 64-77). Abuarqoub (ibid) further explains that in healthcare, the language barrier can lead to misdiagnosis, delayed treatment, incomplete understanding of a patient's condition, and an increased risk of medical errors. Additionally, Abuarqoub (ibid) states that over 60% of aircraft incidents are caused by human error resulting from ineffective crew communication due to the language barrier. The researcher also demonstrates that misunderstandings caused by the language barrier are the main cause of yearly sea accidents. In the business sector, the language barrier can lead to negative emotions and prevent customers from seeking necessary information or complaining about service failures. Finally, Abuarqoub (ibid) indicates that due to the language barrier, students may have difficulty understanding teachers and classmates, which can lead to isolation and stress among young people. Expanding on this topic, Berardo (2007) highlights that misunderstandings arising from the language barrier can result in conflicts, hurt feelings, frustrations, and even violence. Fang (2017) also points out that the language barrier can lead to the exclusion of ethnic minority groups who are not able to access their entitlements due to a lack of communication in their first language.

Another scholar who showed concern about the language barrier is Cabrera (2022), he argues that the language barrier is a critical challenge to democracy. He explains that it can prevent people from understanding important information needed for elections, which is essential for a democratic process. Piller (2022) also observed that the language barrier can also hinder equal participation in social activities, potentially limiting minority language speakers' involvement in public events,

including elections. As a result, minority language speakers may struggle to express their views and contribute to their country's governance which goes against the "free expression of the will of the electors" as stated in Article 25 (b) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Moreover, the Constitution of Lesotho (1993) acknowledges only Sesotho and English as official languages. This poses a challenge to minority language speakers to take part in public events such as elections in Lesotho. This is in spite of several charters and declarations advocating for the recognition of minority languages. The Harare declaration, for instance, recommends that African nations formulate a clear language policy that accommodates every language spoken in the country (Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, 1997).

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The constitution of Lesotho, as stated in section 4 (1), guarantees personal rights and freedoms to every citizen, regardless of colour, race, sex, language, religion, or politics. However, minority language speakers may face a language barrier that prevents them from accessing these personal rights and freedoms, including the freedom of expression and a right to vote or run for election through a fair and equal suffrage system, including a secret ballot. According to Starkey (2002), freedom of expression is essential for democracy as it enables citizens to criticize and hold the government accountable for fulfilling their obligations. Mudau (2023) also argues that real freedom of expression cannot exist if people are prohibited from using their preferred languages. As a democratic country, Lesotho held its general elections on October 7th, 2022. The majority of Basotho exercised their democratic right to choose their representatives in parliament. This study aims to investigate whether the language barrier affected the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing, the most diverse district, during the 2022 general elections.

1.1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY.

The study aims to investigate the impact of the use of only official languages during the 2022 Lesotho general elections on the participation of minority language speakers who do not fully understand both Sesotho and English.

1.1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

To achieve the stated aim, the following questions are asked:

- (a) Which languages were used in the pre-election, election and post-election processes in the 2022 general elections of Lesotho?
- (b) How did the language barrier affect minority language speakers in Quthing during the 2022 general elections?
- (c) What is the role of language in the general elections as a prerequisite of democracy?

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

- (a) It is hypothesized that Sesotho and English were the only languages used in the pre-election, election and post-election process
- (b) It has been suggested that the language barrier prevents minority language speakers from fully exercising their democratic right to participate in election processes.
- (c) The researcher hypothesized that language can facilitate or hinder participation in the elections of any country.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

This study aims to support existing scholarly works that call for the recognition of minority languages in Lesotho. It is hoped that by reducing the language barrier, democracy would be more accessible to minority language speakers. The study's findings may help the government understand the importance of investing in elections that allow all citizens to participate in their preferred language. Additionally, the study is expected to inform the Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho's programs and services to conduct linguistically accessible elections.

This will allow electors to make informed decisions based on political issues and information from media that accommodates minority languages.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW.

In this section, the study will examine the relevant scholarly literature. The literature has been divided into five sections based on their themes. The first section will explore the importance of language in human communication, while the second section will review different scholarly opinions on the definition of a minority language. In the third section, the study will discuss how the language barrier can affect individuals. The fourth and fifth sections will cover the role of language, particularly minority languages, in elections as a requirement for democracy.

1.3.1 LANGUAGE AND ITS ROLES IN HUMAN BEINGS

According to Bhasin (2020), language is a faculty that defines human beings and human nature. It helps humans express their thoughts and feelings through sounds, symbols, written or spoken words, posture, gestures or signs. On this premise, Alieva (2020) views language as an important means of communication among the members of society. Clarifying further, Alieva (ibid) explains that thinking is a conscious process that can only be understood through communication which is impossible without language.

Banga (2015) views language as a tool for building social identity. Social identity refers to how individuals identify themselves with others according to what they have in common (Deaux, 2001). Cargile and Clement (2014) and Sirbu (2019) also opined that language is a significant means of exercising a person's ethnicity which refers to having similar national, racial and cultural origins or other traits in common (Yang et al., 2022). Rita Mae Brown's quote about language (2011) says "Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going". This implies that when one learns a particular language, he or she is automatically

interacting with the culture associated with that language. Turchyn (2023) also says “Language is culture and culture is language”.

Eminov (2003) contends that language is important in nationalism. Nationalism is a belief that is based on the premise that the state and the nation should be unified (Garner 2022). In his discussion about nationalism, Eminov (ibid) comments that the language of the people enhances the feeling of collective identity, unity, and the formation of close relationships among the people within a certain country. Another scholar who views language as useful for nationalism is Branchadell (2012) who explained that the more people use their first language mainly in official matters it is likely they feel a strong sense of belonging towards their nation.

The above information is pertinent to the present paper as it describes the significance of using one’s language which includes minority languages which are the concern of the study.

1.3.2 DEFINITION OF A MINORITY LANGUAGE

According to Maja (2007), there is no agreed-upon definition of a minority language. However, Grenoble and Singerman (2020) opine that the simple definition of a minority language derives from the definition provided by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1992. The charter defines a minority language based on (i) a numerically smaller population and (ii) a lack of official status which according to these scholars is “problematic”. This section aims to provide the reader with different views of scholars regarding the definition of a minority language that mostly derives from the above-mentioned Charter.

Pedley and Viaut (2018) contend that defining a minority language has never been easy. In their view, the meaning of a minority language is context-based. Clarifying further, Pedley and Viaut (ibid) comment that the representation of a linguistic word can be influenced by different parameters such as power issues between majority and minority languages and the way society

views the language regarding territory, identity, nationhood and history. On this premise, the scholars opine that a general view that the majority language is described in terms of power and demographic superiority cannot uniformly apply in all societies. Hence in one society, one criterion could be enough to classify a language as a majority or a minority. To substantiate their claim, they mentioned that in most African countries, Western languages became the majority language because of power even though they were used by a small number of speakers.

Limberger, Kurschner, Altenhofen and Mozzillo (2020) also warn that the definition of a minority language that normally draws from the above-mentioned Charter is somehow problematic. They clarify that minority languages do not form a homogenous group of languages. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines homogenous as something of the same kind or nature throughout. To substantiate their claim, these scholars point out that some minority languages share the co-official status with the majority language in their regions, as they can be present in a formal context while others can be used as regional languages only. A similar view is held by Zamyatin (2014) who mentioned that in the United Kingdom, Welsh is a compulsory subject for all students in Wales though the de facto official language of the United Kingdom is English. Other minority languages are indigenous while some are the result of migration processes (Limberger et al. *ibid*). Based on this information, Limberger et al. choose to define a minority language as “the opposite of majority language by having a marginal position to majority languages”.

Contributing to the ongoing debate, Ejim (2022) notes that a minority language is sometimes explained as a language spoken by less than 50 percent of the population within a geographic area. In the view of this scholar, this definition is doubtful. The scholar opines that the above definition is silent about the economic, social and political prestige of a minority language. According to this scholar, this is a shortcoming since, for instance, one language can be a majority language in one country and be a minority in another country. Ejim's (*ibid*) opinions exemplify the situation of Sesotho which is a majority language in Lesotho yet in the neighboring country South Africa Sesotho becomes a minority language.

All this information about minority languages is relevant to the current study as it will shed light on the status of minority languages in Quthing which are the subject of the present paper.

1.3.3 THE IMPACT OF THE LANGUAGE BARRIER ON PEOPLE'S LIVES.

Kim and Mattila (2018) identify issues that concern ESL (English as a second language) users in intercultural service experiences through a qualitative study based on a grounded theory approach. Their analysis shows that the language barrier makes ESL users struggle to communicate what they want or get basic information about the product or service. These scholars also found out that the language barrier causes negative emotional reactions that hamper ESL users from acting on certain issues such as complaining about service failure or seeking necessary information. This information is critical to the present study as it emphasizes that language is a barrier in service delivery which could hinder people's access to democracy.

Olani, Muleta, Rikitu and Disassa (2023) explored the impact of language barriers on healthcare access and quality for Afaan Oromoo-speaking patients in public hospitals in Addis Ababa. These scholars found out that many Afaan Oromoo-speaking patients face a language barrier when seeking treatment in public hospitals. The patients are unable to communicate their illnesses or seek clarifications on their prescriptions. The aforementioned researchers' study further shows that healthcare providers are also challenged to take patients' histories and to talk about how the treatment is going to be used as well as the duration. In conclusion, they present that the language barrier has a bad result on the quality of care, healthcare access, hospital stays, patient expenditure and satisfaction level. Olani et al. study contributed greatly to the present study because it also shows the impact of the language barrier on minority language speakers which is what the researcher seeks to investigate in Quthing.

The Bell Foundation (2023) explored the impact of the language barrier on people's experiences of the criminal justice system. Their study seeks to fortify evidence around the impact of the

language barrier and to provide practical tools for practitioners to better their practice in working with people for whom English is their second or additional language (ESL). Their findings suggest that ESLs are often underprivileged because they may face barriers, mostly the language barrier in accessing justice and in effectively participating in criminal proceedings. The researchers further mentioned that ESLs require specialized help including translation and interpretation before, during and after the trial, which sometimes the state fails to provide. As a result, the ESLs often face unfair justice outcomes. The Bell Foundation`s study also justifies that language could be the main barrier that hinders people`s participation in social activities which is what the present study seeks to find out to minority language speakers of Quthing.

Shah, Kometsi and Rrenzinger (2022) also present the impact of the language barrier on minority language speakers in Lesotho which is the context of the present study. Their research showed that Siphuthi speakers are neglected in a national context. They further contend that the use of only majority languages by government institutions hampers Siphuthi speakers` access to crucial social services such as education, employment, healthcare, justice and welfare. Shah et al. (2022) also argue that language is a barrier to Phuthi children because most of them start school not understanding either Sesotho or English which are the media of instructions. As a result, teachers and students encounter a language barrier that leads to low performance of Phuthi students. This information adds to Kolobe and Matsoso`s (2020) argument that the poor performance of learners could sensibly be associated with the linguistically discriminative curriculum, educational assessments and practices that exist in the education system of Lesotho. The above information forms the basis of the present study as it justifies that language is a barrier to Baphuthi people who are the subject of the present study.

1.3.4 MINORITY LANGUAGES AND ELECTIONS AS A PREREQUISITE OF DEMOCRACY IN WESTERN COUNTRIES

The legitimacy and the value of linguistic diversity are enshrined within international treaties and other documents such as the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic,

Religion and Linguistic Minorities (United Nations Human Rights, 1992). The document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: Human Dimension, 1990), the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Journal on Minority and Group Rights, Vol.6, No.4,1999), and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (European Language Charter,1992) are also among the documents that offer guidelines for states on dealing with language rights and linguistic minority claims.

Western countries differ in the way in which they include minority languages during voting processes. For instance, Yates`s (2017) study shows that America is a linguistically diverse country with at least 350 languages spoken in the region. However, the vast majority of citizens in America speak English which makes it the de facto official language since it has not been declared official by the law. Yates further states that even though English is used as the de facto official language, America abides by the Voting Act of 1965. According to this Act, election documents must be printed in multiple languages available in the areas where at least 5 percent of voting citizens are non-English speakers. This is done to give citizens an equal opportunity to participate in election processes effectively. This study shed light on the present one on how other countries ensure that communities that form part of minority language speakers also enjoy their democratic rights. This information speaks directly to the question of the study that seeks to establish which languages were used in Quthing during the 2022 Lesotho election processes.

Another study that deals with elections is the one conducted by Frouville and Callejon (2019). Their study covers different aspects of Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which dictates that individuals have a right to participate in public affairs. One of the tenets of this covenant is that every citizen has the right to participate in electoral processes, the right to vote or be elected, free expression and the right to participate in decision-making processes. The authors' findings indicate that during elections various social groups such as minority language speakers and indigenous people still face discrimination regardless of the provisions of the law that protect their rights. This supports Grin`s (2000) findings that even though Europe is among the continents that allow suggestions and measures in favour of minority

languages, it encounters difficulties in selecting, designing, implementing and evaluating such measures. This information is critical to the current study as it makes it clear that minority speakers are discriminated against during elections because countries do not apply provisions of the law that exist in their countries to protect them. It would be interesting for me as a researcher to establish whether this is the case with the minority language speakers in Quthing.

Theara (2013) investigates the difficulties faced by minority communities during elections in Cambodia. The researcher discovered that the language barrier is the most challenging factor for the ethnic minority population. High illiteracy among these communities, especially the older citizens has made the voting process even more complicated. Theara 2013 further states that these minority citizens have to rely on local authorities or another person for assistance in the voting booths. This indicates that the minority speakers' vote confidentiality is compromised or they could vote according to the assistant's desires. This study contributes more to the present paper's aim as it also intends to find out if the minority language speakers in Quthing participated effectively in the 22 general elections.

1.3.5 MINORITY LANGUAGES AND ELECTIONS AS A PREREQUISITE OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

The African region has also reinforced the recognition of multilingualism and its implementation in various charters and conventions such as the African Charter on Human and People`s Rights (1981). Article 2 of this charter dictates that every person shall be entitled to the enjoyment of rights and freedoms without discrimination of any kind such as race, ethnicity, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other circumstances. The Language Plan of Action for Africa is an instrument designed to guide the formation of language policies in the continent of Africa. The preliminary guidelines of this document encourage all African states to have a clearly defined language policy in which all languages in that particular state will be recognized and accepted (Executive Counsel, Eighth Ordinary Session: January, 16-21, 2006, Khartoum, Sudan). Other documents in which the

recognition of multilingualism is enshrined include the Language Plan of Action (1986), and the Report on Experts' Meeting on the Strategies for the Protection of African Languages in Education (Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa 17-March, 1997). All these documents were produced to assist Africans in obtaining equality and effective participation in politics in their respective countries.

However, maintaining linguistic diversity seems unattainable in most African countries (A Cross-Cultural Organization Recognizing Diversity (ACCORD), 2022). Elaborating further, ACCORD (ibid) asserts that most African states selected the colonial language as the language used in government and education hoping that it would unify the multicultural society of Africans. Consequently, little was paid to African languages available in the communities leading to the marginalization of minority and indigenous languages. Their findings show that the use of foreign languages in African societies makes indigenous people feel excluded leading to the majority of minority language speakers in the country losing interest in participating in public activities such as elections. The study is relevant to the present research study as it emphasizes that the marginalization of minority languages could lead to ineffective participation of minority speakers in public affairs such as elections.

Coming closer home, McLaughlin (2020) studied language and election in South Africa. The study was meant to test the effect that language recognition practices in multilingual democratic societies have on voter turnout. It builds on the premise that Section 6 (1) of the 1996 South African constitution recognizes 11 languages as official. Using aggregate and survey data, the findings show that voter turnout in South African elections is higher in areas where the provincial and local government recognizes the mother tongue which is often used by minority speakers. The author makes an example of Cape Town, Mangaung and Tswane as the towns that first adopted the South African language policy in their municipalities. According to the findings, in the 2006 municipal elections, the 3 provinces showed higher voter turnout. The author concluded that this was because the government accommodated the citizen's home languages in this activity. The study is also relevant to the present research study as it confirms the importance of one's mother tongue, including those of minority language communities in elections.

Solway (2002) examines the present rise of minority struggles in Botswana. Using liberal political theory he looks into the processes that contributed to the current patterns of diversity in Botswana. Looking at the situation of minority and majority languages, the scholar asserts that the elections that brought Botswana's independence were much more democratic than the elections of a sovereign Botswana today. This is because, during pre-elections, the colonial masters considered a variety of languages available in Botswana in the preparations for those elections. The election materials were available in Setswana, Ikalanga, Otjiherero and definitely, English and Afrikaans which were the colonial languages. After independence, government affairs, education and official media were limited to English as an official language and Setswana as a national language. The present paper draws support from this study since it also emphasizes the significance of linguistically accessible elections to the nation including minority language speakers.

Ghai, Yash, Sing'Oel and Wanyoike (2013) explore normative and institutional mechanisms for enhancing minority political participation in the Kenya 2013 elections. The study demonstrates that Kenya's constitution has limitations on promoting the political participation of minority groups, including minority language speakers. Their analysis indicates that another way to better the participation of minorities in politics is to ensure that political parties are persuaded to nominate the members of minority groups. They also suggest that minorities could secure their full participation in the country's decision-making by using the provisions of the law that could work in their favour. For instance, they could use petitions to the authorities and the Human Rights Commission to make their voices heard. This study is relevant to the present research study because it advocates for the effective participation of minority speakers in elections which is what the researcher intends to find out if it is the case in Quthing.

The present study differs from the above studies in that it looks into the impact of using only the majority languages in the 2022 Lesotho general elections. This study will investigate whether this affects the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing using Critical Theory and the Sociological, Psychosocial and Rational Choice models of voting behavior.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory applied in this study is Critical Theory. Brian (2012) denotes that Critical Theory originated from the Frankfurt school in the 1930s by theorists Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas. These theorists are collectively known as the Frankfurt School (Brain, *ibid*). The primary purpose of the Frankfurt School was to study the labour movement and its effect on society which Horkheimer broadened the scope to include social and political topics (Wong and Ying, 2011). As a result, the first definition of Critical Theory was presented by Horkheimer in his 1937 essay entitled “Traditional and Critical Theory”. Wong and Ying further clarify that Horkheimer’s definition contrasts Critical Theory with Traditional Theory in that Critical Theory aims at critiquing and changing society while Traditional Theory only understands or simply explains existing social institutions as they are. Bohman (2005) defines Critical Theory as a social philosophy that aims to challenge repressive social practices and institutions by upholding ideas and practices that meet the general principle of justice.

According to Fui, Khin and Ying (2011), the purpose of Critical Theory is to question and reveal social injustices and to identify social changes necessary to produce a democratic society. The key characteristics of a Critical Theory as spelled out by Horkheimer (1972) include (i) explanatory- a Critical Theory explains what is wrong with the present social reality. (ii) Practical- it identifies the factors that lead to the oppression of others and (iii) normative- it shows how the oppression should be defeated with new achievable practical goals for social transformation.

Critical Theory will be applied to determine whether or not the government of Lesotho abides by its Constitution and the National Assembly Act of 2011, both of which guide the country's elections. It will also used to assess whether programs and services offered by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of Lesotho align with the fundamental principles of the Constitution as the highest law of the land.

As stated earlier, the study intends to investigate whether the language barrier affected the participation of minority language speakers in the 2022 national elections of Lesotho. Thus, along with the Critical Theory, three primary models of voting behaviour will be used to analyse the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing's electoral processes.

1.4.1 MODELS OF VOTING BEHAVIOR

Rule (2014) describes voting behavior as “the actions of citizens in respect of participating in the elections that take place for members of their local, regional or national government”. Rule (ibid) further states that the behavior does not only result in support of a party or candidate but also includes abstaining from the voting process. Antunes (2010) mentioned that the scientific study of voting behavior is characterized by three primary research schools, (i) the School of Columbia, known as the Sociological Model, (ii) the School of Michigan also known as the Psychosocial Model and (iii) the School of Rochester or the Rational Choice Model. These three main models of voting behavior will be used in this present study to analyze how the residents of Quthing involved themselves in electoral processes and responded to electoral activities.

1.4.2 SOCIOLOGICAL MODEL OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR

According to Antunes (2010), the Sociological Model of Voting Behaviour was pioneered by Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues at Columbian University for the presidential elections of 1940 in Erie country. Wiese (2011) explained that the developers of this model at first wanted to study the effects of media on electoral decisions. Nonetheless, at the end of the research, they discovered that the media's influence was very little but the decisive influence was the social group to which the voters belong. For them, an individual's voting is mainly influenced by the conditions in which they are born, grow, or work. For instance, people who work in the health sector would likely vote for the same political party that identifies with their interests. Clarifying further, Wiese (ibid) avers that the Sociological Model links voting behavior to group membership since individuals make personal decisions but their decisions cannot be entirely divorced from other factors such as social

status, family and friends. Antunes (ibid) also states that the developers of this model emphasized the role of family and political socialization in particular for influencing voting behavior. For example, in the same way, a child learns how to live from the closest people around him/her, their favouritism towards a political party could highly be influenced by family and friends. Owen (2017) defines political socialization as “the process by which people acquire the political attitudes, beliefs, opinions and behaviors”. Nonetheless, this model has been criticized as a static approach since socioeconomic characteristics such as income, education and occupation do not change in the short term yet voting behaviour changes from one election to the next (Antunes, 2010). Thus, the psychosocial model was developed as a response to this criticism using the concept of partisanship.

1.4.3 PSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR

This model was developed by a group of scholars at the University of Michigan as an alternative to the Sociological Model (Mahsud and Amin, 2020). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the psychosocial model introduces the concept of partisanship to respond to the limitations of the sociological model. Huddy and Bankert, (2017) define partisanship as a long-lasting feeling of devotion that people develop towards a particular political party. This concept allowed these researchers to link the influence of sociological and historical long-term factors identified in the Sociological Model and political short-term factors that mark each election (Mahsud and Amin, ibid).

