ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF THE MOSHAWENG CIRCUIT IN THE NORTHERN CAPE

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that “English Language Teaching in Primary Schools of the Moshaweng Circuit in the Northern Cape” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

…… Date ……..
Asteria N. Nsamba

SUMMARY

This study investigated the implementation of National Curriculum Statement's English First Additional Language in three rural primary schools in Northern Cape Province. The focus of the investigation was on English First Additional Language learning, teaching and assessment in grade four. The purpose was to evaluate class activities in order to determine the level of achievement in English, and to establish whether classroom practices were being informed by National Curriculum Statement policy for English First Additional Language. The study employed a qualitative case study approach, using classroom observation and document analysis research tools. The findings revealed that the learners lacked literacy skills because they were not engaged in suitable and meaningful tasks to meet their linguistic needs. Most activities given to the learners were irrelevant, and not age, grade and language level appropriate. There was no evidence of communicative, text-based, reading and process writing activities in the learners' portfolio files. It was also discovered that teaching, learning and assessment did not conform to National Curriculum Statement policy for English First Additional Language and the principles of OBE methodology. Recommendations to address the problems are proposed.

Key Words: Curriculum; Curriculum 2005; National Curriculum Statement; English First Additional Language; OBE; Assessment; Learning Outcomes; Assessment Standards; Teaching and Learning; Second Language Learning and Second Language Acquisition; Theories on Language Learning.

DEDICATION

To my husband George and my sons Newton and Nelkon, who offered me unconditional love and support, patience and remarkable understanding throughout.

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I am thankful to God for giving me tremendous strength to carry out this study.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS AND THEIR EXPANSIONS

1. ANC	African National Congress
2. APO	Area Project Office
3. AS's	Assessment Standards
4. CASS	Continuous Assessment
5. CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
6. COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
7. C2005	Curriculum 2005
8. EFAL	English First Additional Language
9. GET	General Education and Training
10. LAD	Language Acquisition Device
11. LIEP	Language in Education Policy
12. LO	Learning Outcome
13. LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
14. NCS	National Curriculum Statement
15. OBE	Outcomes Based Education
16. PRAESA	Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa
17. RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa's school curriculum (primary and post primary) has undergone significant changes in recent years. The Department of Education has developed a curriculum framework – The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which incorporates Outcomes Based Education (OBE), a method of teaching that focuses on what learners can "actually" do after being taught. The curriculum framework highlights learning outcomes (that is, what a learner is able to do), and stipulates the standards required from the teaching and learning at the end of a learning process.

This study focussed on this new curriculum - the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The aim of the study was to investigate the implementation of English First Additional Language curriculum in the grade 4 classroom, in Moshaweng Circuit (former Moshaweng Area Project Office) primary schools. The study was intended to serve the following purposes:

- To evaluate the quality of classroom activities in Grade 4 in order to determine the level of achievement in English First Additional Language.
- To establish whether the classroom practices of the Grade 4 teachers are informed by NCS policy for English First Additional Language.

Moshaweng Circuit has 58 primary schools. In all these schools, English first additional language is taught as a subject, and it is the language of learning and teaching (LOLT). The home language for learners in this area is Setswana. (English second language is currently referred to as English first additional language in the new curriculum framework.)

The study focussed on 3 of 58 primary schools in Moshaweng Circuit, in the Northern Cape. Moshaweng Circuit was part of Bophirima Region in the North West Province. Moshaweng became part of the Northern Cape Province from 1 April 2007. It is one of the remote rural areas of the Northern Cape.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The question this study sought to investigate was: How do grade 4 teachers implement English First Additional Language (EFAL) curriculum in Moshaweng Circuit? From this question, the following sub-questions emerge:

- Are all English First Additional Language (EFAL) learning outcomes covered?
- Do learning activities include skills, knowledge and values that can be demonstrated in real life situations?
- Do the teachers follow Outcomes Based Assessment and NCS planning?
- Have the teachers changed their teaching practices to meet the requirements of the new curriculum policy. Does the classroom practice indicate the understanding of the NCS policy as well as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) methodology?