According to Antunes (2010), the Psychosocial model identifies six psychological factors that may influence voters’ decision-making (i) party identification, (ii) concerns with issues, (iii) personal attachment to candidates, (iv) conformity to the group standards, (v) sense of efficacy and (vi) sense of civic obligation to vote. Nevertheless, the main theme of this model is partisanship or party identification (Antunes, ibid). Similarly, this approach also shows limitations where it fails to give the reasons why some voters who identify with the party vote for another party or refrain from participating in an election (Wiese, 2011). Wiese (ibid) further elaborates that this criticism was

presented by authors who claim that the clarification as to why voters change their voting choices even though they identify with the party should not be based on a psychosocial variable but by taking into account factors related to information processing and the rationality of voters. Hence the development of the Rational Choice Model.

1.4.4 THE RATIONAL CHOICE MODEL

Mahsud and Amin (2020) state that the economists Anthony Downs, Duncan Black and Kenneth Arrow were the most dominant introducers of the Rational Choice Model in electoral studies. Anthony Downs's seminal book "An Economic Theory of Democracy" is considered a fundamental work for the Rational Choice Model in the study of voting behaviour (Antunes, 2010). This model assumes that an individual's vote is based on his rational self-interest. According to this model, voters are like consumers who choose a political party that sells the manifestoes that will benefit them or align with their personal beliefs (Young, 2021).

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This section expounds on how the research will be carried out by outlining the specific procedures to be followed in collecting and analyzing data. Richard (2004) defines a research methodology as the specific procedures or methods used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a research topic. Richards (ibid), also states that the methodology section of the research paper answers two main questions, "How was the data collected or generated?", and "How was it analyzed?"

According to Williams (2007), the three common approaches to conducting research are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Williams (ibid) indicates that qualitative research generates textual data. It is primarily used to discover and gain an in-depth understanding of individual experiences, thoughts and opinions. In contrast, quantitative research gathers numerical data or information that can be converted into numbers. Mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative designs (Williams, ibid).

For this study, the researcher used the qualitative research approach, which focuses on non-numerical data. However, the number of participants in the study is indicated using numbers. According to Maxwell (2004), it is possible to integrate quantitative information, such as numerical data, into qualitative analysis and reporting. Cleland (2017) explains that the qualitative approach aims to understand the beliefs and opinions of individuals, groups, and cultures, while McLeod (2019) considers it the best tool for analyzing behaviors or patterns governing social conditions. Social condition is the current situation or state that affects the life and relationships of people in the community (Braveman, 2010). The qualitative approach helped the researcher understand whether the use of only Sesotho and English in last year's national elections affected the involvement of minority language speakers in Quthung.

1.5.1 DATA COLLECTION.

According to Elmusharaf (2012), the most common ways of data collection in qualitative research include surveys, focus groups, direct observations, documents and records as well as interviews. Elmusharaf (ibid) defines a survey as a qualitative research method that uses questions to collect information from a specific group of people. In the focus group discussions, the researcher selects a group of people to talk about a given topic in a moderate setting (Elmusharaf, ibid). Another qualitative data collection method is direct observation, which involves the researcher observing individuals or events in a natural environment. Data for documentaries and records is gathered by reviewing existing documents (Duke University, 2022). According to Cleland (2017), interviews are methods of data collection in which the researcher asks questions to gather information.

The study employed both primary and secondary data to answer a research problem. Primary data is the first-hand data collected by the researcher from sources such as observations, interviews, surveys, questionnaires and case studies (Ajayi, 2017). In this present study, primary data was collected through the use of interviews. Secondary data is data that was collected by someone other than the researcher (Ajayi, ibid). The secondary data in this study was collected from documents in the library and on the internet.

As a researcher, I found interviews suitable for data collection in this study. According to Cleland (ibid), interviews are effective tools for primary data collection as they allow two-way communication enabling the participants to feel comfortable talking about issues that they could not talk about in a group setting. Clarifying further, Cleland (ibid) asserts that interviews enable the researcher to capture raw emotions for a deeper understanding of the problem. Thus the researcher used interviews to explore the views and experiences of minority language speakers regarding elections and voting which is a confidential process. Abawi (2017) mentions three types of interviews namely, (i) structured interviews, (ii) semi-structured interviews, (iii) in-depth interviews.

Abawi (ibid) explains a structured interview as a type of interview in which a researcher plans a set of questions and provides the research participants with options from which to choose a response. In an unstructured interview, the researcher does not plan the questions but the questions are asked spontaneously. Semi-structured interview combines both structured and unstructured interviews. Boyee and Neale (2006) elaborate that an in-depth interview involves one-on-one engagement with individual participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea or situation. The researcher found the semi-structured interviews more appropriate in this study as they were not only restricted to the set of planned questions but also allowed me to ask follow-up questions to gather additional information from the participants.

1.5.2 SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS.

Researchers such as Matlosa (2012), Kolobe and Matsoso (2020) found that minority languages in Lesotho are mostly spoken in Quthing, Butha-Buthe and Mohale's Hoek districts. For this present study, I chose Quthing as the setting of the study. The choice of the single geographic setting was informed by Wang, Moss and Hiller (2006) who opine that when conducting a study it could be unmanageable to cover multiple geographic settings due to limited resources and time constraints. The study participants in the present study are minority speakers who are directly

affected by the language barrier in national activities such as elections. IEC officials also take part in this investigation as oversee of elections in Lesotho.

1.5.3 SAMPLING

Sampling is the process of selecting a source from which data will be collected to address a research problem, as defined by Gentles, Charles, and Ploeg (2015). For this study, data is collected through stratified random sampling from Basotho, Baphuthi, and Xhosas three ethnic groups found in Quthing. It is important to note that the Zulu ethnic group was once present in Quthing, as stated by Schiffman (2011) and Chefa (2019). However, it is believed that they migrated to South Africa. Therefore, individuals who speak Zulu in Quthing may belong to one of the three aforementioned ethnic groups and have learned the language during visits to South Africa. As a result, the Zulu ethnic group is excluded from this study.

Stratified random sampling is a sampling method that allows the researcher to divide the population into smaller groups based on the shared characteristics of the members and then randomly select the participants among those groups to form the final sample. The 3 ethnic groups in Quthing are divided into subgroups of youth, 18-35 years, middle-aged, 36-59 years and elderly, 60-80 years. The researcher interviewed 5 men and 5 women from the youth, middle-aged and elderly groups in Moyeni and Mount Moorosi, small towns found in Quthing. The participants are selected in various places such as taxi ranks, health centers, market stalls and the streets in both towns. The researcher interviewed males and females interchangeably, skipping 4 people and interviewing the fifth person who was willing to participate. IEC officials included 1 officer who is a stakeholder in IEC policy-making and a presiding officer in Quthing.

Murphy (2021) avers that stratified sampling allows the researcher to get a sample population that best describes the population being studied, ensuring that each sub-group of interest is represented. In this present research study, stratified sampling allows the researcher to have the representative

of all ethnic groups found in Quthing as well as other stakeholders such as IEC officials in her sample. Convenient sampling is also used to select the participants from the subgroups formed in stratified sampling. Omona (2013) highlights that convenient sampling allows the researcher to get data from readily and easily available sources.

1.5.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

According to the University of Oxford (2021), when conducting research, it is crucial to follow ethical guidelines to treat all participants fairly and respectfully. This involves obtaining clear and active consent from participants ensuring that they willingly agree to take part in the study and understand the expectations, usage of their data, and potential consequences. To obtain consent, I clearly explained to the participants the academic purpose of my research and asked if they would be willing to participate. I reassured them that the information they provided would only be used for academic purposes and that their identities would be kept anonymous. Participants were also given the freedom to decline or withdraw from the study at any point.

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY.

This study is organized into five chapters. The **first chapter** deals with the introduction of the study, statement of the problem, background to the study, research aim, research questions and hypothesis. The chapter further deals with the significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology and organization of the study. **Chapter two** explores the Basotho nation's history, from its founding and highlights the existence of minority languages in Quthing. In **chapter three**, the focus is on the languages that were utilized in the 2022 national elections. The impact of using mainly Sesotho and English during elections on minority language speakers' participation is also explored. Additionally, the chapter presents data on the significance of accessible language in elections as a fundamental aspect of democracy. **Chapter four** will present the data analysis and findings. **Chapter five** presents the general conclusions of the study as well as the recommendations for further investigation.

CHAPTER 2

1.0. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the impact of using mainly Sesotho and English in the Lesotho 2022 elections on minority language speakers' participation in Quthing. As a starting point, this chapter gives a brief history of the formation of Basotho as a nation by Moshoeshe I from various Bantu tribes. This is meant to situate the minority language speakers, who are the concern of this study, in this country.

2.1 The history and formation of the Basotho nation

Basotho as a nation was formed by Moshoeshe I whose childhood name is Lepoqo. Although this name is pronounced as lepɔ!ɔ, it is derived from lepoqo which means 'dust'. Among the Basotho, children are named after, among other factors, circumstances surrounding their birth (Mbhele, 2019). Gill (1993) reveals that the name Lepoqo was given to Moshoeshe I because as a young boy, he enjoyed being involved in disputes and fighting. During these fighting, there used to be dust generated and released into the air. It was under these circumstances that Moshoeshe I was named Lepoqo. However, as Gill (ibid) further explains, after being exposed to the traditions of his elders; the laws and customs of his people which revolved around the chieftainship and the extended family' he was now a changed man understanding adulthood and its responsibilities. In order to match his new character, he was given the name Letlama 'The Binder'. As a young man, Letlama was not only a good fighter, but he was also very intelligent. These characteristics enabled him to capture many cattle from a chief called Ramonaheng. This act was considered so degrading for this chief that it was compared to an act of shaving and removing one of the things that symbolise his manhood, which is his beard. Shaving is the removal of hair using a razor and usually during this process the sound *shoa shoa* (phonetically transcribed as fwa fwa) is heard. Since the act of capturing the cattle was compared to shaving the beard 'the process during which shoa shoa

is produced, Letlama was given the praise-name Moshoeshe, the name that he was thereafter known by till his death.

History indicates that as a young man, Moshoeshe had an ambition to become a great chief. That is why at the age of 34, he moved to Botha-Bothe with his followers where he ruled as a chief (Gill, 1993). Botha-Bothe is one of the districts in the north of Maseru, the capital city of Lesotho. This was until the latter part of the 18th century when a war called Lifaqane erupted. According to Seloma (1994), this was caused by numerous factors including succession disputes and quarrels over land. It was during this period that Moshoeshe I brought together different tribes which were also fleeing from this war including members of the Nguni. Moshoeshe I called his people Basotho and his country, Lesotho. According to Thompson (1975), the Nguni-speaking groups were the first inhabitants of what later became Lesotho. An example is that of the Baphuthi who moved from the Witwatersrand area into the mountainous parts of Lesotho and settled in Mohale's Hoek, Quthing and Qhacha's Nek in contemporary Lesotho. They were fleeing the wrath of Shaka. Baphuthi speak Sephuthi which according to the Academic Forum (accessed, 2023) is said to be linguistically part of siSwati. Although it exhibits some influence from Sesotho and siXhosa, it has a unique lexical and grammatical core that is not found in any of the two languages.

Ellenberger's (1912) research also shows that during Moshoeshe I's era, chiefdoms were the dominant political units, with all except for the San, being subject to the chief. Practically every village and chiefdom included people of different clans and families of Nguni and Basotho origin. Ellenberger further states that Mokhachane, the father of Basotho nation founder Moshoeshe I, was also the chief of Bakoteli of the Bakoena clan. His kingdom in Menkhoaneng also comprised Nguni people, such as Ntšekhe, the father of Makoanyane who became a trusted friend of Moshoeshe I and the leader of his men after he formed his chiefdom. The chiefdoms varied in size and population due to the splits that often occurred if one ambitious member of the ruling family decided to form his chiefdom with his age mates and other followers he could attract (Ellenberger, *ibid*).

During his youth, Moshoeshoe I displayed the necessary ambition and leadership qualities to become a leader in his time, as earlier indicated. He successfully brought the elders of the Sekake group and several clans, including the Makara and Ratšiu of the Bafokeng, under his father's authority (Ellenberger, 1912). Ellenberger also notes that Moshoeshoe I left Menkhoaneng around 1820, at the age of 34, to establish his village below Butha-Buthe Mountain. His followers included senior councilors of his grandfather Peete, initiation mates and their families, the Nguni family of Ntšekhe, including Makoanyane and Makara, and his own growing family. After settling in Butha-Buthe, the Fokeng of Ntsukunyane, and his mother's people, also looked to him for leadership. Thus, Moshoeshoe's chiefdom consisted of members of his lineage, his wife's lineage, and diverse tribes.

According to Thompson (1975), during Moshoeshoe I's time, leadership was characterized by force and intimidation with powerful individuals wiping out weaker chiefdoms and taking their properties. However, Moshoeshoe I was a wise leader who realized the value of kindness and mercy in gaining the support of his people. To avoid conflicts, he formed alliances with other chiefs while still using force when necessary to expand his chiefdom and protect his people from external attacks. Moshoeshoe's chiefdom grew by the end of the period known as Lifaqane, which was marked by violent upheavals in the early 19th century. Mothibe (2013) indicates that many individuals and families from various clans joined Moshoeshoe I after their chiefdoms were destroyed during Lifaqane. These included leaders such as Mokakailane (brother of Sekonyela), Khoabane (chief of the Marabe section of Bakoena) and Letele (son of Mohlomi) and many individuals and family groups of humble origin. Nonetheless, Moshoeshoe's lineage which is Bakoena of Mokoteli became dominant.

As indicated in the preceding paragraph, the Basotho nation was formed as a response to political unrest, where conflicts between tribes caused people to be scattered across different lands. Thus, the Basotho nation comprised the Sotho and Nguni tribes. According to Mohale (2023), the Sotho people are comprised of four main groups namely, the Southern Sotho (Basuto), the Western Sotho (Tswana), and the Northern Sotho (Pedi). Meanwhile, the Nguni cultural group consisted of the Xhosa, Zulu, Swati, and Ndebele ethnic groups. As the leader of these varied tribes, Moshoeshoe

I used the term Basotho as a political tool to unite the newly formed nation (Phafoli and Zulu, 2012). Matlosa (2012) adds that the Basotho nation was made up of several tribes, including Batlokoa, Basia, Bataung, Matebele, Bathepu, and Baphuthi. The presence of these tribes indicates the existence of various native languages, such as Setlokoa, Setebele, Sephuthi, Sethepu, and Seqhosa.

However, adding to this discussion, Thompson (1975) elaborates that the first inhabitants of what later became Lesotho were the Nguni-speaking groups such as Amatzetsa (later known as Mapetla), the Mapolane and the Baphuthi. The Mapetla and Mapolane settled between Thaba-Bosiu and Thaba-Tšoeu (today known as Mafeteng), while the Baphuthi settled in Mohale's Hoek, Quthing and Qhacha's Nek in contemporary Lesotho. Mothibe (2013) shows that the Bakoena were the first Sotho-speaking people to settle in the Mohokare Valley around 1500, followed by their descendants Makhoakhoa and Bahlakoana. He further clarifies that by the late 17th century and the whole of the 18th century, other Sotho-speaking groups had joined them leading to the occupation of the whole area that came to be Orange Free State and Lesotho by Sotho-speaking people. Therefore, Mohokare Valley became home to both the San and the Nguni-and Sotho-speaking people.

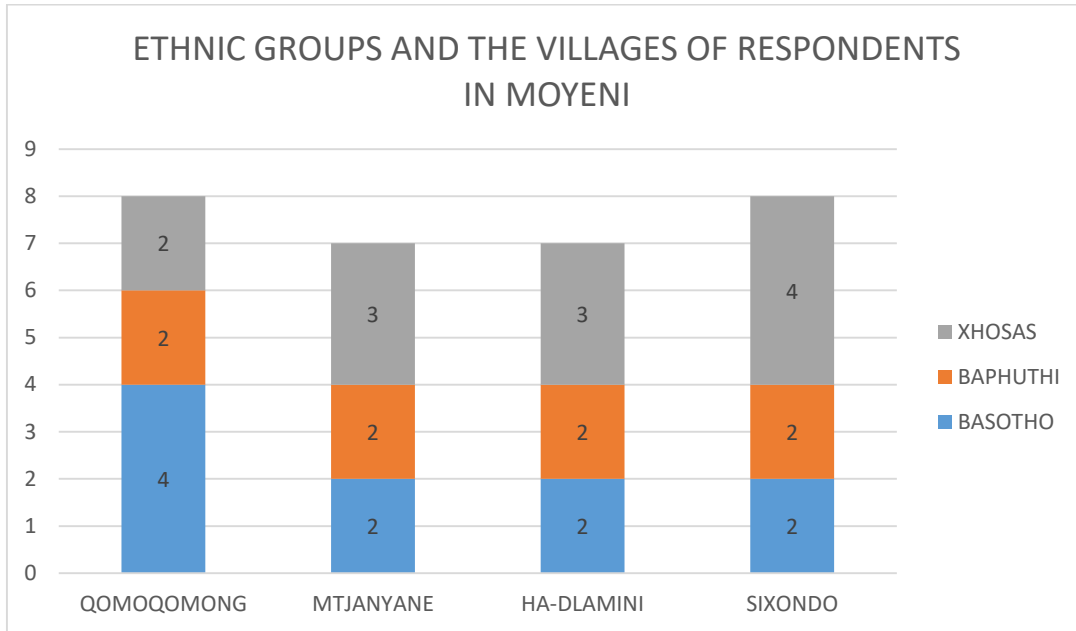
Moshoeshoe I allowed the different tribes that formed the Basotho nation to retain their customs and traditions, but Basotho only identified with Sesotho as their language (Kompi, 2016). Sesotho is a Bantu language that originated in the Bantu-Nguni era, with dialects from Sotho, Pedi, and Tswana. It played a unifying role in the Basotho nation, comprising Sotho and Nguni tribes as indicated by Phafoli and Zulu (2012). 85% of Lesotho's population speaks Sesotho, while minority languages are spoken by 10% of citizens. Kolobe and Matsoso (2020) observe that the Butha-Buthe, Mohale's Hoek, Qacha's Nek, and Quthing districts of Lesotho have a higher population of minority language speakers. Quthing is highlighted by Schiffman (2011) and Chefa (2019) as the most diverse district, with Baphuthi, Xhosas, and a few Zulus still speaking their mother tongues to this day. According to Matlosa (2012), Seqhosa and Sephuthi are spoken in Quthing, Setebele in Botha-Bothe, while Setaung is spoken in Mohale's Hoek. Additionally, the researcher mentions that Setlokoa is spoken to a smaller extent in Mokhotlong.

The population of Lesotho is around 2.3 million, with 85% of the people speaking Sesotho and only 10% speaking minority languages (Gordon, 2015). Lesotho is divided into 10 districts, each with its own town sharing the same name as the district. The largest town and capital is Maseru. The 10 districts are further divided into 80 electoral constituencies, 128 local community councils, 10 district councils, and the Maseru municipal council with roughly 1508 councillors (Local Government District Information Book, 2008). Lesotho is the only country in the world that lies entirely over 1,000 meters above sea level, with Thabana-Ntlenyana as its highest point at 3,482 meters above sea level. (Ministry of Communications, 2022). Monyane (2009) states that before gaining independence on October 4th, 1966, Lesotho was known as Basutoland and was under British rule for almost a century (1868-1966). After gaining independence, it was renamed the Kingdom of Lesotho (Monyane, *ibid*).

2.3 MINORITY LANGUAGES IN THE QUTHING DISTRICT.

Since the main focus of this study is the possible language barrier that affected minority language speakers' participation in the 2022 Lesotho national elections, as the researcher, I needed to confirm the existence of such groups in Quthing and the regions in which they are found. To achieve this, I interviewed 30 people in Moyeni and another 30 in Mount Moorosi. These are the small towns in Quthing. As indicated in the methodology section, the total of 30 interviewees was made up of 5 men and 5 women from the youth, middle-aged and elderly groups. The interviewees were asked for information related to their villages, ethnic groups and native languages. Chart 1 below presents the number of participants from Moyeni who took part in the study, the villages they came from, their ethnic groups and their mother tongue.

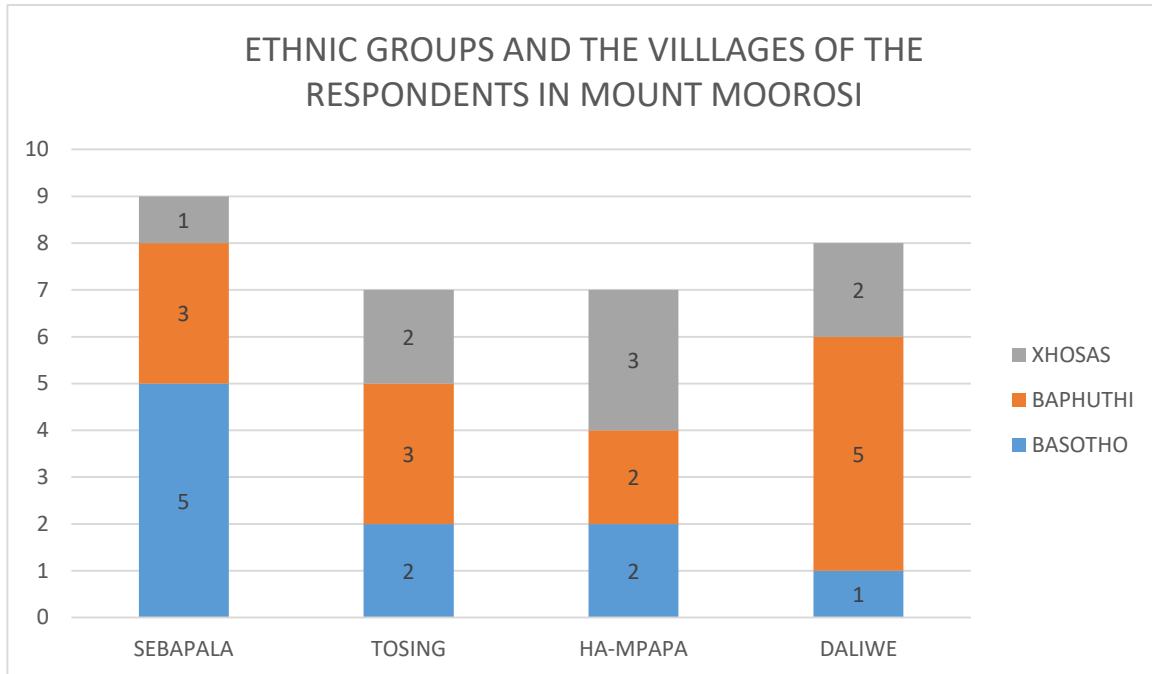
CHART 1.



According to the chart above, a total of 30 people were interviewed in Moyeni. They were made up of 8 participants from Qomoqomong and another 8 from Sixondo, while 7 were from Mtjanyane and the other 7 from Ha-Dlamini. As the chart indicates, 4 (50%) participants in Qomoqomong are Basotho while the remaining 4 (50%) is shared between Baphuthi and the Xhosas. The chart also indicates that Mtjanyane is dominated by the Xhosas with 3 (42.9%) participants while the remaining 4 (57.1%) are shared by Basotho and Baphuthi. The same situation obtains in Ha-Dlamini whereby 3 (42.9%) participants are the Xhosas while the remaining 4 (57.1%) are shared equally by Basotho and Baphuthi. The chart further reveals that Xhosas also dominate in Sixondo with 4 (50%) participants while the remaining half is shared equally by Basotho and Baphuthi.

As previously stated, data was also obtained in Mount Moorosi. Chart 2 below presents the results from this town.

CHART 2.



Based on Chart 2, a total of 30 participants were interviewed in Mount Moorosi. They include 9 from Sebapala, 7 from Tosing and another 7 from Ha-Mpapa. The last 8 participants were from Daliwe. According to the data, Basotho dominates Sebapala with 5 (55.6%) participants, whereas 3 (33.3%) are Baphuthi and only 1 (11.1%) is Xhosa. However, Tosing is dominated by Baphuthi with 3 (42.9%) participants while the remaining 4 (57.1%) are shared equally among Basotho and the Xhosas. In Ha-Mpapa, Basotho and Baphuthi share 4 (57.1%) participants equally, while the Xhosas dominate with 3 (42.9%) participants. The last village, Daliwe, is dominated by Baphuthi with 5 (62.5%) participants. The Xhosas and Basotho make up the remaining 3 (37.5%) participants with 2 (25%) and 1 (12.5%) respectively.

2.4 CONCLUSION.

This chapter has provided an overview of the events that led to the formation of the Basotho nation, which was formed by uniting various ethnic groups. The research indicates that Moshoeshoe I brought together various Bantu-speaking people who had fled their homelands due to conflict, forming the nation now known as Basotho. Despite this unification, some of these ethnic groups

retained their customs and culture including languages, resulting in Lesotho being home to a diverse range of ethnic groups in different regions, including Quthing. The information presented in this chapter reaffirms the fact that Quthing is home to different ethnic groups.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 INTRODUCTION.

This study aims to investigate the impact of the use of only majority languages in the 2022 general elections on the participation of minority language speakers in the Quthing district. The current chapter addresses three research questions of this study. The first one seeks to establish the languages that were used in the election processes of Lesotho. The second one investigates whether or not minority language speakers were affected by the possible use of mainly Sesotho during the 2022 general elections. The last question is aimed at determining the role that an accessible language plays in elections as a prerequisite for democracy.

3.1 THE LANGUAGES WHICH WERE USED IN QUTHING DURING THE 2022 ELECTION PROCESSES.

This section aims to establish the languages which were used in the previous year's Lesotho national elections. It specifically seeks to determine the languages which were used in the pre-election, election and post-election phases. But before addressing this question, it was important to first find out whether the respondents participated in the 2022 general elections or not. For those who did not participate, it was equally crucial to establish the reasons they did not. Therefore, the following question was asked.

Question 1: Lesotho held national elections in 2022, did you participate in those elections? If not, why?

The findings reveal that out of 60 participants, 40 voted in the 2022's national elections while the remaining 20 participants did not. According to the collected data, 14 minority language speakers did not vote, while 6 Basotho also did not vote. In other words, a large number of the people who did not participate in the 2022 Lesotho general elections were the minority language speakers with 70% as opposed to 30% of Basotho who also did not vote. When the participants were asked to

give their reasons for not participating in the 2022 national elections, their responses include the following:

Ke hobane lebitso la ka le ne le sa hlahe lenaneng la bakhethi kaha ke ne ke sa ka ka ea hlahloba manane ho sheba na lebitso laka le ntse le hlaha. 'It is because my name did not appear on the voter`s list as I did not check whether my name was still included in the voter`s list before the elections'.

When questioned further about why he did not verify that his name still appeared on the voter`s list, the respondent stated:

Ha ke ea hlahloba lebitso laka lenaneng la bakhethi hobane ke ne ke qoba ho ea litsing tsa khethelo kaha puo e sebelisoang e le Sesotho joale ke hloile ho buoa Sesotho kaha e se puo eaka ea letsoele. 'I did not check whether my name was still on the voting list because I avoided going to the polling station because the services are only offered in Sesotho which I hate because it is not my mother tongue'.

Another participant who was a Xhosa, also did not participate in the last year`s national elections provided a different reason when she said:

Ha ke ea khetha hobane lebitso laka le sa hlaha lenaneng la bakhethi kaha ke ne ke sa ngolisa. 'I did not vote because my name did not appear on the voters' list since I had not registered'.

She was then asked why she did not register. Below is her response:

Ha ke ikutloe ke le karolo ea sechaba sa Basotho hobane `muso oa Lesotho ha o ele hloko rona ba lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang kahare ho naha kaha re qobelloa ho sebelisa puo eo e

seng ea rona ea letsoele. Muso ha o ananele lipuo tsa rona tsa letsoele. ‘I do not feel like I am part of Basotho because the government does not regard the existence of minority language speakers since we are forced to use a language that is not our mother tongue. The government of Lesotho does not recognize our mother tongue’.

The issue of language was raised by another respondent, who was a member of a Phuthi ethnic group when she reported that:

Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa feela likhethong tsa naha ke lona lebaka le etseng hore ke se khethe likhethong tse fetileng kaha ha ke utloisise hantle le hona ho tseba ho bala puo tseo ka bobeli. Kahoo khetho eaka ha e be lekunutu joalokaha e le tšoanelo, ka letsatsi la likhetho ke lokela ho ba le motho ea tla nthusisa ho khetha. ‘The use of only Sesotho and English during elections hindered my participation since I cannot read or understand both languages well. This meant that my vote was no longer a secret as it should be since on the day of elections I have to bring along somebody who would assist me’.

Another participant who also did not understand or read Sesotho and English lamented that those who interpreted what politicians said during campaigns, sometimes misled them. She stated the following:

Batho ba re hlalosesang ka puo ea habo rona seo bapolotiki ba se buileng ha ba ntse ba iketa, ka nako e ‘ngoe ha ba re hlalosetse seo e leng nnete. Ha ele mopolotiki eo ba seng ka lehlakoreng la hae ha ba hlolose hantle seo a se buileng. Ha ele mopolotiki eo ba leng ka lehlakoreng la hae tlhaloso tsa bona ke tse susumelletsang motho hore a tšhetse bao mohlalosi a ba tšehetsang. ‘People who assisted in interpreting what the politicians had said during the campaigns sometimes misled us. Their interpretations influenced us to support their preferred politicians’.

In addition to the issue of language, other participants that include both minority language speakers and Basotho mentioned the politician's unfaithfulness as one of the reasons they did not vote in the 2022 national elections. Below are some of their responses:

Ho se tšepahalle sechaba hoa bapolotiki ke lona lebaka la mantlha leo ke sa kang ka khetha. Ka nako ea likhetho bapolotiki ba tla sechabeng ho se tšepisa hara tse ling, theho ea mesebetsi ea ba nang le litsebo le ba se nang tsona. Ho fihlela kajeno naha ea Lesotho e ntse e aparetsoe ke tlhokeho ea mesebetsi kaha bapolotiki ba lebala tseo ba li tšepisitseng sechaba hang hoba ba lula litulong. 'The unfaithfulness of the politicians was the main reason I did not vote. During the election period, politicians usually promised to do a lot for the public, including creating jobs for both skilled and unskilled residents. However, once elected, they quickly forget about all their campaign promises'.

A similar point was raised by another participant who also asserted that since the 1990s when she started voting, politicians had promised to fix damaged roads and connect electricity in their villages. According to this respondent, all these have been empty promises. In his own words, he lamented that:

Le leng la mabaka a entseng hore ke se khethe selemong se fetileng ke ho se tšepahalle sechaba hoa bapolotiki. Ka bo 90s koana ha ke qala ho kena lipolotiki, bapolotiki e sa le ba re tšepisa motlakase le ho re lokisetsa litsela. Le ha ho le joalo, le kajeno re ntse re tsamaea hofeta lihora tse 4 ka maoto hobane hahona tsela moo kolo e ka tsamaeang ha habo rona, le motlakase o ntse o le sieo. 'Politician's unfaithfulness was one of the reasons I did not vote last year. Since the 1990s when I started voting, politicians had promised to fix damaged roads and connect electricity in our villages but those were just empty promises. We still had no electricity and had to travel for more than 4 hours on foot because there are no roads for cars in our villages'.

Given the fact that there were some participants who voted, it was equally important for the study to also determine the reasons they did. The following are some of their responses:

Ke tokelo eaka ke le motho e mocha ho kenya letsoho tsamaisong ea naha ea Lesotho ka ho khetha batho bao ke bonang ba na le makhabane a ho busa. 'It is my responsibility as a youth to contribute towards the running of Lesotho by electing people whom I see fit to govern'.

One participant from Phuthi ethnic group stated that he voted because he still had faith that the candidate he would support would influence the government of Lesotho to recognize minority languages and treat them like other languages in the country. Below is what he said:

Ke khethile hobane ke ne ke na le tšepo ho bao ke ba khethileng hore ba tla loanela hore 'muso o ele hloko boteng ba lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha. 'I voted because I trusted that those that I elected would fight for the recognition of minority languages in this country'.

Another minority language speaker stated:

Le ha e le mona 'muso o sa ele hloko boteng ba lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha, nna ke ikutloa ke le karolo ea sechaba sa Basotho, kahoo ho khetha ke tokelo eaka. 'Even though the government of Lesotho does not recognize the existence of minority language speakers, I consider myself a member of the Basotho nation and as such, voting is my responsibility'.

A Mosotho participant also stated that she voted because she hoped that the new party led by a new candidate would not be as disloyal as his predecessors. In her own words, she said the following:

Lebaka le entseng hore ke khethe ka 2022 ke ho thehoa hoa mokha o mocha o etelletsoeng pele ke moetapele e mocha lipolotiking tsa Lesotho. Ke ne ke lumela hore eena ha tlo tšoana le baetapele ba fetileng ba bileng lipolotiking tsa Lesotho ka nako e telele mme ba ntse ba etsetsa sechaba litšepiso tseo ba hlolehang ho li phethahatsa ha ba se ba le litulong. ‘I participated in the 2022 national elections because of the formation of a new party led by a new leader. I believed that this leader would be different from the previous politicians who had been in Lesotho politics for a long time and made promises to the nations which they could not fulfill once they are in government’.

Another Mosotho participant who was also an old woman, raised a similar point that she voted because she had faith in a newly formed party led by a successful businessman. She pointed out that she had thought that as a businessman, his party would provide basic services which the party that she had been a member of for more than 40 years failed to deliver. Below is what she said:

Ke khethile selemong se fetileng hobane ke ne ke batla litšebeletso tsa mantlha joaloka tokiso ea litsela, khokelo ea motlakase, kaho ea setsi sa bophelo le theho ea mesebetsi. Tsena kaofela ke tseo mokha oa lipolotiki oo ke bileng setho sa ona ho feta lilemo tse mashome a mane, o hlotsoeng ho li phethahatsa. Joale ke ne ke na le tšepo ho mokha o mocha oa lipolotiki o etelletsoeng pele ke mohoebi e moholo kahare ho naha hore o tla tlisetsa motse oa heso litšebeletso tsena tsa mantlha. ‘The reason I voted last year was that I needed basic service delivery including the building of roads, electricity connections, the building of health center and the creation of jobs. The party that I was a member of for more than 40 years failed to provide the aforementioned services for my community. I believed that now that a new political party led by a successful businessman had been founded, it would bring those services to our village’.

A youth from Phuthi ethnic group also reported that she voted because she hoped that jobs would be created for the youth and proper roads would be built in the Quthing district. In her own words, she stated that:

Ke khethile hobane ke na le tšepo ho mokha o khothalelitsoeng ho nna ke batsoali baka hore ha o ka fuoa monyetla oa puso, o ka tseba ho hlahisetsa batho ba bacha mesebetsi le ho lokisa litsela tse senyehileng hampe-mpe mona seterekeng sa heso sa Quthing. ‘I voted because I believed that if given a chance to be a government, a political party introduced to me by my parents would create jobs for the youth and also fix badly damaged roads in my district, Quthing’.

Another minority language speaker stated:

Ke khethile hobane ke batla kaho ea sekolo sa mathomo tikolohong ea heso. Bana ba rona ba tsamaea ka maoto sebaka se selelele haholo ho fihla sekolong kaha se batla se le sebakana ho motse oa heso. Ka linako tse ling ha pula e nele haholo ba hloleha ho ea sekolong kaha phorohloana eo ba lokelang ho e tšela e tlala metsi. ‘I voted because I wanted the construction of a primary school in our village, as the one we currently have is quite far from our village. Also, during the rainy seasons, children sometimes skip school because the stream they have to cross gets flooded’.

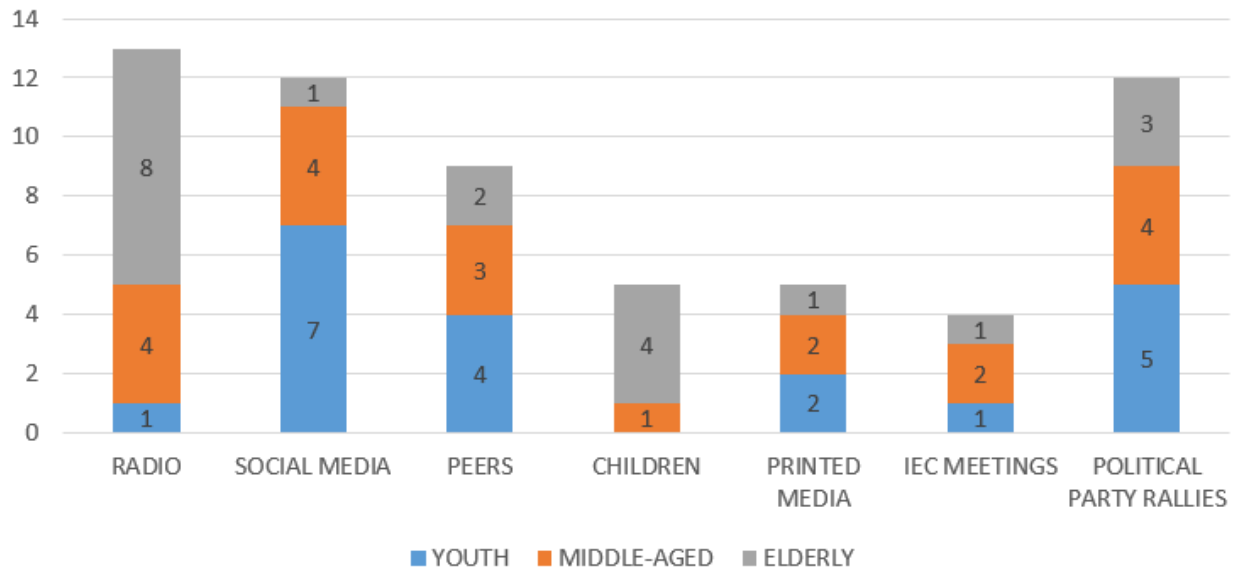
After learning that some respondents participated in the 2022 national elections while others did not, it was critical for the study to establish how election-related information was transmitted to them. As a result, the following question was asked.

Question 2: How did you receive the information related to the elections before, during, and after they have taken place?

The responses are shown in the chart below.

Chart 3.

ELECTION-RELATED INFORMATION SOURCES CATEGORIZED BY AGE-GROUPS



According to the chart, Quthing residents used various election-related information sources to obtain information about the 2022 national elections. These sources included radio, social media, peers, children, printed media, IEC meetings and political party rallies. Among these sources, radio, social media and political party rallies were the most popular sources with 37 out of 60 participants relying on them. Data also shows that the elderly formed the majority of the participants who relied on the radio with 8 (62%) members, followed by 4 (30.7%) who were middle-aged. According to the findings, only 1 (7.6%) of the youth relied on the radio for election-related information. Unlike in the case of radio which was used mostly by the elderly, the findings reveal that the use of social media was dominated by the youth with 7 (58%) participants, followed by 4 (30%) middle-aged respondents. In the case of social media also, only 1 participant from the elderly used it to access election-related information. The findings further indicate that the usage of political party rallies by the participants was relatively balanced. Thus, the number of youth who used this source of information is more than the number of middle-aged participants by one member. Similarly, the number of middle-aged participants who used political party rallies exceeds the number of the elderly by just one participant.

As already indicated, the above chart reveals that peers were also the sources for election-related information before, during and post the 2022 general elections in the Quthing district. These sources were used by 9 out of the total of 60 participants. The findings indicate that 44.44% of the participants who used this source were youth, 33.33% were middle-aged, and the remaining 22.22% were elderly. Additionally, the chart further shows that the participants who received election-related information from their children, printed media and IEC meetings were few. For instance, according to the chart, 8.33% (made up of 4 elderly members and 1 middle-aged one) accessed information from their children. Again, the chart indicates that another 8.33% of the participants (comprising 1 elderly, 2 middle-aged members and 2 youths) accessed election-related information through printed media. Lastly, the chart reveals that IEC meetings were the least used sources for election-related information by the participants. This is because only 4 (6.66%) respondents used it. These were made up of 1 elderly member, 1 youth and 2 middle-aged participants.

Given the fact that one of the fundamental goals of this study is to establish how language barrier impacts the democratic right of the citizens, it was equally important for me as the researcher to establish which languages were used by election-related information sources during the election processes. Thus, the question below was asked.

Question 3: Which languages were used by the above-mentioned election-related information sources during the 2022 election processes?

The responses are presented in the table below.

Table 1: The languages used by the election-related information sources during the 2022 election processes.

ELECTION-RELATED INFORMATION SOURCE	LANGUAGE USED	NUMBER OF RESPONSES

Radio	Sesotho	8 (13.3%)
	Sesotho and English	4 (6.7%)
	Sesotho, English and isiXhosa	1 (1.7%)
Social media	Sesotho	7 (11.7%)
	Sesotho and English	5 (8.3%)
Peers	Sesotho	3 (5%)
	Sesotho and English	2 (3.3%)
	isiXhosa	2 (3.3%)
	Sephuthi	2 (3.3%)
Children	Sesotho	1 (1.7%)
	isiXhosa	2 (3.3%)
	Sephuthi	2 (3.3%)
Printed media	Sesotho	2 (3.3%)
	Sesotho and English	2 (3.3%)
	Sesotho, English and isiXhosa	1 (1.7%)
IEC meetings	Sesotho	3 (5%)
	Sesotho, English and isiXhosa	1 (1.7%)
Political party rallies	Sesotho	8 (13.3%)
	Sesotho and English	4 (6.7%)

The table above displays the languages utilized in the 2022 election processes in Quthing. According to the table, these languages were Sesotho, English, siXhosa, and Sephuthi. However, out of 60 participants, 32 (53.3%) reported that the sources through which they received information about the elections used mainly Sesotho. The other 17 (28.3%) respondents mentioned that they received information related to the elections in both Sesotho and English. 3 (5%) other participants indicated that in addition to Sesotho and English, they also received this information in isiXhosa. Data further revealed that 4 participants had access to the election-related sources in either isiXhosa or Sephuthi only.

Based on the information provided in Table 1 above, it is clear that minority languages were hardly used in the Quthing district during the 2022 national elections. It was imperative for me as a researcher to investigate the impact that the use of the languages that the participants do not have full access to had on their participation during these elections. To accomplish this, the researcher asked the non-Sesotho speakers the question below.

Question 4: Did the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 national elections have any impact on your participation?

The findings of the study reveal that 25 (71.4%) out of 35 interviewees felt that the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 national elections negatively affected their involvement. Their responses are provided below.

Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa boitokisetsong ba likhetho, ka letsatsi la likhetho le kamorao ho likhetho, e ile ea etsa hore re hloke thahasello ea ho nka karolo lipolotiking ka ha re utloa eka ha re karolo ea puso ea sechaba-ka-sechaba naheng ea Lesotho. ‘The use of Sesotho and English during the preparation of elections, during the elections, and during the post-election processes discouraged us from taking part in the political affairs as we felt like we are not part of the democratic government of Lesotho’.

Another participant lamented the use of only the official languages during the elections as she deemed this as an act of violating their right to freedom of expression as granted by the Constitution of Lesotho. She said:

Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa feela nakong ea likhetho e re amoha tokelo ea bolokolohi ba puo e kollang ho molao oa motheo oa naha. ‘The use of only Sesotho and English during the elections deprives us of the right to use any language which is enshrined in the Constitution of Lesotho’.

Yet another participant expressed concern that due to the language barrier, they were unable to efficiently access election-related information. In his own words, he said the following:

Ba bang ba rona ha ba atleha ho fumana le ho utloisisa hantle litaba tsa likhetho joaloka thuto e fuoang bakhethi le litaba tsa boiketo ba bapolutiki mme sena se etsa hore re khethe re se na tsebo e phethahetseng ka lipolutiki le likhetho. ‘Some of us were not able to access and understand well election processes such as the education provided to people who were going to elect and information on political candidates and this makes us go to the polling stations without adequate knowledge of politics and elections. As a result, we were left uninformed and unable to make informed decisions as voters’.

Another participant stated:

Boholo ba rona ba buoang lipuo tse buuoang ke palo a fokolang ea batho re sitoa ho hlalosa ka botlalo lithoko tsa rona nakong ea boitukisetso ba likhetho, ka letsatsi la likhetho le kamorao ho tsona, mme sena se fokolisa tjantjello ea rona ho nka karolo lipolutiking. ‘Many of us who speak minority languages struggle to express our needs adequately during the pre-elections phase, during the elections and post elections and this weakens our desire to participate in politics’.

Adding to this deliberations, a middle-aged female participant reported that the language barrier made it difficult for her to understand and participate in political events and as a result, she was discouraged from voting. She said:

Ba sa utloisiseng Sesotho le Sekhooa hantle ba sitoa ho ikakhela ka setotsoana lipolutiking kaha ba hloloa ho latela le hona ho utloisisa likhang tsa lipolutiki ka botlalo. ‘Those who do not fully understand Sesotho and English are not able to get involved in politics fully because they are unable to follow and understand political debates fully’.

A similar view was mentioned by an elderly participant when she said:

Rona ba buoang lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha, re ikutloa eka ha re na tokelo lipolotiking tsa Lesotho kaha li sa re kenyelletse. 'As speakers of minority languages, we feel like we have no part to play in Lesotho politics since we are not included'.

Similarly, another participant stated that minority language groups lack representation in politics due to the language barrier, making it difficult for them to contest political leadership roles. Below is what he said:

Batho ba buoang lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang kahare ho naha ba hloloa ho ba le boemeli lipolotiking kaha ho sekisetsoa hoa lipuo tsa bona ho etsa hore ba hloke tjantjello ea ho iketela ho ba baetapele lipolotiking. 'Minority language speakers in the country cannot have representatives in politics since the marginalization of their languages discourages them from being candidates for political positions'.

Another participant said:

Batho ba bang ba buoang puo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho 'me ba hloloa ho itlhalosa ka Sesotho le Sekhooa hantle, ba ikhethela ho se kene likhethong kaha ba lumela hore ho se tsebe ho sebelisa lipuo tsena tse peli hantle ho ka ba sitisa ho etsa khetho ea bona ka bolokolohi. 'Some individuals who are minority language speakers who fail to express themselves in both Sesotho and English, choose not to participate in the elections since they believe that this might affect their freedom to vote'.

Data presented in the preceding paragraphs indicates that using mainly Sesotho and English in last year's elections impeded the involvement of many minority language speakers. Therefore, as the researcher, I felt that it was crucial to establish what, in their view, is the significance of an accessible language in elections. Thus, the following question was asked:

QUESTION 5: What is the role of accessible language in elections as a prerequisite of democracy?

The participants' responses suggest that using accessible language during elections can benefit both politicians and voters. Below are their exact words:

Puo ke tšiea ea mantlha ea puisano kahoo tšebeliso ea puo e utloisoang hantle ke sechaba ka nako ea likhetho, e ka ba molemo ho baiketi le bakhethi ka ho tšoana. ‘Language is the primary means of communication, therefore, using a language that is understood by all the citizens during elections can benefit both the candidates and the voters’.

Another participant argued that using the known language could help politicians enhance their communication skills since they rely on it to promote themselves. He stated:

Ha mopolotiki a sebelisa puo eo a e tsebang hantle ka nako ea likhetho, ho mo thusa ho rapalatsa maano a mokha oa hae ho bakhethi ka puo e manoni e hlakileng mme seo se ka etsa hore batho ba bangata ba khahloe ke seo a se bolelang. ‘When a politician uses a language that he/she knows well, this helps him/her to communicate party manifestos clearly and this makes many to be attracted to what he/she is saying.’

Expanding on the previous point, another participant, who also spoke a minority language, expressed the following viewpoint:

Ha mopolotiki a tseba puo hantle ka botlalo, a ka e sebelisa ho etsetsa mokha oa hae lepetjo le lebitso le khahlang bakhethi. ‘If a politician is proficient in a language, he/she can use it to create catchy slogans that attract voters’.

A youth participant also lamented that he lost hope of becoming a leader in his political party's constituency committee due to his difficulty expressing himself in Sesotho. He stated:

Ke ne ke rata lipolotiki haholo hoba ke na le takatso ea ho ba e mong oa baetapele mokheng oaka komiting ea lebatooa, empa ho se tsebe ho itlhalosa hantle ka Sesotho hoa etsa hore ke sitoe ho kholisa litho tse ling tsa mokha hore li nkhethe. 'I was passionate about politics a lot because I aspired to be a leader in my party's constituency committee. However, my inability to express myself clearly in Sesotho led to my inability to convince other party members to elect me'.

A different participant added:

Ha e le hantle nna ke ne ke batla ho theha mokha khale koana ke sa le lilemo li mahareng, empa tšebeliso ea puo ea Sesotho ke eona e ileng ea ntšitisa. E ntšititse ka hore, ha ke rate ho bua Sesotho hobane kholong eaka ke ne ke khalengoa ka thata hore ke se ke ka bua Sesotho hobane se tla etsa hore ke lebale puo ea siXhosa e leng eona eaka ea letsoele. 'Honestly, during my middle age, I had a desire to form a political party, but the use of Sesotho stopped me from pursuing it. It stopped me because I do not like speaking Sesotho because growing up I was ordered not to use it because of the fear that it will make me forget siXhosa which is my mother tongue'.

Data from the above paragraphs demonstrate the significance of the use of accessible language by politicians during elections. Other participants reiterated the fact that using accessible language in elections can benefit voters. Below are their responses:

Puo e utloisoang ke batho bohle e ka thusa bakhethi ho utloisisa hantle thuto eo ba e fuoang ke IEC le mafapha a nang le seabo a ikemetseng. Thuto ena e thusa batho ho tseba hara tse ling, bohlokoa ba ho ngolisa le ho hlahloba manane a bakhethi pele ho letsatsi la likhetho. 'An accessible language to everybody can assist the voters to understand well the voter education that is provided by the IEC and other stakeholders in the election process. This voter education helps people to know, among others, the importance of registration to vote and also check the election lists before the elections day'.

Another participant remarked that:

Tšebeliso ea puo e utloisoang ke batho bohle nakong ea likhetho e nolofalletsa batho ba bangata ho feta methati eohle eo ba lokelang ho feta ka katleho nakong ea boitukisetso ba likhetho, ka letsatsi la likhetho le kamorao ho likhetho. ‘The use of a language that is accessible to everyone during elections makes it easy for many people to go through all processes which they have to go through in the pre-elections, during the elections and in the post-election processes effectively’.

Sharing similar sentiments, an elderly participant mentioned that accessible language can encourage more people to participate in elections by enabling them to understand and discuss political issues more effectively. She said the following:

Ha batho bohle ba utloisisa puo e sebelisoang ka nako ea likhetho, ba nang le tokelo ea ho khetha ba ka ikakhele ka setotsoana likhethong kaha ba tla be utloisisa hantle likhang tsa lipolotiki le ho kena ho tsona ka katleho. ‘If every person clearly understands the language used during elections, eligible voters may be encouraged to participate in the electoral process as they can understand arguments in politics and effectively participate in their discussions’.

Additional support for the use of accessible language was provided by a participant who emphasized that using accessible language during elections helps voters to make informed choices in the voting booth. She stated:

Puo e utloisoang hantle ke batho bohle nakong ea likhetho, e thusa hore batho ba utloisise ka botlalo mehoo ea mekha ea lipolotiki mme ba tsebe ho khetha ba ipapisitse le mehoo ea mekha ka ho fapana. ‘Accessible language to everyone can help people to understand political parties’ manifestos well and enable them to vote on the basis on these different manifestos’.

Another participant said:

Puo e tloisoang hantle ke bakhethi ka nako ea likhetho e thusa bakhethi ba joalo ho tekela bapolotiki litlhoko tsa bona ka katleho le ho nolofalloa ke ho ba botsa ha ba se ba sa phethahatsa

tseo ba neng ba tšepisitse ho li etsa. ‘Using language that everyone understands during elections enables people to express their needs clearly and also makes it easy for them to hold politicians accountable when they fail to fulfill the promises they made during campaigns’.

As data was not collected from only the Quthing residents, IEC officials as the overseer of Lesotho’s elections also participated in the study. Therefore, they were asked the following question:

Question 6: Is there a clear language policy in place at IEC regarding the involvement of minority language speakers during national elections?

According to the IEC official, IEC does not have a clear written policy on the involvement of minority language speakers found in various districts of Lesotho, including Quthing. In his own words, he stated:

Komisi ha e so be le leano le hlakileng le ngotsoeng malebana le ho kenyelletsa lipuo the buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho tse fumanoang literekeng tse kang Quthing. Le ha ho le joalo, tšebetsoeng ea eona, komisi e etse hloko hore ho bohlokoa ho kenyelletsa lipuo tseo hara lipuo tse sebelisoang nakong ea likhetho kaha ho ntse ho na le batho ba sa utloisising hantle Sesotho hobane e se puo ea bona ea letsoele. ‘Currently, IEC does not have a clearly defined policy on minority language speakers found in various districts of Lesotho including Quthing. Nonetheless, the Commission has recognized the need to include minority languages in the election processes since there are people for whom Sesotho is not their mother tongue and, therefore, do not fully understand it’.

The respondent was further asked how they assisted those who could not fully understand Sesotho during the election period. He said:

Le ha e le mona komisi e so be le leano le hlakileng ka lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho Lesotho, e mothating oa ho kenyetse lipuo tseo tšebetsong ea eona. Mohlala, re se re na le lingoloa ka puo ea siXhosa e le e 'ngoe ea lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea sechaba Quthing. Re mothating oa ho ba le lingoloa ka puo ea Sephuthi joalokaha le sona se buuo hona seterekeng sa Quthing. 'Even though the Commission does not have a clearly defined policy on the involvement of minority languages during elections as yet, it is already working hard to include these languages in the election processes. For instance, we have printed materials in Xhosa as one of the two minority languages found in Quthing. We are also in the process of having printed materials in Sephuthi because it is also spoken in the Quthing district'.

In addition to printed materials, another IEC official added that when hiring employees in multicultural districts such as Quthing, they prefer candidates who speak the minority languages spoken there. She stated:

Nakong ea likhetho ha komisi e hira batho ba tla sebetsa literekeng tseo ho nang le lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho joaloka Quthing, e sheba haholo batho ba nang le tsebo ea lipuo tse joalo. Le ha ho le joalo, komisi e fumana lenane le fokolang feela la batho ba nang le tsebo ea lipuo tsena ebile e le ba buoang siXhosa feela. Ha ele ba buoang Sephuthi bona IEC ha e atlehe ho ba fumana. 'During the elections period, when the Commission hires people who would work in districts that have minority language speakers, such as Quthing, it looks for people who know these languages. However, the Commission is able to find only a few people who know these languages and it is mostly those who speak siXhosa. Until today, the Commission has not been able to find candidates that speak Sephuthi'.

As a researcher, I felt it was crucial to ask IEC officials about the significance of using accessible language in elections, just as I did with the residents of Quthing. As a result, they were asked the question below:

Question 7: In your view, what role does an accessible language play in elections as a prerequisite for democracy?

One of the officials argued that using accessible language during the elections could play a vital role in helping the Commission achieve its primary objective of conducting unbiased and transparent elections. He stated the following:

Ha batho bohle ba utloisisa puo e sebelisoang ka nako ea likhetho, Komisi e ka tseba ho fihlela sepheo sa eona se seholo sa ho tsoara likhetho tse lokolohileng tse nang le ponaletso. ‘If everyone understands the language used during elections, the Commission can be able to achieve its main goal of holding free and transparent elections’.

Another official clarified further when he said:

Batho ha ba utloisisa puo hantle e sebelisoang likhethong, komisi e ka tseba ho fihlela boholo ba sechaba ka thuto e fuoang bakhethi ka litsi tsohle tse fetisang melaetsa joaloka li-ea-le-moea, se-ea-le-moea-pono, likoranta, marang-rang le likopano tseo Komisi e li tsoarang ho ruta batho ka likhetho. Sena se ka thusa ho phahamisa palo ea bakhethi kaha boholo ba sechaba bo tla be bo na le tsebo ka likhetho. ‘When people understand the language used during elections well, the Commission may be able to reach the majority of residents through voter education provided on various media platforms such as radio, television, internet, newspapers and face-to-face meetings. This could enhance voter turnout since more people will be aware of elections’.

During the interview sessions, the IEC officials explained that voter education is essential to raise awareness among people about registering and verifying their names on voter lists. It also helps to educate voters about the candidates and political parties that are eligible to run for elections. Ultimately, this leads to a more informed electorate. This information is reflected in the utterances below:

Thuto e fuoang bakhethi ha e fihletse likarolo tsohle tsa sechaba, boholo ba batho bo tla ba le tjantjello ka likhetho mme bo tla ithuta ka baiketi mabatoeng a bona, mekha eo ba tsoang ho

eona le tseo ba tšepisang ho li etsetsa baahi ha ba ka ba khetha ho ba emela thung ea bakhethoa. ‘If voter education reaches all citizens across the country, more people will be interested in election issues and be encouraged to find information about eligible candidates, their political parties, and what they promise to do for the citizens if elected as representatives in parliament’.

When emphasizing the importance of the use of accessible language during the elections, another official stated:

Tšebeliso ea puo e utloisisoang hantle ke batho bohle ka nako ea likhetho e ka thusa ho phahamisa lenane la bakhethi kaha batho bohle ba tla utloisisa hantle litaba tsa likhetho mme sena se ka ba fa morolo oa ho khetha. ‘Using language that everyone understands during elections can improve voter turnout since everyone will clearly understand election issues, which can motivate people to vote’.

The officials were asked what in their opinions should be done to speed up the process of including minority languages in the election processes. One of them explained that:

Mothati oa ho kenyelletsa lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho litšebeletsong tsa komisi o lokela ho qala Maseru moo ho fumanoang sechaba seo boholo ba sona hlahang literekeng tsohle tsa naha. Ho feta mona, Maseru ke moo batho ba fumanang ha bobebe mekhoha e ‘maloa ea ho fetisa molaetsa joaloka li-ea-le-moea, maselinyana, puisano ka marang-rang le sona se-ea-le-moea-pono. ‘The process of including minority languages in election procedures should begin at Maseru district where people from various districts of Lesotho come to meet. Furthermore, Maseru is where people can easily access information through radios, television, newspapers and social media platforms’.

A similar sentiment was shared by another officer who stated:

Mothati oa ho kenyelletsa lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho tšebetsong ea IEC ha o ka qala Maseru, batho ba bangata ba tla hlokomela hore IEC e fana ka litšebeletso ka lipuo tse joalo. Sena se ka thusa IEC ho fumana batho ba bangata ba buang lipuo tsena mme eaba sena se

fa Komisi monyetla oa ho ba hira e le ho thusa hore batho bohle bao puo ea bona ea letsoele e seng Sesotho, le bona ba fumane litaba tse amanang le likhetho. Ho feta moo, le Basotho bao Sesotho e leng puo ea bona ea letsoele ba ka ba le thahasello ea lipuo tseo kaha ba tla be ba mamela mananeo moo li sebelisoang. ‘If the process of including minority languages could begin in Maseru, many people would be aware that IEC offers services in those languages. This could help IEC to attract speakers of such languages as part of their employees. Such employees be able to disseminate voter education in those languages across all media platforms and at IEC meetings. Moreover, people who speak Sesotho as their mother tongue may also be interested in learning the minority languages because they will have access to them on all media platforms’.

3.2 CONCLUSION.

The main aim of this chapter was to establish the languages that were used in Quthing in the 2022 general elections in the pre-election phase, during the elections and the post-election phase. The findings have revealed that during the election processes both Sesotho and English were predominantly used to disseminate information. This was done despite the existence of minority language speakers in this district. The findings of the study have revealed that this has negatively affected the participation of minority language speakers and in the process, their democratic rights have been compromised.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter discusses and analyses data presented in the previous one. The main aim of the current research was to investigate how the use of only Sesotho and English in the 2022 Lesotho national elections affected the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing. In order to achieve this aim, the study focused on three primary research questions. The first one sought to establish the languages that were used in the processes involved in these elections. The second one investigated whether or not minority language speakers were affected by the language barrier during the 2022 general elections. The last question was meant to determine the role that an accessible language plays in elections as a prerequisite for democracy. The data for this study is discussed and analysed based on these questions.

Before asking the question related to the languages that were used in the 2022 national elections, it was critical to establish whether or not the respondents participated in this important national activity. It was equally crucial to determine their reasons for participation or non-participation.

4.1 The voting behaviour of Quthing residents in the 2022 national elections.

The findings of the study indicate that out of 60 participants interviewed in Quthing, 40 of them (67%) voted in the Lesotho national elections of 2022, while the remaining 20 (33%) did not. The collected data further showed that 14 (70%) minority language speakers did not vote while 6 (30%) Basotho also did not vote. As the findings indicate, most of those who did not vote were minority language speakers. According to Rule (2014), the actions and decisions made by citizens in relation to local, regional, or national elections are known as voting behaviours. These can include supporting political candidates or parties or choosing not to participate in the voting process entirely, which is what was revealed by the findings of the study. Rule (ibid) further states that a

person's decision to vote or not vote can be influenced by how they believe it will impact their quality of life.

As stated in Chapter One, this study employs Critical Theory along with three primary models of voting behavior namely, the Sociological, Psychosocial, and Rational Choice Models to analyze the data. Critical Theory aims to question and expose social injustices to promote a democratic society, as explained by Fui, Khin, and Ying (2011). This theory is applied to determine whether or not the government of Lesotho abides by its Constitution and the National Assembly Act of 2011, both of which guide the country's elections. Critical Theory is also used to assess whether programs and services offered by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of Lesotho align with the fundamental principles of the Constitution as the highest law of the land. One of the main functions of the elections, as Likoti (2009) correctly observes, is to increase citizens' involvement in the governance process.

In order to analyse the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing during the Lesotho 2022 electoral processes, the study utilizes three primary models of voting behaviour discussed earlier. As outlined in the theoretical framework section, the Sociological Model of Voting Behaviour was pioneered by Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues at Columbia University for the presidential elections of 1940 in Erie County Antunes (2010). The model acknowledges that individuals make personal decisions, but their decisions cannot be entirely divorced from other factors such as social status, family and friends. However, the model has been criticized for being too static, as socioeconomic characteristics such as income, education, and occupation do not change in the short term, yet voting behaviour changes from one election to the next (Antunes, 2010). Therefore, the Psychosocial Model was developed as an alternative to the Sociological Model, using the concept of partisanship.

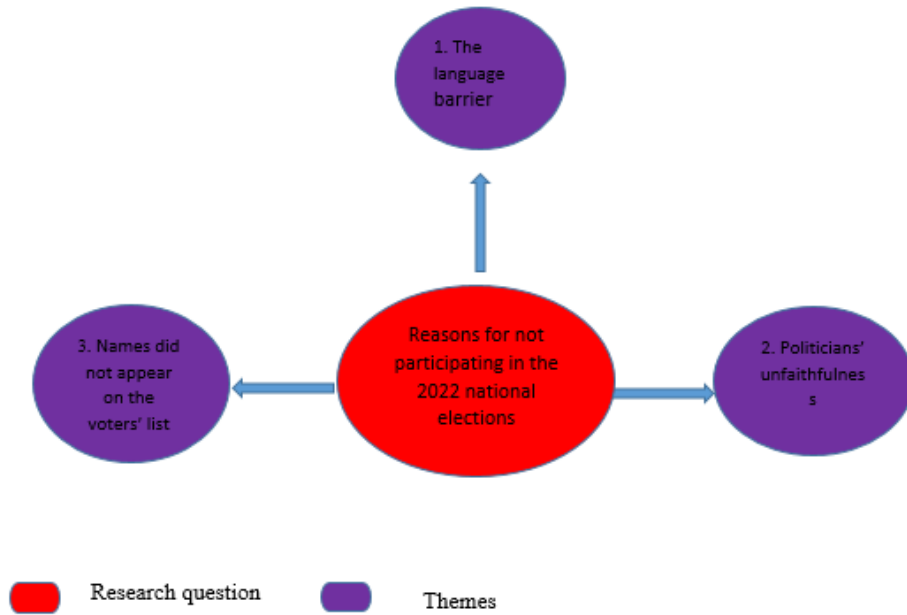
The Psychosocial Model was developed by a group of scholars at the University of Michigan (Mahsud and Amin, 2020). As mentioned earlier, the Psychosocial Model introduces the concept of partisanship to address the limitations of the Sociological Model. Huddy and Bankert (2017)

define partisanship as a long-lasting feeling of devotion that people develop towards a particular political party. Similarly, this approach also has limitations as it fails to explain why some voters who identify with a particular party choose to vote for another party or refrain from participating in an election (Wiese, 2011). Hence the development of the Rational Choice Model.

Mahsud and Amin (2020) state that the economists Anthony Downs, Duncan Black, and Kenneth Arrow were the main proponents of the Rational Choice Model in electoral studies. This model assumes that an individual's vote is based on their rational self-interest. According to this model, voters are like consumers who choose a political party that sells manifestos that will benefit them or align with their personal beliefs. (Young, 2021).

Data in this section is analyzed thematically. The themes that arose from those who did not vote include the language barrier, politicians' unfaithfulness, and names that did not appear on the voters' list. In contrast, the themes that emerged from those who participated in the election are service delivery, a civic obligation and a new party led by a new leader. The figure below displays the themes picked from those who did not vote.

Figure: 2



4.1.1 The language barrier.

When the participants were asked why they did not vote last year, one of the reasons they gave was that the use of mainly Sesotho and English during elections hindered their participation. Some of the responses they provided included the following:

Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa feela likhethong tsa naha ke lona lebaka le entseng hore ke se khethe likhethong tse fetileng kaha ha ke utloisise hantle le hona ho tseba ho bala puo tseo ka bobeli. Kahoo khetho eaka ha e be lekunutu joalokaha e le tšoanelo, ka letsatsi la likhetho ke lokela ho ba le motho ea tla nthusisa ho khetha. ‘The use of only Sesotho and English during elections hindered my participation since I cannot read or understand both languages well. This meant that my vote would no longer be a secret as it should be since on the day of elections I have to bring along somebody who would assist me’.

Ha ke ea hlahloba lebitso laka lenaneng la bakhethi hobane ke ne ke qoba ho ea litsing tsa khethelo kaha puo e sebelisoang e le Sesotho joale ke hloile ho buoa Sesotho kaha e se puo eaka ea letsoele.
'I did not check whether my name was still on the voting list because I avoided going to the polling station as the services were only offered in Sesotho which I hate because it is not my mother tongue'.

As the above utterances indicate, some participants could not go to the polling station due language barrier. They were also not comfortable taking other people with them to the polling for assistance as this would result in their ballots losing the 'secrecy' that they deserve. This has affected their right to participate in the election process which is their democratic right as Lesotho citizens. One of the steps that any country should take in an attempt to ensure that its citizens enjoy their democratic rights during national elections, is to create an environment whereby everybody will participate regardless of their language background. As the study indicates, the language barrier is very detrimental to free and fair national elections. It denies citizens an opportunity to exercise their right to elect the candidates of their choice in secret. Based on the Critical Theory, the IEC's minimal use of siXhosa and complete exclusion of Sephuthi during the 2022 national elections is considered undemocratic. This language barrier hindered minority language speakers from exercising their democratic right to vote for their representatives in government, as the findings revealed. This exclusion reinforces inequality, particularly for minority language speakers, and violates Section 4(1) of the Constitution, which states:

Whereas every person in Lesotho is entitled, whatever his race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status to fundamental human rights and freedoms, that is to say, to each and all of the following: the right to life, the right to personal liberty, freedom of movement and residence, freedom from inhuman treatment, freedom from slavery and forced labour, freedom from arbitrary search or entry, the right to respect for private and family life, a right to a fair trial of criminal charges against him and to a fair determination of his civil rights and obligations, freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, Freedom from arbitrary seizure of property, freedom from discrimination, the right to equality before the law and the equal protection of the law and the right to participate in government. (Page 8)

This issue of the language barrier is not unique to Lesotho or other African countries but it is observed in Western countries like Cambodia. For instance, Theara's (2013) research on the difficulties that minority language communities face during elections in Cambodia found that the biggest obstacle is the language barrier. As is the case with the participants in Quthing, Theara's study further indicates that the high illiteracy rate among older citizens in these communities has made the voting process even more complex since these participants are forced to rely on local authorities or another person to help them in the voting booths, and in the process, the minority language speakers' vote confidentiality is compromised or they could vote according to the assistant's desires. In this regard, Heringa and Nguyen (2020) note the challenge presented by voting assistance in maintaining the balance between protecting voting freedom and secrecy while also enabling the right to vote. In their view, to address this issue, voters who require assistance should clearly state their voting preference and then any help provided by a third party should be monitored by an election official. The current study supports this view and argues that in the presence of election officials, the chances of minority language speakers ending up making wrong choices when electing candidates might be reduced.

The responses above also reveal some minority language speakers' hostility towards Sesotho, one of the official languages of Lesotho which has also been accorded the status of one of the official languages of the country. This hostility is picked from the participant who shared that he avoided going to the IEC's offices to check his name on the voters' lists because he hated communicating in Sesotho. A similar observation is made in the study conducted by Schiffman (2011) who explored linguistic democracy in Lesotho and discovered that individuals who speak minority languages, particularly in regions like Quthing, exhibit hostility towards those who speak Sesotho. According to Schiffman's study, even those minority language speakers who fully understand Sesotho do not want to speak it, which may explain why some participants in the current study still do not want to speak it. The negative attitude that is displayed by minority language speakers towards Sesotho in Quthing is normal. It is a fact that the majority of Sesotho speakers do not see the need to learn the minority languages in the country. However, they expect minority language speakers to learn and speak Sesotho. Of course, this does not sit well with these minority language

speakers. The message that Sesotho speakers send to the minority language speakers is that their language is more of a language than other languages that are spoken in Lesotho. Similar observation is made by Bagwasi (2020) in her research on bilingualism in Botswana and its relationship with education. She discovered that while many speakers of minority languages also speak Setswana, few native Setswana speakers speak any Botswana minority languages. She further argues that minority language speakers need to learn Setswana for survival and integration into the wider community, while native Setswana speakers do not feel the same obligation to learn minority languages. In Bagwasi's view, this form of bilingualism does not support equal language distribution, mutual integration, or respect for each other's languages and cultures. The repercussions of treating other languages as more important than others are provided by Brant (2020) who explains that language inequality can create ethnic tensions and conflicts because speakers of dominant languages often marginalize minority languages, considering them less valuable.

Based on the findings, it is possible that some minority language speakers in Quthing only speak Sesotho for survival and not because they want to learn a second language, which Sari (2019) explains as instrumental motivation in learning a second language. According to Sari (ibid), the process of learning a language is greatly influenced by one's attitudes and motivation, which in turn affect the learning outcomes. Having a positive attitude towards the language and its speakers can increase motivation and lead to better learning outcomes. Gardner's theory of the Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Acquisition distinguishes between instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Integrative motivation involves learning a language to be a part of a language community or to communicate with people from another culture, while instrumental motivation involves learning a language for more practical reasons, such as passing an exam or getting a promotion (Gardner, 2010). In Quthing, most minority language speakers have negative attitudes towards Sesotho, indicating that they only learn it for instrumental purposes. As a result, they only use Sesotho when necessary, limiting their competency in the language.

4.1.2 Politicians' Unfaithfulness.

Another reason that participants gave for not voting in the 2023 national elections was the issue of politicians who are unfaithful. Some of their responses included:

Ho se tšepahalle sechaba hoa bapolotiki ke lona lebaka la mantlha leo ke sa kang ka khetha. Ka nako ea likhetho bapolotiki ba tla sechabeng ho se tšepisa hara tse ling, theho ea mesebetsi ea ba nang le litsebo le ba se nang tsona. Ho fihlela kajeno naha ea Lesotho e ntse e aparetsoe ke tlhokeho ea mesebetsi kaha bapolotiki ba lebala tseo ba li tšepisitseng sechaba hang hoba ba lule litulong. 'The unfaithfulness of the politicians was the main reason I did not vote. During the election period, politicians come to the people and promise, among others, the creation of jobs for both skilled and unskilled people. Until today, Lesotho is still facing the challenge of unemployment because once they get power, the politicians forget what they promised people'.

Le leng la mabaka a entseng hore ke se khethe selemong se fetileng ke ho se tšepahalle sechaba hoa bapolotiki. Ka bo 90s koana ha ke qala ho kena lipolotiki, bapolotiki e sa le ba re tšepisa motlakase le ho re lokisetsa litsela. Le ha ho le joalo, le kajeno re ntse re tsamaea hofeta lihora tse 4 ka maoto hobane ha hona tsela moo kolo e ka tsamaeang ha habo rona, le motlakase o ntse o le sieo. 'One of the reasons I did not vote last year is the politicians' unfaithfulness towards the people. Since the 1990s when I started participating in politics, politicians had promised to connect electricity for us and repair damaged roads. However, even today we still travel more than 4 kilometers on foot because the bad road for vehicles and electricity is still not there in our village'.

The above data exposes the fact that some voters in Quthing did not participate in the elections due to the politicians' failure to fulfill their promises. As data reveals, during the previous elections, the villagers had been promised electricity connectivity and proper roads. However, according to the respondents, these promises were never fulfilled. The issue of politicians who fail to fulfill the promises they make during their election campaign is a concern worldwide. For instance, George H.W. Bush failed to fulfill a promise he made in his 1988 presidential nomination acceptance speech (Apple, 2023). According to Apple (ibid), Bush promised that he would never raise taxes,

even if pressured by Congress. However, in 1990, he was forced to compromise on his pledge when he realized that increasing tax revenue could help improve the stagnant U.S. economy. Bush's decision to renege on his promise was a great blow to the Americans who had elected him with the hope that he would not increase the revenue tax. The politicians' false campaign promises are strongly condemned by Gumede (2021), a South African citizen whose view is that they can undermine the credibility of information given to voters, especially in a society with high illiteracy levels. Gumede cited former South African President Jacob Zuma as one of the politicians who failed to fulfill his campaign promises. According to him, in the 2014 national elections campaign, Zuma promised South Africans six million new jobs and five million new houses. Additionally, in the run-up to the ANC's 2017 national conference, Zuma promised free higher education for the poor and working-class students, despite the fact that the National Treasury and the 2017 Heher Commission showed that universal free higher education was unaffordable. It is such empty promises that deter the communities from exercising their democratic right to vote for new governments.

Nonetheless, the study undertaken by Cruz, Keefer, Labonne, and Trebbi (2019) in the Philippines discovered that voters are more likely to vote for incumbents who fulfilled their past pledges, as they perceive them to be more trustworthy. Additionally, the same study reveals that voters tend to vote for candidates whose policies are aligned with their own preferences. As already indicated, according to the study, there were some people in Quthing who chose not to vote in the national elections of 2022 because they believed that it would not benefit them since politicians never fulfill their promises. The participants' choice of not voting aligns with the Rational Choice Theory of voting behavior which suggests that a person's vote is determined by their rational self-interest. To expand on this theory, Young (2021) explains that similar to how consumers choose a product that aligns with their interests, voters may select a political party that promotes policies that benefit them. This theory implies that a person's vote is influenced by what they believe is best for them. The findings of the current study indicate that Basotho in Quthing prefer politicians who are able to fulfill their promises. Since the previous candidates failed to deliver what they had promised, it is obvious that the participants have lost interest in politicians and have no hope that the election would benefit them in any way.

4.1.3 Names did not appear on the voter's list.

In addition to the reasons provided above, when the participants were asked the reasons for not voting last year, others stated that their names did not appear on the voter's list. Some of their responses are mentioned below:

Ke hobane lebitso la ka le ne le sa hlahe lenaneng la bakhethi kaha ke ne ke sa ka ka ea hlahloba manane ho sheba na lebitso laka le ntse le hlaha. 'It is because my name did not appear on the voter's list as I did not check whether my name was still included in the voter's list before the elections'.

Ha ke ea khetha hobane lebitso laka le sa hlaha lenaneng la bakhethi kaha ke ne ke sa ngolisa. 'I did not vote because my name did not appear on the voters' list since I had not registered'.

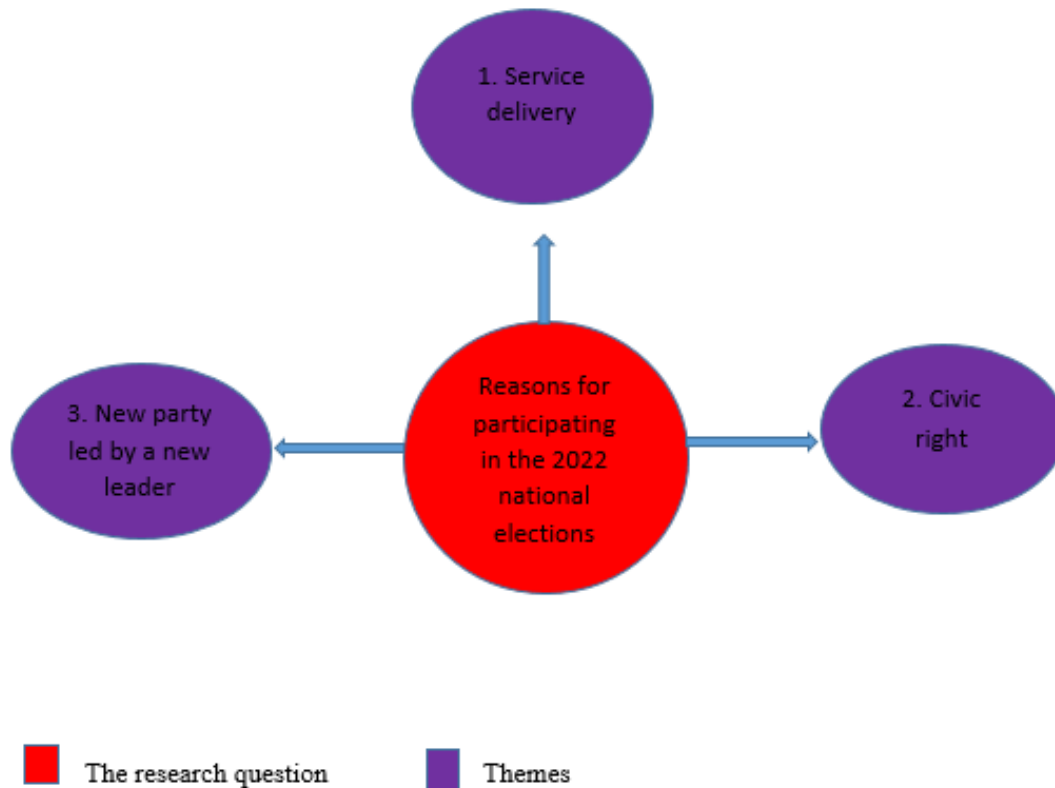
From the above responses, one observes that Basotho are aware that registration for participation in the election process is mandatory for every citizen as stipulated in Section 4 (3) of the National Assembly Electoral Act of 2011. However, one also realizes that this registration requirement does not extend to voting. In this regard, the study argues that, had voting been made mandatory, every Mosotho would make it point that they check whether or not their names appear on the voting list on time and necessary measures would have been taken to make sure that every citizen's names appear on it. In this way, there would be no excuses for not voting like the ones shared in the responses above. Additionally, according to the same Electoral Act, the registration process should be a continuous process. However, referring to the 2022 national elections, Mudau and 'Nyane (2023) contend that the IEC of Lesotho failed to provide a continuous registration process which could arguably leave many eligible voters unregistered. It is not surprising that residents in Quthing (possibly in other areas in Lesotho), failed to cast their votes for the simple reason that they did not check their names on the voting lists.

Another key element that the study observes is the ineffectiveness of voter education during the 2022 national elections. Ogbu (2020) also emphasizes the importance of voter education as it ensures that voters are ready, willing and able to participate in electoral processes. Ogbu (ibid) further indicates that voter education should accommodate all citizens who are eligible to vote including disadvantaged groups such as minority language speakers. According to Mudau and 'Nyane (2023), among other issues, the content in voter education is mostly about who is eligible to vote, where and how to register to vote, how voters should check the voter's roll to ensure that they have been duly included, where and when the election is taking place and the information about political parties and candidates. The findings presented in Chapter 3 reveal that voter education in Quthing was mainly conducted in Sesotho. There is a high possibility that this posed a challenge to those minority language speakers who could not understand Sesotho fully. According to Gacheche (2020), individuals tend to learn better when taught in their native language, resulting in more effective and efficient education. Moreover, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2020) highlights the significance of education in one's mother tongue, as it enhances the quality of learning, promotes inclusion, and improves learning outcomes. The study contends that since in Quthing voter education was provided mainly in Sesotho, many of the voters must have encountered challenges in accessing information due to the language barrier.

4.1.4 The reasons provided by the participants who voted last year.

As previously mentioned, the findings of the study established that although 20 (33%) did not vote in the 2022 Lesotho national elections, 40 (67%) did vote. As in the case of those participants who did not vote, those who voted were also asked to provide the reasons why they decided to do so. From their responses, three themes were identified and they are displayed in Figure 2 below.

Figure 3



4.1.4.1 Service delivery.

The findings of the study indicate that one of the reasons some of the participants voted in the 2022 Lesotho national elections is because they expected that after the elections the elected candidates would provide the basic services that the community desperately needed. Below are some of their exact words:

Ke khethile selemong se fetileng hobane ke ne ke batla litšebeletso tsa mantlha joaloka tokiso ea litsela, khokelo ea motlakase, kaho ea setsi sa bophelo le theho ea mesebetsi. Tsena kaofela ke tseo mokha oa lipolotiki oo ke bileng setho sa ona ho feta lilemo tse mashome a mane, o hlotsoeng ho li phethahatsa. Joale ke ne ke na le tšepo ho mokha o mocha oa lipolotiki o etelletsoeng pele ke mohoebi e moholo kahare ho naha hore o tla tlisetsa motse oa heso litšebeletso tsena tsa mantlha. ‘The reason I voted last year was that I needed basic service delivery such as the building of roads, electricity connections, the building of a health center and the creation of jobs. The party

that I was a member of for more than 40 years failed to provide the aforementioned services to my community. Then I had faith in the newly formed political party led by a great businessman in the country, that he would provide those services to our village’.

Ke khethile hobane ke na le tšepo ho mokha o khothalelitsoeng ho nna ke batsoali baka hore ha o ka fuoa monyetla oa puso, o ka tseba ho hlahisetsa batho ba bacha mesebetsi le ho lokisa litsela tse senyehileng hampe-mpe mona seterekeng sa heso sa Quthing. ‘I voted because I had faith in the party which had been recommended to me by my parents that given a chance to rule, it would create jobs for the youth and also repair the badly damaged roads in my district, Quthing’.

From the above responses, it is observed that some participants chose to vote for a different party instead of the one they had been loyal to for a long time as the previous one failed to bring services to the community. This finding is consistent with the Psychosocial Model and the Rational Choice Model of voting behaviour. Partisanship is a concept in the Psychosocial model that posits that people develop a long-lasting feeling of devotion towards a particular political party. For example, one participant had been a member of a political party for more than 40 years. However, this participant’s decision to vote for a new party, not the party she had been a member of for more than 40 years, also aligns with the Rational Choice Model. This model was developed as a response to the limitations of the Psychosocial Model which fails to explain why some voters who identify with the party vote for another party or refrain from participating in an election (Wiese, 2011). The Rational Choice Model assumes that an individual’s vote is based on his rational self-interest, as stated earlier in the preceding paragraphs. Some participants in Quthing also voted for a new party led by a new leader, instead of the parties that they had been members of for a long time as they believed that it would bring services to their communities.

The fact that citizens expect services delivery and provision of basic needs after elections is not peculiar to Quthing residents alone. An analysis conducted by Nkomo (2017) of the 2016 local elections in South Africa revealed a similar situation. The findings indicate that the African National Congress (ANC) lost power in three major cities of the country, namely Johannesburg,

Pretoria, and Nelson Mandela Bay, for the first time since 1994. This was due to voters choosing to vote for opposition parties like the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Democratic Alliance (DA). Furthermore, Nkomo discovered that South Africans opted to vote for other parties instead of the ANC, which they had been long-time members of because they held the incumbents responsible for not fulfilling their campaign promises of providing basic needs to the citizens. Elections are the key tenants of democracy. In this regard, Matlosa (2019) is adamant that Africans need a democracy that can provide for their basic needs and develop their nations.

Politicians' failure to provide essential services to communities is not limited to African countries but is also prevalent in Western countries. According to a study conducted by Stevens (2020), low-income individuals in the United States who are eligible to vote are much less likely to participate in national elections than those with higher incomes. Based on the Rationale Choice Model, this means that, low-income individuals may not continue to vote for politicians who fail to improve their living conditions. That is why some residents in Quthing decided to elect the new party with the hope that unlike the old one, the new one will meet their basic needs.

4.1.4.2 Civic right.

Data further indicates that another reason why some participants took part in the 2022 Lesotho national elections was that they regard voting as a civic right. Some of their responses are listed below:

Ke tokelo eaka ke le motho e mocha ho kenya letsoho tsamaisong ea naha ea Lesotho ka ho khetha batho bao ke bonang ba na le makhabane a ho busa. 'It is my right as a youth to participate in the administration of Lesotho by electing people whom I see fit to govern'.

Le ha e le mona 'muso o sa ele hloko boteng ba lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha, nna ke ikutloa ke le karolo ea sechaba sa Basotho, kahoo ho khetha ke tokelo eaka. 'Even though the government of Lesotho does not recognize the existence of minority

language speakers, I consider myself a member of the Basotho nation and as such, I have a right to vote’.

Based on the responses above, it is evident that some participants voted in the 2022 Lesotho national elections because they felt it was their right to do so as stipulated in Section 20, Subsection 1 (b) of the Constitution of Lesotho. According to this section: “Every citizen of Lesotho shall enjoy the right to vote or to stand for election at periodic elections under this Constitution under a system of universal and equal suffrage and secret ballot”.

The idea that voting should be considered a right of every citizen is supported by a study conducted by FairVotes in 2023. According to this study, many participants in the U.S saw voting as a privilege and a responsibility. On the one hand, those who considered it a privilege did so because, in their view, other countries did not enjoy the same freedom. On the other hand, those who considered voting as a responsibility emphasized the importance of choosing a government. However, FairVotes advocates for the constitutional recognition of voting as a right. In his view, this would protect citizens from being denied their right to vote. Contributing to this discussion, Sithole (2023) highlights that voting is not just a right, but also a responsibility. He, however, laments that most Africans tend to neglect it. He, therefore, proposes mandatory voting in African countries to address the issue of low voter turnout during elections. According to him, this would address the issue of legitimacy in African governments.

4.1.4.3 A new party led by a new leader.

Data also indicates that one of the reasons the participants voted in the 2022 Lesotho national election was the emergence of a new political party led by a leader who had never been in politics before. Here are a few of their responses:

Lebaka le entseng hore ke khethe ka 2022 ke ho thehoa hoa mokha o mocha o etelletsoeng pele ke moetapele e mocha lipolotiking tsa Lesotho. Ke ne ke lumela hore eena ha tlo tsoana le baetapele ba fetileng ba bileng lipolotiking tsa Lesotho ka nako e telele mme ba ntse ba etsetsa sechaba litšepiso tseo ba hlolehang ho li phethahatsa ha ba se ba le litulong. ‘I participated in the 2022 national elections because of the formation of a new party led by a new leader. I believed that this leader would be different from the previous politicians who had been in Lesotho politics for a long time and made promises to the nations which they could not fulfill once they were in government’.

Ke khethile hobane ke ne ke na le tšepo ho mokha o mocha o etelletsoeng pele ke moetapele e mocha hore o tla loanela hore ‘muso o ele hloko boteng ba lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha. ‘I voted because I believed that a new party led by a new leader would fight for the recognition of minority languages in this country’.

It has been noted that people tend to vote based on their own self-interest, as per the Rational Choice Model used in this study. In Quthing, individuals supported a fresh party with a new leader as they believed it would cater to their personal needs, which prior parties had neglected. In a September 2022 survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), 2,523 U.S. adults were willing to consider voting for a new political party that falls between Republicans and Democrats. The PRRI research indicates that Americans are discontented with the current political climate and are open to a new party and leader. According to Webb and Bale (2021), voters often switch political parties and align themselves with different ones based on their ideologies and leadership. These scholars argue that a political party that presents ideologies that are in the best interest of the public is more likely to win elections. Furthermore, people tend to be attracted to a new leader because a new leader can enhance the legitimacy of the party's policy ideas, as is evident in the case of participants from Quthing.

After learning that some respondents participated in the 2022 national elections while others did not, it was critical for the study to establish how election-related information was transmitted to them.

4.1.4.4 The sources of election-related information used by Quthing residents.

In the previous chapter, it was demonstrated that the residents of Quthing utilized various sources to gather information related to elections, such as radio, social media, peers, children, printed media, political party rallies, and IEC meetings. However, the most commonly used sources of election-related information were radio, social media, and political party rallies. According to Teshome (2009), radio is a reliable way of transferring information as it reaches almost all segments of the population, especially those residing in remote areas and illiterates. This author cited the Namibian 1989 elections as an example, where 60% of people were illiterate and as a result, they were educated about the elections through the radio. The study argues that older participants in Quthing also relied heavily on the radio due to illiteracy.

A similar situation is observed in Australia. Krause (2020) discovered that for many older Australians, listening to the radio was an essential part of everyday family life, as opposed to the use of television and newer digital listening technologies. Therefore, this implies that radio holds a significant place in the lives of many older Australians. Graying with Grace's (2023) research supports these findings, showing that elderly people mostly rely on the radio for information because, in most cases, they live alone, and the radio keeps them company. Additionally, others are unable to leave their homes to socialize due to issues such as limited mobility or vision. The study argues that older participants in Quthing may have relied on the radio for election-related information for similar reasons as those found in Graying with Grace's study. This is because even in other parts of the country, elderly people prefer to stay at home and one of the things that keeps them company is the radio.

Even though Teshome (2009) identified radio as a reliable and convenient source of information, the findings of the study revealed that young individuals in Quthing preferred social media for election-related information. Out of the interviewed youth, 7 (58%) relied on social media for election information while just 1 (7.6%) used radio as a source. This was not surprising since Klar's

(2021) study also shows that younger generations are more likely to turn to social media for information than older generations. Klar's findings revealed that 45% of young individuals aged 15-24 consider social media their 'go-to' source for information, while only 17% of those aged 40 and above said the same. The fact that contrary to the old generation, young people are more inclined to use social media is also brought up by Abdulrahman (2018) who also discovered that the youth primarily depend on social media for information. The researcher administered questionnaires to 100 randomly selected youths from Shankaraghatta to assess the impact of social media on them. The participants were asked which media they use for general information, and the findings suggested that 63% of them rely on the internet, while television was 19%, followed by radio with 7% users.

In the previous chapter, it was mentioned that Quthing residents relied on political party rallies to gather information about the elections. According to Paget's research in 2023, political rallies are crucial for voter persuasion and mobilization in Sub-Saharan Africa, where media access is limited. The study argues that in Quthing, political rallies became an important tool for information since media availability is not as widespread as in other districts of Lesotho. Therefore, rallies were used fairly utilized among different age groups, with 25% of the youth, 20% of the middle-aged, and 15% of the elderly people. Research indicates that political campaign rallies are prevalent not only in African nations but also in Asian countries like India. In 2021, Menon and Goodman conducted a study that revealed that Indians prefer campaign rallies over other forms of political campaigning. This preference was clearly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic, as large crowds attended campaign rallies despite movement restrictions. These political campaigns involved numerous rallies with large crowds, with minimal social distancing and very little mask-wearing. This highlights the significance of campaign rallies to voters, as was the case with the participants in Quthing.

However, Peterside's (2023) cautions that in some instances such rallies have little to do with genuine belief in the candidate or the election message, and more to do with economic reasons. Peterside (ibid) cites situations where, in Nigeria, people, particularly young people, are being paid to attend rallies, while others attend simply to receive food due to the prevalence of poverty in that

country. Similarly, in Lesotho poverty is also widespread. This implies that the three age groups of participants in Quthing may have used campaign rallies in a fairly balanced manner due to the above-mentioned factors which influenced Nigerians to attend campaign rallies.

The findings of the study further pointed out the fact that peers are another source of election-related information that was mainly used by the youth. This can be attributed to the fact that young people often seek knowledge from their peers, as noted by Davis, Chilla, and Do (2022). Their research has shown that peers hold a significant influence on decision-making among teenagers and young adults. This is because teenagers and young adults have a strong desire to belong to a group of friends or peers. However, Darker (2016) argues that older people enjoy seeing the world from a younger perspective, which is why they tend to rely on young people for information. Sjjad (2019) shares a similar view, agreeing that while older people have more experience and skills, there are still many things that younger people can teach them. For instance, younger people are more familiar with new technology and digital devices, and they are better informed about current events and the latest fashion trends. These findings explain why the elderly in Quthing relied on the youth for information about the elections.

The findings of the current study presented in Chapter 3 suggested that residents of Quthing did not rely much on printed media for election information. The study argues that when it comes to print, the possibility is that most of the available newspapers around the country publish in mostly English and Sesotho which are not accessible to most residents of Quthing especially the minority language speakers. As a result, the majority of them do not buy these newspapers. Another possibility is that, as the Daily Monitor (2016) reports, reading is typically associated with school in African culture, and once someone finishes school, they may not prioritize reading. This might have been the case with the Quthing residents. However, a different view is held by NReadWrite (2021) who suggests that Africans do understand the importance of reading, but difficult circumstances such as poverty caused by poor political leadership can make it hard to find the time and motivation to read. It is argued that due to the high rate of unemployment which has led to poverty, it might be difficult for residents of Quthing to choose reading newspapers over buying basic needs such as food.

In addition to printed media, the findings further point out participants from Quthing showed less interest in attending IEC meetings as a source of information related to elections. As stated in the previous chapter, the IEC of Lesotho managed to recruit a few officials who are proficient in siXhosa but failed to find any who spoke Sephuthi. The research also indicated that some minority language speakers do not like communicating in Sesotho, which is the language usually used by IEC officials. This may have resulted in reluctance among minority language speakers to attend these meetings. It is a fact that education is best received through a language that one is familiar with. That is why UNESCO (2020) stresses the importance of education in one's mother tongue, which enhances the quality of learning and promotes inclusivity. There is a possibility that minority language speakers felt excluded during the meeting due to language barrier. According to Deignan (2022), teaching that is inclusive creates an open and welcoming environment, fosters a sense of belonging among learners, and encourages participation through active listening. Particularly to voter education, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2023) clearly stipulates that Elections Management Bodies (EMBs) should customize their voter education programs based on the needs of the community and the target audience to increase participation. The use of languages that are not accessible to minority language speakers in Quthing might have resulted in them feeling excluded from voter education programs and this could be a reason why most of them were not interested in attending IEC meetings.

4.2 Languages that were used in election-related information sources.

As explained in the previous chapter, it was crucial for the study to determine the languages that were used by the sources that were supposed to provide information related to the election processes. Data has revealed that the languages used during the 2022 elections in Quthing were Sesotho, English, siXhosa, and Sephuthi. However, the study also found that the majority of the election processes were conducted in Sesotho and English. Out of the 60 participants interviewed, 32 (53.3%) reported receiving information about the elections primarily in Sesotho. Additionally, 17 (28.3%) respondents received information in both Sesotho and English, while 3 (5%)

participants received it in siXhosa as well. The data further indicated that only 4 (13.3%) participants had access to election-related information exclusively in siXhosa or Sephuthi.

The results above indicate that in the 2022 Lesotho national elections, the use of both Sesotho and English dominated that of minority languages. Specifically, data reveals that only 13.3% of minority language speakers received information related to elections through their own languages. The issue of the marginalisation of minority languages is not peculiar to Lesotho. When addressing the same issue, Solway (2002) notes that in several African countries, these languages are often excluded from significant democratic activities, such as elections. In his study on the current growth of minority struggles in Botswana, he discovered that the elections that led to Botswana's independence were more democratic than the current elections in the sovereign country. This was because, during pre-elections, the colonial masters took into account the various languages spoken in Botswana and made preparations for the elections accordingly. According to this study, during the mentioned elections, materials were available in Setswana, Ikalanga, Otjiherero, including English, and Afrikaans, which were the colonial languages. However, after independence, government affairs, education, and official media were limited to English as an official language and Setswana as a national language, leading to discrimination against minority language speakers in election activities up until today.

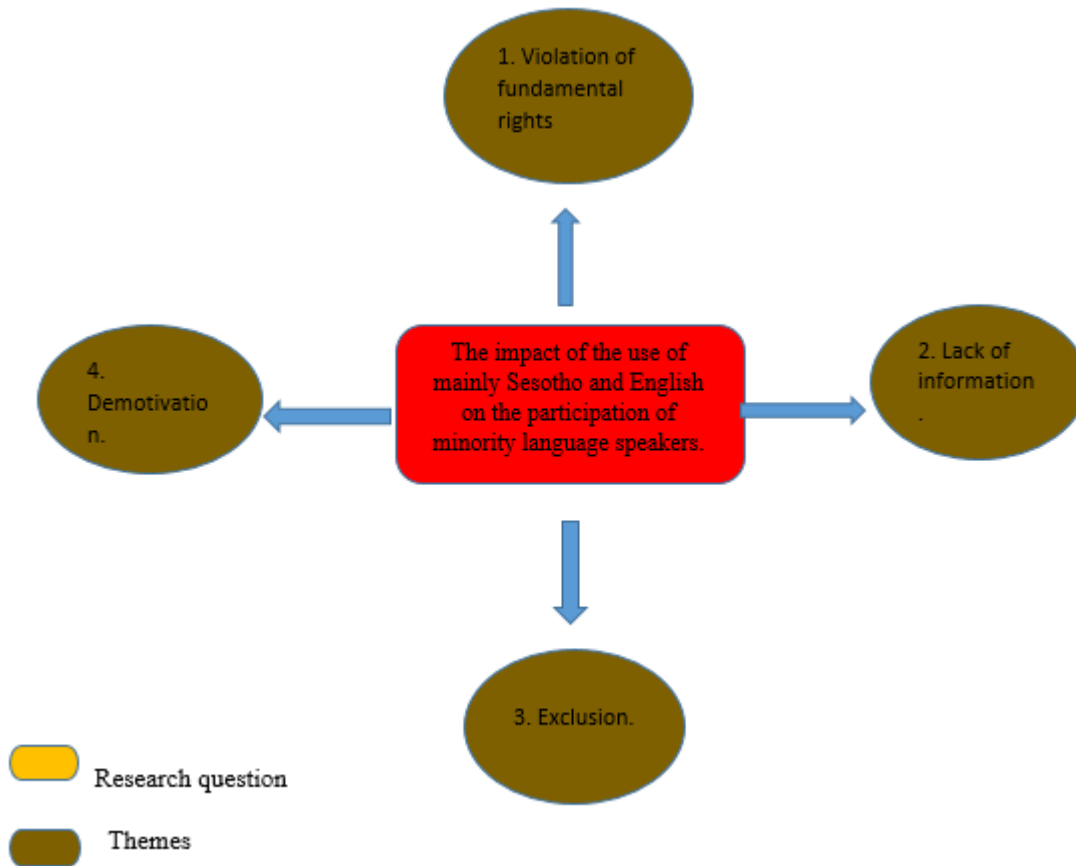
The findings of the current study align with those of Solway's (ibid). As shown earlier, during the previous year's elections in Quthing, minority languages were hardly used. This made it difficult for them to participate fully and as a result, they were deprived of complete access to democracy. Scholars such as Chanchai (2015) and Charlotte (2022) caution that democracy cannot exist without elections. Adding to this, Matlosa (2005) identified the two primary functions of elections, which are to increase citizens' involvement in the governance process and to form a parliament that accurately represents the country's political stakeholders. The study argues that the 2022 national elections failed to enhance the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing. As a result, the current parliament does not accurately represent the aspirations of all multilingual stakeholders.

Although some African countries still discriminate against minority languages, as discussed earlier, the African region has reinforced the recognition of multilingualism and its implementation in various charters and conventions, such as the Harare declaration (1997). One of its provisions states that "In a broader term, Africa acknowledges its ethnolinguistic pluralism and accepts this as a normal way of life and as a resource for development and progress" (Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, 1997). South Africa, one of the African countries, has taken a step toward the above-mentioned provision by making 11 African languages official after marginalizing them for decades during the apartheid era (Bostock, 2018). Drawing from the Critical Theory, this act was relatively democratic, as it reinforced equal participation in the country's activities, including elections. However, this was not the case for participants from Quthing who encountered problems due to the language barrier, hindering their effective participation in last year's elections.

4.3 The impact of the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 national elections on the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing.

One of the questions that this study intended to interrogate was the impact that the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 Lesotho national elections had on minority language speakers in Quthing. The participants were, therefore asked, 'Did the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 national elections have any impact on your participation?' From the responses, four themes were identified and they are displayed in the figure below.

Figure 4: Themes



4.3.1 Violation of fundamental rights and freedoms.

As mentioned above, the participants were asked how the usage of mainly Sesotho and English in the 2022 Lesotho general elections affected their participation. One of the arguments they advanced was that it went against their constitutional rights and freedoms. Some of their responses included:

Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa feela nakong ea likhetho e ile ea re amoha tokelo ea bolokolohi ba puo e kollang ho molao oa motheo oa naha. ‘The use of only Sesotho and English during the elections deprived us of the right to use languages of our choice as enshrined in the Constitution of Lesotho’.

Batho ba bang ba buoang puo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho 'me ba hloloa ho itlhalosa ka Sesotho le Sekhooa hantle, ba ile ba ikhethela ho se kene likhethong kaha ba lumela hore ho se tsebe ho sebelisa lipuo tsena tse peli hantle ho ka ba sitisa ho etsa khetho ea bona ka bolokolohi. 'Some individuals who are minority language speakers who cannot express themselves in both Sesotho and English chose not to participate in the elections since they believed that this might affect their freedom to vote'.

It is clear from the above utterances that minority language speakers in Quthing were unhappy with the use of mostly English and Sesotho during the 2022 Lesotho national elections. The participants reiterated the fact that the exclusion of their mother tongues not only deprived them of the opportunity to exercise their freedom to vote but also went against their right to use the languages of their choice as enshrined in the Constitution of Lesotho.

The fact that elections are part and parcel of democracy cannot be over-emphasized. Matlosa (2015), advances two core values of democracy. The first one is that democracy fosters an environment that protects and advocates for civil liberties and political rights. In his view, a democratic government should respect and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms, which in the case of Lesotho, are enshrined in Section 4(1) of the Constitution. However, as the findings of the current study revealed, the minority language speakers in Quthing did not enjoy their linguistic rights, which form part of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is the result of such findings that the United Nations Human Rights (2023) warns that nations should prohibit discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, in order to effectively respect and protect fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Constitution of Lesotho still has discriminatory provisions such as Section 3(1), making it challenging for minority language speakers to feel included in Lesotho's democratic rule.

The second core value of democracy that Matlosa (ibid) suggests is that it has practical value in safeguarding and advancing socio-cultural and economic rights, which are essential for people and communities to lead a dignified life. These rights comprise access to adequate food, housing,

healthcare, education, cultural identity, social security, employment, water, and sanitation, as outlined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. The results of the current research discovered that due to the language barrier, some minority language speakers in Quthing are unable to fully participate in the election processes where they could effectively express their views and communicate their basic human needs to the politicians who are entrusted with the management of the country's resources. This is despite the fact that access to freedom of expression is enshrined in Section 14(1) of the Constitution. According to this Section:

Every person shall be entitled to, and (except with his own consent) shall not be hindered in his enjoyment of, freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to communicate ideas and information without interference (whether the communication be to the public generally or to any person or class of persons) and freedom from interference with his correspondence. (Page, 18)

The consequences of this unfortunate situation are that their feelings, opinions and views remain unknown and their basic needs unattended to. As Mudau (2023) correctly argues, true freedom of expression cannot exist if people are not allowed to use their preferred language.

It should be noted that discrimination against minority groups is not a problem only in Africa but also in Europe, as highlighted by researchers Frouville and Callejon (2019). They make it clear that despite laws such as Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which aim to safeguard the rights of minority groups, discrimination still persists in Europe. Reiterating the views already advanced by other scholars in this study, they also emphasize that discrimination against minority language speakers hinders their participation in elections.

4.3.2 Lack of access to information.

According to the participants, the other impact that the use of mainly Sesotho and English had on their participation in the 2022 Lesotho national elections was that they had no access to the election information and as a result they felt they knew nothing about the whole process. Their responses included the following:

Ba bang ba rona ha ba atleha ho fumana le ho utloisisa hantle litaba tsa likhetho joaloka thuto e fuoang bakhethi le litaba tsa boiketo ba bapolotiki mme sena se entse hore re khethe re se na tsebo e phethahetseng ka lipolotiki le likhetho. ‘Some of us were not able to access and understand well election processes such as the education provided to people who were going to elect and information on political candidates and this made us go to the polling stations without adequate knowledge on politics and elections’.

Ba sa utloisiseng Sesotho le Sekhooa hantle ba ne ba sitoa ho ikakhela ka setotsoana lipolotiking kaha ba hloloa ho latela le hona ho utloisisa likhang tsa lipolotiki ka botlalo. ‘Those who did not fully understand Sesotho and English were not able to get involved in politics fully because they were unable to follow and understand political debates fully’.

The above responses indicate that some participants failed to participate in the 2022 Lesotho national elections because they felt they had very little information related to this auspicious occasion. Here again, this was because information related to the elections was provided mainly in Sesotho and English. It is possible that even those who voted did so with limited knowledge of political parties and candidates, and party manifestos. This aligns with Malada’s (2015) study which stressed the importance of accessible information during elections. He argued that while voting appears simple with a tick or X, it requires sound decision-making skills. In his view, access to information influences the decisions one makes during the voting process.

The problem of inaccessible election information is not only present in African countries such as Lesotho and South Africa but also in Western countries including the U.S. According to Fowler and Margolis (2013), America also lacks behind in a democratic informed electorate. In their view,

this lack of information results in Americans not being aware of the positions of major political parties on key issues. These scholars argue that this problem of uninformed voters may be the reason why under-represented groups like ethnic minorities may not vote. They further point out that even if these groups do vote, their choices may not reflect their true preferences as they may not have access to information about candidates and parties.

4.3.3 Exclusion.

Another issue that minority language speakers raised is that the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 Lesotho national elections made them feel excluded from the process. Below are some of the responses they gave:

Rona ba buoang lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha, re ikutloa eka ha re na tokelo liolotiking tsa Lesotho hoba ha li re kenyeletse. 'As speakers of minority languages in the country, we feel like we have no right in the country's politics since we are not included'.

Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa boitokisetsong ba likhetho, ka letsatsi la likhetho le kamorao ho likhetho, e ile ea etsa hore re hloke thahasello ea ho nka karolo lipolotiking ka ha re utloa eka ha re karolo ea puso ea sechaba-ka-sechaba naheng ea Lesotho. 'The use of Sesotho and English during the preparation of elections, during the elections, and during the post-election processes discouraged us from taking part in the political affairs as we felt like we are not part of the democratic government of Lesotho'.

Lesotho is home to various ethnic groups as explained in Chapter 2. However, Section 6(1) of the National Assembly Electoral Act 2011 only recognizes Sesotho and English, which leaves out minority languages spoken in areas like Quthing. This section requires that an application to be registered as an elector must only be filled out in Sesotho or English. Unfortunately, this has hindered minority language speakers from enjoying their right to participate in their country's

democracy which is enshrined under Section 20 of the national Constitution. The importance of the use of accessible language during the election is emphasized by Spelmans (2023), who calls for election laws that are inclusive of diverse societies. As an example, he cited the case of Mr. Mestan, a Bulgarian citizen of Turkish origin and the leader of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms Party. Mr. Mestan was fined for speaking in Turkish during a campaign event because the Bulgarian Electoral Code prohibits the use of any language other than Bulgarian during election campaigns. Mr. Mestan argued that the language prohibition was a violation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Data for the current study also revealed that minority languages are not included in elections, as the National Assembly Electoral Act 2011 only recognizes Sesotho and English for use in elections. This means that speakers of minority languages are unable to fully exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms, as protected under Section 4(1) of the Constitution.

4.3.4 Demotivation.

Additionally, when the minority language speakers were asked about the impact of the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 Lesotho national elections, others reported that it demotivated them. In their own words they mentioned:

Boholo ba rona ba buoang lipuo tse buuoang ke palo a fokolang ea batho re sitoa ho hlalosa ka botlalo litlhoko tsa rona nakong ea boitukisetso ba likhetho, ka letsatsi la likhetho le kamorao ho tsona, mme sena se fokolisitse tjantjello ea rona ea hore kamoso re ka ikamahanya le taba tsa lipolotiki. nka karolo lipolotiking. ‘Many of us who speak minority languages struggle to express our needs adequately during the pre-elections phase, during the elections and post elections and this has demotivated us from participating in politics in future.’

Ba sa utloisiseng Sesotho le Sekhooa hantle ba sitiloe ho ikakhela ka setotsoana lipolotiking kaha ba ne ba hloloa ho latela le hona ho utloisisa likhang tsa lipolotiki ka botlalo. ‘Those who did not fully understand Sesotho and English were not able to participate in politics because they were unable to follow and understand political debates fully’.

In the previous chapter, it was noted that minority language speakers in Quthing face challenges when it comes to speaking Sesotho for various reasons. Some dislike the language, while others were not allowed to learn it by their parents when they were young. This negative attitude towards Sesotho resulted in a lack of motivation among some individuals to participate in the 2022 national elections where Sesotho was one of the main languages used. A study by Rantzau in 2018 also found that the language barrier has become a significant obstacle for non-English speakers to register to vote in the United Kingdom. This has caused difficulties for these individuals to exercise their democratic rights, leading to discouragement from participating in democracy. Rantzau's study revealed that the process of registering to vote can be complex and time-consuming, especially for those who are not fluent in English. According to this scholar, this has resulted in many people being discouraged from registering and casting their votes. It is not surprising, therefore, that minority language speakers in Quthing also felt discouraged from taking part in election processes due to the dominant use of Sesotho.

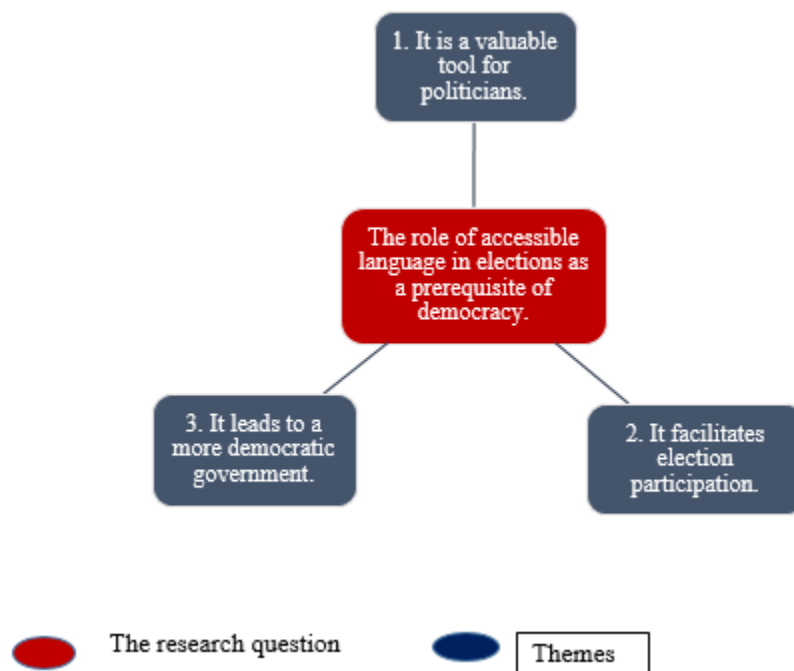
Kern (2022) is another scholar who has appreciated the significance of incorporating minority languages in election processes. He believes that every eligible citizen has the fundamental right to equal access to voting. In his view, in order to ensure that all eligible voters are well-informed, confident, and able to vote on crucial issues in their communities, it is essential to increase the availability of voting materials in different languages. He points out that failure to provide translated voting materials can create a barrier to participation and discourage people from taking part in elections, as was experienced by the participants in Quthing during the 2022 national elections.

Data analyzed in the preceding paragraphs indicates that using mainly Sesotho and English in last year's elections impeded the involvement of many minority language speakers. Therefore, as the researcher, I felt that it was crucial to establish what, in their view, is the significance of an accessible language in elections.

4.4 The role of accessible language in elections as a prerequisite of democracy.

Data analyzed in the preceding paragraphs indicates that using mainly Sesotho and English in the 2022 Lesotho national elections impeded the involvement of many minority language speakers. Therefore, as the researcher, I felt that it was crucial to establish what, in their view, is the significance of an accessible language in elections. The question was posed not only to Quthing residents but also to IEC officials who oversee elections in Lesotho. Upon analyzing the participants' responses, three themes were identified. They are: (i) accessible language is a useful tool for politicians, (ii) It encourages voter participation and (iii) It leads to a more democratic government. The themes are displayed in the Figure 4 below:

Figure: 5



4.4.1 Accessible language is a valuable tool for politicians.

As indicated above, one of the themes that emerged from the participants' responses when they were asked about the importance of accessible language in elections was that it is a valuable tool for politicians. Below are some of their exact words:

Ha mopolotiki a sebelisa puo eo a e tsebang hantle ka nako ea likhetho, ho mo thusa ho rapalatsa maano a mokha oa hae ho bakhethi ka puo e manoni e hlakileng mme seo se ka etsa hore batho ba bangata ba khahloe ke seo a se bolelang. ‘When a politician uses a language that he/she knows well, that is rich, this helps him/her to communicate party manifestos clearly and this makes many people to be attracted to what he/she is saying.’

Ha mopolotiki a tseba puo hantle ka botlalo, a ka e sebelisa ho etsesa mokha oa hae lepetjo le lebitso le khahlang bakhethi. ‘If a politician is proficient in a language, he/she can use it to coin a catchy name and slogans that attract voters’.

Ke ne ke rata lipolotiki haholo hoba ke na le takatso ea ho ba e mong oa baetapele mo0kheng oaka komiting ea lebatooa, empa ho se tsebe ho itlhalosa hantle ka Sesotho hoa etsa hore ke sitoe ho kholisa litho tse ling tsa mokha hore li nkhethe. ‘I was passionate about politics a lot because I aspired to be a leader in my party's constituency committee. However, due to my inability to express myself clearly in Sesotho, I failed to convince other party members to elect me’.

During the election processes, communication is crucial and as Bhasin (2020) and Alieva (2021), there can be no communication without accessible language. In this regard, the findings of the current study revealed that participants in Quthing understand that an accessible language is important in politics, for both the politicians and voters, as shown by the above responses. Akram and Iqbal (2020) also agree that language is essential in politics and that it is impossible to participate without it, as demonstrated by the Quthing participants who were unable to engage effectively due to the language barrier. According to Lindberg (2006), equal participation is a fundamental aspect of democracy as it is necessary for self-government and the sovereignty of the people. In order for a political system to be considered democratic, it must legally allow for political participation that is based on equal distribution of power and provide equal opportunities for all citizens to exercise their political freedoms. The findings of this study reveal that this was not the case with minority language speakers whose linguistic rights were compromised and this deprived them of the opportunity to exercise their right to vote in the 2022 Lesotho national elections.

4.4.2 Accessible language facilitates election participation.

Another theme that emerged from participants' responses when asked about the importance of accessible language in elections was that it enables participation in the elections. Some of their responses are as follows:

Tšebeliso ea puo e utloisoang ke batho bohle nakong ea likhetho e nolofalletsa batho ba bangata ho feta methati eohle eo ba lokelang ho feta ka katleho nakong ea boitukisetso ba likhetho, ka letsatsi la likhetho le kamorao ho likhetho. 'The use of a language that is accessible to everyone during elections makes it easy for many people to go through all processes which they have to go through in the pre-elections, during the elections and in the post-election processes effectively'.

Ha batho bohle ba utloisisa puo e sebelisoang ka nako ea likhetho, ba nang le tokelo ea ho khetha ba ka ikakhele ka setotsoana likhethong kaha ba tla be utloisisa hantle likhang tsa lipolotiki le ho kena ho tsona ka katleho. 'If every person clearly understands the language used during elections, eligible voters may be encouraged to participate in the electoral process since they would understand arguments in politics and effectively participate in their discussions'.

Batho ha ba utloisisa puo hantle e sebelisoang likhethong, komisi e ka tseba ho fihlela boholo ba sechaba ka thuto e fuoang bakhethi ka litsi tsohle tse fetisang melaetsa joaloka li-ea-le-moea, se-ea-le-moea-pono, likoranta, marang-rang le likopano tseo Komisi e li tšoarang ho ruta batho ka likhetho. Sena se ka thusa ho phahamisa palo ea bakhethi kaha boholo ba sechaba bo tla be bo na le tsebo ka likhetho. 'When people understand well the language used during elections, the Commission may be able to reach the majority of citizens through voter education provided through various media platforms such as radio, television, internet, newspapers and face-to-face meetings. This could enhance voter turnout since more people will be aware of elections '.

As previously indicated, Section 6(1) of the National Assembly Electoral Act of 2011 requires individuals to fill in a registration form written in either Sesotho or English. The use of this form excludes a large number of minority language speakers, such as Xhosas and Baphuthi in Quthing, who do not fully understand these languages. It is, therefore, not surprising that the findings

indicate that a large number of people who did not vote last year are minority language speakers, and they cited the language barrier as the main reason. Based on Critical Theory, the exclusion of minority languages in registration forms promotes inequality. This is due to the fact that filling out the form would be simpler for native Sesotho speakers but would prove challenging for individuals who speak minority languages. This would then result in minority language speakers feeling discouraged from registering to vote.

A different situation obtains in the United States of America which acknowledges the significance of language accessibility during elections. As per the Advancing Justice Report of 2014, federal law Section 203 mandates the provision of assistance in languages spoken by ethnic groups such as Latino, Asian American, American Indian, and Alaska Native communities. This report highlights the positive impact of this law on minority language speakers' participation in elections, and it aligns with the current study's finding that accessible language can enhance election participation. The officials of the IEC also agree that accessible language can aid their office in reaching all segments of society for voter education. This, in turn, can encourage more people to participate in elections, thereby increasing voter turnout. A similar observation is made by Murthy (2023) who argues that the fact that in New York City, people are expected to fill out voter registration forms in English, has resulted in minority language speakers facing difficulties while attempting to vote. This scholar also acknowledges that the lack of accessible language is a major hindrance for such voters, leading to their low participation in the elections. That is why Malada (2015) also emphasizes the significance of voter participation in elections, arguing that, while the absence of violence and transparency in the process is essential for free and fair elections, it is the involvement of the electorate that gives an election credibility.

Data has revealed that IEC officials appreciate the importance of accessible language during the election process. However, the challenge that they are confronted with is the scarcity of officials who are fluent in minority languages spoken in Quthing. One of them stated:

Nakong ea likhetho ha komisi e hira batho ba tla sebetsa literekeng tseo ho nang le lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho joaloka Quthing, e sheba haholo batho ba nang le tsebo ea lipuo tse joalo. Le ha ho le joalo, komisi e fumana lenane le fokolang feela la batho ba nang le tsebo ea lipuo tsena ebile e le ba buoang siXhosa feela. Ha ele ba buoang Sephuthi bona IEC ha e atlehe ho ba fumana. ‘During the elections period, when the Commission hires people who would work in districts that have minority language speakers, such as Quthing, it looks for people who know these languages. However, the Commission is able to find only a few people who know these languages and it is mostly those who speak siXhosa. Until today, the Commission has not been able to find candidates that speak Sephuthi’.

On the basis of the above response, it is clear that the absence of candidates who are fluent in minority languages has led to IEC’s failure to effectively deliver voter education in places like Quthing where they are found in large numbers. Consequently, this has negatively affected their efforts to produce fair and transparent elections. This is depicted in utterances such as the one below:

Ha batho bohle ba utloisisa puo e sebelisoang ka nako ea likhetho, Komisi e ka tseba ho fihlela sepheo sa eona se seholo sa ho tsoara likhetho tse lokolohileng tse nang le ponaletso. ‘If everyone understands the language used during elections, the Commission can be able to achieve its main goal of holding free and transparent elections’.

The above utterance draws support from the 1994 Inter-Parliamentary Council (IPC) which acknowledges and endorses fundamental principles for periodic, free, and fair elections. These principles are identified as:

The right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country directly or indirectly, through freely chosen representatives, to vote in such elections by secret ballot, to have an equal opportunity to become a candidate for election, and to put forward his or her political views, individually or in association with others. (Inter-Parliamentary Council 1994).

As already mentioned, from the IEC official's response, it is clear that the IEC of Lesotho is committed to upholding the above IPC principles of conducting regular, unbiased, and transparent elections. However, the language barrier in multicultural districts such as Quthing has posed a significant challenge to ensuring fair and equal participation of all citizens.

4.4.3 Accessible language leads to a more democratic government.

The last theme that was picked up from the responses of the participants on the role of accessible language in elections is that it leads to a more democratic government. The following are some of their words:

Puo e utloisoang hantle ke batho bohle nakong ea likhetho, e thusa hore batho ba utloisise ka botlalo mehoo ea mekha ea lipolotiki mme ba tsebe ho khetha ba ipapisitse le mehoo ea mekha ka ho fapana. 'Accessible language to everyone can help people to understand political parties' manifestos well and enable them to vote on the basis of these different manifestos'.

Puo e utloisoang hantle ke bakhethi ka nako ea likhetho e thusa bakhethi ba joalo ho tekela bapolotiki litlhoko tsa bona ka katleho le ho nolofalloa ke ho ba botsa ha ba se ba sa phethahatsa tseo ba neng ba tšepisitse ho li etsa. 'Using language that everyone understands during elections enables people to express their needs clearly and also makes it easy for them to hold politicians accountable when they fail to fulfill the promises they made during campaigns'.

Democratic governance, as defined by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in 2021, refers to institutions that uphold democratic principles such as transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in decision-making. It also means upholding the rule of law and treating all individuals equally. The ultimate goal of democratic governance is to create a fair and just society that is inclusive and respectful of all citizens' voices. In the case of minority language speakers in Quthing, democratic governance would have entailed, among other key issues, the use of language that is accessible to them.

According to the National Democratic Institute (2013), transparency is also essential to credible elections. This means that every stage of the election process must be open to examination by relevant parties who can ensure that procedures are being followed and that no abnormalities have taken place. Providing transparency in an election establishes trust and confidence in the process, as voters can verify that the outcomes accurately reflect the people's will. Therefore, including minority languages in electoral processes, as suggested by participants in Quthing, would have enabled speakers of these languages to effectively examine all electoral stages, which would have ultimately increased their trust in the democracy of Lesotho.

Adding to this discussion, Jelmin (2012) emphasizes the importance of accountability in ensuring transparency and responsible conduct in democratic governance. Specifically, Jelmin explains that in representative democracies, citizens hold elected officials accountable through the electoral process, known as vertical accountability. This is achieved through voting, which allows citizens to reward or punish elected representatives based on their performance in office. The study argues that minority language speakers in Quthing were unable to effectively evaluate the performance of officials involved in the 2022 Lesotho national elections due to the language barrier. This emphasizes the fact that accessible language in elections is necessary to produce a government that reflects the true will of the people. Similarly, Malada (2015) emphasizes the importance of participation as another principle of democratic governance stating that participating in an election is more than just casting a ballot. It is about citizens understanding the importance of voting and making informed choices, even if those choices are subjective. Therefore, voter education is crucial in helping people participate effectively in democratic processes. The IEC participant shared a similar view as stated below:

Thuto e fuoang bakhethi ha e fihletse likarolo tsohle tsa sechaba, boholo ba batho bo tla ba le tjantjello ka likhetho mme bo tla ithuta ka baiketi mabatoaeng a bona, mekha eo ba tsoang ho eona le tseo ba tšepisang ho li etsetsa baahi ha ba ka ba khetha ho ba emela thung ea bakhethoa.
'If voter education reaches all citizens across the country, more people will be interested in election issues and be encouraged to find information about eligible candidates, their political parties, and what they promise to do for the citizens if elected as representatives in parliament'.

Unfortunately, minority language speakers in Quthing were not given sufficient voter education because of the language barrier. This made it difficult for them to express their needs and learn about political parties, candidates, and the election process. As a result, their choices may not reflect their true preferences, as Margolis (2013) pointed out. Additionally, their freedom of expression, which is protected under Section 14(1) of the Constitution of Lesotho, was also compromised. This situation goes against the principles of democratic governance, as stated by IDEA (2021).

Contributing to the above discussion, Pacific University (2022) states that being an informed voter is as crucial as casting a vote itself. It ensures that people make informed decisions that impact the community as a whole. The decisions made at the polls have a direct effect on voters' lives and the lives of others. To make informed choices, voters must educate themselves on the candidates' positions on various issues by consulting different sources of information, such as news outlets and social media platforms. They should also attend or review candidates' debates and forums (Jennings, 2023). However, during the 2022 elections, minority language speakers in Quthing were unable to educate themselves about the elections as election-related information sources barely utilized minority languages. Consequently, their votes were not “a free expression of the will of the electors” as stated in Article 25 (b) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, data was analyzed and discussed in relation to the three main research questions, mentioned earlier. The findings revealed that during the 2022 election process, Sesotho was the primary language used to disseminate information, despite the presence of minority language speakers in Quthing who did not fully understand the language. This had a negative impact on the participation of minority language speakers, as many refrained from voting, while others voted with little information about the elections. Additionally, some individuals were unable to contest elections due to their inability to speak Sesotho fluently. The analysis highlighted the importance of accessible language in politics, as it is essential for both politicians and v

CHAPTER 5

5.0 Introduction.

The previous chapter analyzed data on how the use of mainly Sesotho in the 2022 Lesotho national elections impacted the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing. This chapter serves to summarize the study by recapping the main points covered in each chapter. The chapter also provides recommendations and suggestions for future research based on the findings.

5.1 Summary of the study.

Chapter one dealt with the introduction of the study, statement of the problem, background to the study, research aim, research questions, hypothesis and the significance of the study. This chapter also discussed the literature review and theoretical framework upon which the study is grounded. It further outlined the methodology that the study adopted and the organization of the study.

Chapter two explores the Basotho nation's history, from its founding and highlights the existence of minority languages in Quthing. It revealed that Moshoeshoe I brought together various Bantu-speaking people who had fled their homelands due to conflict, forming the nation now known as Basotho. The chapter further showed that despite this unification, some of these ethnic groups retained their customs and culture, resulting in Lesotho being home to a diverse range of ethnic groups in different regions, including Quthing. The information presented in this chapter reaffirms the fact that Quthing is home to different ethnic groups such as Basotho, Baphuti and Xhosas.

Chapter three presented data collected qualitatively from the respondents on the impact of using mainly Sesotho and English in the 2022 Lesotho national elections on the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing. The study engaged 60 participants. Data for this study was analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that out of these 60 participants, 40 of them voted in the 2022

Lesotho national elections while the remaining 20 did not. These 20 were made up of 14 minority language speakers and 6 Basotho. This means that a significant number of those who did not vote were minority language speakers, making up 70% of non-voters as opposed to 30% of Basotho. The majority of minority language speakers who did not vote cited the language barrier as the main hindrance to their participation. Many of them did not fully understand Sesotho, which was one of the main languages used during the elections, while others understood it but preferred not to communicate in it. Ultimately, they ended up not voting because it required that they use Sesotho. In contrast, Basotho who did not vote cited politicians' unfaithfulness as the main reason they did not cast their votes. They indicated that politicians often make promises they fail to fulfill once elected. The findings further revealed that those participants who did vote, both Basotho and minority language speakers, did so because they needed service delivery, which the incumbent politicians had failed to deliver. These participants reported that they were hopeful that these new candidates would fulfill their promises and provide basic services. Others reported that they participated in these elections to exercise their right to vote, protected under Section 20 of the Constitution of Lesotho. The behaviour of Quthing residents regarding elections, especially whether to participate or not and reasons for doing so, is influenced by the Sociological, Psychosocial, and Rational Choice models of voting behaviour.

Although the issue of language barrier was one of the main reasons why minority language speakers did not vote during the 2022 Lesotho national elections, one of the critical points that the study picked up in Quthing is the negative attitude of some minority language speakers towards Sesotho. As indicated in Chapter Two, certain villages in Quthing are home to a significant number of minority language speakers. For example, Daliwe is where the Baphuthi people reside, and Sixondo is where we found Xhosa speakers. In these areas, people use their native language for everyday communication, which can explain why some of them struggle to understand Sesotho, which is not their primary language. It is commendable when speakers of a language are proud of their language and proudly use it every day. But this does not mean that this should be to a total exclusion of other languages that are found in their communities. However, the findings of the current study revealed that in some areas of Quthing some members of the community abhorred Sesotho and this led to their incompetence in this language. For instance, some of the participants

reported that growing up, they were prohibited from communicating in Sesotho as their parents feared they may forget their mother tongue. This attitude was against Euton's (2011) declaration that to effectively learn a second language, one needs to practice communication skills with native speakers to gain a better understanding of the language and its nuances. Denying their children an opportunity to learn Sesotho at an early age had negative repercussions on the minority language speakers as they ended up not being able to participate in the 2022 Lesotho national elections due to the use of mainly Sesotho. As Galatro (2022) suggests, exposing children to a language at an early age can be beneficial, as the critical period for language acquisition starts at two years old and ends during puberty. A similar observation is made by Lenneberg (1967) who reiterates that if a child does not learn a language during this period, they may have difficulty acquiring it effectively later on, as the neural foundation for language has been permanently damaged.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, one of the primary concerns addressed by the current study was to find out the languages used during the 2022 national elections in Quthing, a multicultural district. The study revealed that out of 60 participants, 32 (53.3%) reported that they received election-related information mainly in Sesotho. 17 (28.3%) participants received information in both Sesotho and English, and 3 (5%) participants received information in Sesotho, English, and isiXhosa. Data also revealed that 4 participants only had access to election-related sources in isiXhosa or Sephuthi. The chapter also established that Quthing residents received education about elections from various sources such as radio, social media, peers, children, printed media, IEC meetings and political party rallies. Sesotho was the main language used in all the above sources of election-related information except for peers and children. This indicates that minority language speakers had limited opportunities to adequately communicate about election aspirations using their native languages, except when they spoke with their peers and children and minimally in IEC meetings. This weakened the strengths of those who were interested in contesting for elections. The described situation was evidenced by one participant who failed to convince members of his party to elect him as a member of the constituency committee due to his lack of proficiency in Sesotho, the language used during elections. As it has been clarified in Chapter Three, politicians who are proficient in the language they use can skillfully craft catchy names and persuasive slogans for their political party. This viewpoint is supported by Malaba (2020), who stresses the value of

fluency in language in politics and the need for politicians to possess language proficiency to effectively persuade voters to support their ideas and values. Malaba (ibid) clarifies further that successful persuasion involves the use of logos, ethos, and pathos, essential devices of persuasion that politicians must be capable of employing. These are the techniques that worked for David Cameron who effectively used logos in his speech to convince the Scottish to vote against Scotland's separation from the United Kingdom (Zhiyong, 2016). Logos is a persuasive device that involves citing facts, statistics, and analogies to provide evidence and reasoning to support one's ideas (Malaba, 2020). Cameron utilized this technique by highlighting the potential negative consequences of separation, such as a new currency, economic downturn, reduced pensions and separated families. Ultimately, his logical reasoning succeeded in persuading the Scottish to vote 'No'. Unfortunately, individuals in Quthing who speak minority languages were unable to use such techniques because of their limited proficiency in Sesotho.

The study concludes that the language barrier hampered minority language speakers' full access to fundamental human rights and freedoms including freedom of expression and a right to participate in government outlined by Section 4(1) of the Constitution. They were denied access to freedom of expression since their native languages were not adequately used during the national elections. This argument is supported by the fact that the freedom to speak one's native language is a fundamental human right, as stated in Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966. According to this Article:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right in community with the members of their group to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and use their own language. (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, UN General Assembly, 16 December 1966)

According to Mudau (2023), true freedom of expression cannot be achieved if people are not allowed to use the language they prefer. The right to participate in government is outlined in Section 20(1) of the Constitution of Lesotho. Under this Section, every citizen of Lesotho has the

right to vote or run for election through a fair and equal suffrage system, including a secret ballot. According to the findings, some individuals who speak minority languages were hesitant to bring language assistants with them to the voting booths because they were afraid that their choice would not remain confidential. Others chose not to vote altogether, and one of the reasons for this was that they avoided activities that required them to communicate in Sesotho, as they disliked using the language. Additionally, some minority language speakers cast their votes with little knowledge about the elections because the use of Sesotho made information about the elections difficult to access. Incompetence in Sesotho also resulted in some people failing to persuade other members of their party to elect them to certain leadership positions within the party. Furthermore, the language barrier hindered minority language speakers from effectively communicating their needs to politicians who manage the resources of the country, which resulted in the needs of these communities being unaddressed. As Edigheji (2020) points out, people seek democracy because they want a better quality of life and well-being. Therefore, the study argues that the main use of Sesotho in Lesotho's 2022 national elections had a negative impact on the participation of minority language speakers in Quthing. Critical Theory asserts that denying minority language speaker's full access to his or her fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression and the right to participate in government through an equal suffrage system, contradicts the principles of democracy. As a result, it is important to implement changes to address this issue.

5.2 Recommendations.

Based on the analysis of the research, the following recommendations are being proposed.

5.2.1 Reformation of the laws that monitor the elections in Lesotho.

The study suggests that the Constitution of Lesotho under Section 3(1) which currently recognizes only Sesotho and English as official languages, be reformed. The reformation should include all indigenous languages in Lesotho. This will allow for changes to be made to other laws such as Section 6(1) of the National Assembly Electoral Act 2011. Presently, this act only permits citizens to register to vote using the form written in Sesotho or English. Such a reform would guarantee

that all citizens, regardless of their language background, have equal access to participate in Lesotho's elections. This would encourage more people to participate in the election process. Rantzau's (2018) study also highlights the importance of including minority languages in the election processes. His study revealed that the language barrier has hindered non-English speakers from registering to vote in the United Kingdom. According to the researcher, registering to vote can be a complex and time-consuming process, especially for those who are not fluent in English. This leads to discouragement from participating in elections.

Furthermore, Lindberg (2006) shows that in order for a political system to be considered democratic, it must legally allow for political participation that is based on equal distribution of power and provide equal opportunities for all citizens to exercise their political freedoms. This distribution of power should include the use of languages that are accessible to all citizens. The findings of this study reveal that this was not the case with minority language speakers whose linguistic rights were compromised and this deprived them of the opportunity to exercise their right to vote in the 2022 Lesotho national elections. Therefore, the study supports Lindberg's argument that all individuals should be treated as equals when it comes to political rights and freedoms to allow everyone to contribute to the decisions that affect them.

5.2.2 The government should invest in linguistically accessible elections.

To promote inclusivity and fairness in the electoral process, it is recommended that the Lesotho government allocate resources towards facilitating elections that cater to all indigenous languages. This would involve providing language lessons to IEC officials in minority languages and hiring more officials who speak these languages. Additionally, election materials such as registration forms and ballots should be made available in all indigenous languages. Voter education should also be conducted in various media platforms, political rallies, and meetings with stakeholders in different indigenous languages. This would ensure that minority language speakers have equal access to the electoral process. By implementing these measures, the language barrier can be

overcome, and the inclusivity and fairness of the electoral process can be improved for all individuals.

5.2.3 Improving the representation of minority language speakers in parliament.

In order to increase the participation of minority language speakers in elections, it would be beneficial for the government to ensure their representation in Lesotho's parliament. One potential solution could be implementing a similar system to the gender quota system already in place for local and national legislative structures. According to 'Nyane and Rakolobe (2021), this system mandates a 30% gender quota for local council elections where 30% of all single-member electoral districts are randomly reserved for women. A zebra list for national elections ensures that names on a political party's list for proportional representation in the National Assembly are alternated between men and women. A special electoral provision the government could adopt is to have at least one seat reserved in the community council and parliament for minority language speakers. To qualify for these seats, the chosen representative must receive a certain number of votes from their own ethnic group.

5.2.4 Basotho should also learn minority languages available in the country.

It is recommended that Basotho learn minority languages in order to promote inclusivity and reduce the exclusion of those who speak minority languages. This will also enable them to access essential services and opportunities, including full participation in political activities including elections. Youlden (2015) argues that promoting inclusivity through language learning is a crucial step towards creating a fair and just society where every individual is valued and respected for who they are. If Basotho learn minority languages, it will foster a better understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives, ultimately leading to a more peaceful and harmonious society.

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APPENDICES: Research instruments and data collection request letters.

APPENDIX 1

Interview questions for Quthing residents and IEC officials.

QUESTION 1: Lesotho held national elections in 2022, did you participate in those elections? If not, why?

QUESTION 2: How did you receive the information related to the elections before, during, and after they have taken place?

QUESTION 3: Which languages were used by the above-mentioned election-related information sources during the 2022 election processes?

QUESTION 4: Did the use of mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 national elections have any impact on your participation?

QUESTION 5: What is the role of accessible language in elections as a prerequisite of democracy?

QUESTION 6: Is there a clear language policy in place at IEC regarding the involvement of minority language speakers during national elections?

QUESTION 7: In your view, what role does an accessible language play in elections as a prerequisite for democracy?

APPENDIX 2

(a) Examples of responses from the Quthing residents who did not participate in elections.

Question 1:

- ❖ *Ke hobane lebitso la ka le ne le sa hlahe lenaneng la bakhethi kaha ke ne ke sa ka ka ea hlahloba manane ho sheba na lebitso laka le ntse le hlaha.*
- ❖ *Ha ke ea hlahloba lebitso laka lenaneng la bakhethi hobane ke ne ke qoba ho ea litsing tsa khethelo kaha puo e sebelisoang e le Sesotho joale ke hloile ho buoa Sesotho kaha e se puo eaka ea letsoele.*
- ❖ *Ha ke ea khetha hobane lebitso laka le sa hlaha lenaneng la bakhethi kaha ke ne ke sa ngolisa.*
- ❖ *Ha ke ikutloe ke le karolo ea sechaba sa Basotho hobane `muso oa Lesotho ha o ele hloko rona ba lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang kahare ho naha kaha re qobelloa ho sebelisa puo eo e seng ea rona ea letsoele. Muso ha o ananele lipuo tsa rona tsa letsoele.*
- ❖ *Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa feela likhethong tsa naha ke lona lebaka le etseng hore ke se khethe likhethong tse fetileng kaha ha ke utloisise hantle le hona ho tseba ho bala puo tseo ka bobeli. Kahoo khetho eaka ha e be lekunutu joalokaha e le tšoanelo, ka letsatsi la likhetho ke lokela ho ba le motho ea tla nthusisa ho khetha.*
- ❖ *Batho ba re hlalosesang ka puo ea habo rona seo bapolutiki ba se buileng ha ba ntse ba iketa, ka nako e 'ngoe ha ba re hlalosetse seo e leng nnete. Ha ele mopolutiki eo ba seng ka lehlakoreng la hae ha ba hlalose hantle seo a se buileng. Ha ele mopolutiki eo ba leng ka lehlakoreng la hae tlhaloso tsa bona ke tse susumelletsang motho hore a tšehetse bao mohlalosi a ba tšehetsang.*
- ❖ *Ho se tšepahalle sechaba hoa bapolutiki ke lona lebaka la mantlha leo ke sa kang ka khetha. Ka nako ea likhetho bapolutiki ba tla sechabeng ho se tšepisa hara tse ling, theho ea mesebetsi ea ba nang le litsebo le ba se nang tsona. Ho fihlela kajeno naha ea Lesotho e ntse e aparetsoe ke tlhokeho ea mesebetsi kaha bapolutiki ba lebala tseo ba li tšepisitseng sechaba hang hoba ba lula litulong.*

- ❖ *Le leng la mabaka a entseng hore ke se khethe selemong se fetileng ke ho se tšepahalle sechaba hoa bapolutiki. Ka bo 90s koana ha ke qala ho kena lipolutiki, bapolutiki e sa le ba re tšepisa motlakase le ho re lokisetsa litsela. Le ha ho le joalo, le kajeno re ntse re tsamaea hofeta lihora tse 4 ka maoto hobane hahona tsela moo koloi e ka tsamaeang ha habo rona, le motlakase o ntse o le sieo.*

(b) Examples of responses of the participants who voted.

- ❖ *Ke tokelo eaka ke le motho e mocha ho kenya letsoho tsamaisong ea naha ea Lesotho ka ho khetha batho bao ke bonang ba na le makhabane a ho busa.*
- ❖ *Ke khethile hobane ke ne ke na le tšepo ho bao ke ba khethileng hore ba tla loanela hore ‘muso o ele hloko boteng ba lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha.*
- ❖ *Le ha e le mona ‘muso o sa ele hloko boteng ba lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha, nna ke ikutloa ke le karolo ea sechaba sa Basotho, kahoo ho khetha ke tokelo eaka.*
- ❖ *Lebaka le entseng hore ke khethe ka 2022 ke ho thehoa hoa mokha o mocha o etelletsoeng pele ke moetapele e mocha lipolotiking tsa Lesotho. Ke ne ke lumela hore eena ha tlo tšoana le baetapele ba fetileng ba bileng lipolotiking tsa Lesotho ka nako e telele mme ba ntse ba etsetsa sechaba litšepiso tseo ba hlolehang ho li phethahatsa ha ba se ba le litulong.*
- ❖ *Ke khethile selemong se fetileng hobane ke ne ke batla litšebeletso tsa mantlha joaloka tokiso ea litsela, khokelo ea motlakase, kaho ea setsi sa bophelo le theho ea mesebetsi. Tsena kaofela ke tseo mokha oa lipolutiki oo ke bileng setho sa ona ho feta lilemo tse mashome a mane, o hlotsoeng ho li phethahatsa. Joale ke ne ke na le tšepo ho mokha o mocha oa lipolutiki o etelletsoeng pele ke mohoebi e moholo kahare ho naha hore o tla tlisetsa motse oa heso litšebeletso tsena tsa mantlha.*

- ❖ *Ke khethile hobane ke na le tšepo ho mokha o kothalelitsoeng ho nna ke batsoali baka hore ha o ka fuoa monyetla oa puso, o ka tseba ho hlahisetsa batho ba bacha mesebetsi le ho lokisa litsela tse senyehileng hampe-mpe mona seterekeng sa heso sa Quthing.*

Question 2:

Examples of election-related information sources.

- ❖ Radio
- ❖ Social media
- ❖ Peers
- ❖ Children
- ❖ Printed media
- ❖ Iec meetings
- ❖ Political party rallies

Question 3

Languages that were used by the election-related information sources.

ELECTION-RELATED INFORMATION SOURCE	LANGUAGE USED	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Radio	Sesotho	8 (13.3%)
	Sesotho and English	4 (6.7%)
	Sesotho, English and isiXhosa	1 (1.7%)
Social media	Sesotho	7 (11.7%)

	Sesotho and English	5 (8.3%)
Peers	Sesotho	3 (5%)
	Sesotho and English	2 (3.3%)
	isiXhoza	2 (3.3%)
	Sephuthi	2 (3.3%)
Children	Sesotho	1 (1.7%)
	isiXhosa	2 (3.3%)
	iSephuthi	2 (3.3%)
Printed media	Sesotho	2 (3.3%)
	Sesotho and English	2 (3.3%)
	Sesotho, English and isiXhosa	1 (1.7%)
IEC meetings	Sesotho	3 (5%)
	Sesotho, English and isiXhosa	1 (1.7%)
Political party rallies	Sesotho	8 (13.3%)
	Sesotho and English	4 (6.7%)

Question 4

The impact of using mainly Sesotho and English in national elections.

- ❖ *Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa boitokisetsong ba likhetho, ka letsatsi la likhetho le kamorao ho likhetho, e ile ea etsa hore re hloke thahasello ea ho nka karolo lipolotiking ka ha re utloa eka ha re karolo ea puso ea sechaba-ka-sechaba naheng ea Lesotho.*
- ❖ *Tšebeliso ea Sesotho le Sekhooa feela nakong ea likhetho e re amoha tokelo ea bolokolohi ba puo e kollang ho molao oa motheo oa naha.*
- ❖ *Ba bang ba rona ha ba atleha ho fumana le ho utloisisa hantle litaba tsa likhetho joaloka thuto e fuoang bakhethi le litaba tsa boiketo ba bapolotiki mme sena se etsa hore re khethe re se na tsebo e phethahetseng ka lipolotiki le likhetho.*

- ❖ *Boholo ba rona ba buoang lipuo tse buuoang ke palo a fokolang ea batho re sitoa ho hlalosa ka botlalo litlhoko tsa rona nakong ea boitukisetso ba likhetho, ka letsatsi la likhetho le kamorao ho tsona, mme sena se fokolisa tjantjello ea rona ho nka karolo lipolotiking.*
- ❖ *Ba sa utloisiseng Sesotho le Sekhooa hantle ba sitoa ho ikakhela ka setotsoana lipolotiking kaha ba hloloa ho latela le hona ho utloisisa likhang tsa lipolotiki ka botlalo.*
- ❖ *Rona ba buoang lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho kahare ho naha, re ikutloa eka ha re na tokelo lipolotiking tsa Lesotho kaha li sa re kenyelletse.*

Question 5

The role of accessible language in elections.

- ❖ *Puo ke tšiea ea mantlha ea puisano kahoo tšebeliso ea puo e utloisisoang hantle ke sechaba ka nako ea likhetho, e ka ba molemo ho baiketi le bakhethi ka ho tšoana.*
- ❖ *Ha mopolotiki a sebelisa puo eo a e tsebang hantle ka nako ea likhetho, ho mo thusa ho rapalatsa maano a mokha oa hae ho bakhethi ka puo e manoni e hlakileng mme seo se ka etsa hore batho ba bangata ba khahloe ke seo a se bolelang.*
- ❖ *Ha mopolotiki a tseba puo hantle ka botlalo, a ka e sebelisa ho etsa mokha oa hae lepetjo le lebitso le khahlang bakhethi.*
- ❖ *Ke ne ke rata lipolotiki haholo hoba ke na le takatso ea ho ba e mong oa baetapele mokheng oaka komiting ea lebatooa, empa ho se tsebe ho itlhalosa hantle ka Sesotho hoa etsa hore ke sitoe ho kholisa litho tse ling tsa mokha hore li nkhethe.*
- ❖ *Ha e le hantle nna ke ne ke batla ho theha mokha khale koana ke sa le lilemo li mahareng, empa tšebeliso ea puo ea Sesotho ke eona e ileng ea ntšitisa. E ntšititise ka hore, ha ke*

rate ho bua Sesotho hobane kholong eaka ke ne ke khalengoa ka thata hore ke se ke ka bua Sesotho hobane se tla etsa hore ke lebale puo ea siXhoza e leng eona eaka ea letsoele.

APPENDIX 3

Responses from IEC officials

QUESTION 6

Language policy for minority language speakers.

- ❖ *Komisi ha e so be le leano le hlakileng le ngotsoeng malebana le ho kenyelletsa lipuo the buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho tse fumanoang literekeng tse kang Quthing. Le ha ho le joalo, tšebetsong ea eona, komisi e etse hloko hore ho bohlokoa ho kenyelletsa lipuo tseo hara lipuo tse sebelisoang nakong ea likhetho kaha ho ntse ho na le batho ba sa utloisising hantle Sesotho hobane e se puo ea bona ea letsoele.*
- ❖ *Le ha e le mona komisi e so be le leano le hlakileng ka lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho Lesotho, e mothating oa ho kenyelletsa lipuo tseo tšebetsong ea eona. Mohlala, re se re na le lingoloa ka puo ea siXhoza e le e 'ngoe ea lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea sechaba Quthing. Re mothating oa ho ba le lingoloa ka puo ea Sephuthi joalokaha le sona se buuoana hona seterekeng sa Quthing.*
- ❖ *Nakong ea likhetho ha komisi e hira batho ba tla sebetsa literekeng tseo ho nang le lipuo tse buuoang ke palo e fokolang ea batho joaloka Quthing, e sheba haholo batho ba nang le tsebo ea lipuo tse joalo. Le ha ho le joalo, komisi e fumana lenane le fokolang feela la batho ba nang le tsebo ea lipuo tsena ebile e le ba buoang siXhosa feela. Ha ele ba buoang Sephuthi bona IEC ha e atlehe ho ba fumana.*

Question 7:

The role of accessible language in elections.

- ❖ *Ha batho bohle ba utloisisa puo e sebelisoang ka nako ea likhetho, Komisi e ka tseba ho fihlela sepheo sa eona se seholo sa ho tsoara likhetho tse lokolohileng tse nang le ponaletso.*
- ❖ *Batho ha ba utloisisa puo hantle e sebelisoang likhethong, komisi e ka tseba ho fihlela boholo ba sechaba ka thuto e fuoang bakhethi ka litsi tsohle tse fetisang melaetsa joaloka li-ea-le-moea, se-ea-le-moea-pono, likoranta, marang-rang le likopano tseo Komisi e li tsoarang ho ruta batho ka likhetho. Sena se ka thusa ho phahamisa palo ea bakhethi kaha boholo ba sechaba bo tla be bo na le tsebo ka likhetho.*
- ❖ *Thuto e fuoang bakhethi ha e fihletse likarolo tsohle tsa sechaba, boholo ba batho bo tla ba le tjantjello ka likhetho mme bo tla ithuta ka baiketi mabatoeng a bona, mekha eo ba tsoang ho eona le tseo ba tšepisang ho li etsetsa baahi ha ba ka ba khetha ho ba emela tlung ea bakhethoa.*
- ❖ *Tšebeliso ea puo e utloisisoang hantle ke batho bohle ka nako ea likhetho e ka thusa ho phahamisa lenane la bakhethi kaha batho bohle ba tla utloisisa hantle litaba tsa likhetho mme sena se ka ba fa morolo oa ho khetha.*

APPENDIX 4

DATA COLLECTION REQUEST LETTERS.

The National University of Lesotho

**Telephone: +266
22340601**

Fax: +266



P.O. Roma 180

Lesotho

Faculty of Humanities

10/01/2023

The Resident

Quthing

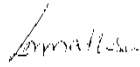
Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: 'Makananelo Mosotho (201202647)

The Department of African Languages and Literature, at the National University of Lesotho, wishes to request your permission to participate in the study conducted by 'Makananelo Mosotho. I am writing to you on behalf of the Department, as her supervisor. 'Makananelo is researching on the 'The Impact of Using mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 Lesotho national elections, on the minority language speakers in Quthing'. This research is done as a requirement in fulfilment of her Master of Arts (M.A) degree. It is hoped that her study will raise more awareness on the plight of the minority language speakers during the 2022 Lesotho national elections. It is her wish that IEC and other members of the society would be aware of the need to accommodate minority language speakers in all national activities including the elections.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours faithfully,



Litšepiso Matlosa (Dr.)

The National University of Lesotho

**Telephone: +266
22340601**

Fax: +266



P.O. Roma 180

Lesotho

Faculty of Humanities

10/01/2023

The Officer
Independent Electoral Office
Quthing

Dear Sir/Madam,

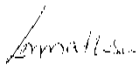
Re: 'Makananelo Mosotho (201202647)

The Department of African Languages and Literature, at the National University of Lesotho, wishes to request your office to allow 'Makananelo Mosotho to collect data in your office. I am

writing to you on behalf of the Department, as her supervisor. ‘Makananelo is researching on the ‘The Impact of Using mainly Sesotho and English during the 2022 Lesotho national elections, on the minority language speakers in Quthing’. This research is done as a requirement in fulfilment of her Master of Arts (M.A) degree. It is hoped that her study will raise more awareness on the plight of these citizens due to language barrier. It is her wish that IEC and other members of the society would be aware of the need to accommodate minority language speakers in all national activities including the elections.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Litšepiso Matlosa', written in a cursive style.

Litšepiso Matlosa (Dr.)