In order to answer these questions, a qualitative case study was conducted, using observation and document analysis tools. It is hoped that the answers to these questions will provide some insight into the practice of teaching and learning English first additional language at primary schools.

1.3 RATIONALE

English has ‘put down roots’ in South Africa just like it has in other states which were ruled by Britain. English is one of the 11 official languages in South Africa. It is taught as a subject in all primary and high schools, and it is also the LOLT in most schools. Currently, English and Afrikaans are the only languages used as the medium of teaching and learning from Grade 4 to Grade 12 and at tertiary institutions in South Africa. According to Language in Education Policy (LIEP) and NCS policy for languages, all learners shall offer their language of learning and teaching and at least one approved language as a subject. One language should be the home language and the other should be the first additional language. The NCS policy further states that in a multilingual society like South Africa, learners should reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages, and should have a strong command of their language of

learning and teaching (LOLT) in order to achieve success in other learning areas (Department of Education 2002a:4).

Although English enjoys a dominant position in South Africa's schools, it is blamed for the high failure rate of learners in many schools. Several studies have revealed that there is a correlation between language proficiency and academic performance. A study conducted in the Kwazulu-Natal province in 2006 revealed that 68% of Grade 6 learners could not read, write and count properly (Naidoo 2006:3). The research showed that learners whose home language was different from their LOLT scored lower marks than those whose home language was the same as the LOLT (Ibid). English is the LOLT of the majority of the learners in Kwazulu-Natal. Another study; Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation Survey, (North West Department of Education 2006:67) also revealed that learners did better at school when taught in their home language. The national average score in LOLT different from home language was 38%. The survey depicted the following about the North West Province:

- Learners whose home language was the same as their LOLT obtained "significantly higher scores" (North West Department of Education 2006:2).
- Learners in the remote rural areas performed more poorly in the LOLT than those in the rural and farm schools. Rural schools' achievement performance was 30% and the remote rural schools' performance was 21% (Ibid: 2).
- 82% of learners in North West's Bophirima Region did not achieve success in the language (LOLT) tasks analysed according to the Languages Assessment Guidelines (Ibid: 2**).**

(The LOLT different from the learners' home language in North West is English. Moshaweng Circuit was one of Bophirima's education districts. Most of the areas in Bophirima were part of the former Bophuthatswana homeland).

Furthermore, Ishmail (2004:123) refers to Taylor and Vinjevold's studies carried out in the 1980s in the former Bophuthatswana primary schools, which showed that learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills were poorly developed in both English and mother tongue. Another study by Schlebusch and Thobedi (2004:41) conducted in township schools on

English second language teaching and learning indicated that the Grade 8 learners "had difficulty expressing themselves in English."

The falling standard of English has a very serious implication for higher education. In an article entitled 'Half of all South Africa's tertiary students drop out', The Mercury (2005:1) reported that out of 120 000 students registered in 2002, 50% dropped out, 22% passed, and 28% were still in the system "five years later." According to the report, this was due to language barrier. The newspaper further reported that learners could not read library books "because English was way beyond them" (Ibid). In addition, learners were said to struggle to get jobs because they could not express themselves in English.

The above revelations prompted the researcher to conduct this study. These revelations are a complete contrast to the Department of Education's vision of literate, creative and critical citizens who lead productive and self-fulfilled lives (Department of Education 2002b:4). This is a concern and a setback because the government's goal is to have high quality education for all South Africa's learners hence the shift from input educational system to outcomes based education.

The assumption of this study is that the NCS framework is clear and easy to follow and can lay a strong foundation for different English (language) skills. Firstly, the framework outlines specific learning outcomes: *Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing, Writing, Thinking, and Language use*, to be achieved and demonstrated on completion of any process of learning. These learning outcomes are clear and measurable. Secondly, it prescribes standards /content to be taught and learned. Thirdly, the framework is based on the principles of Outcomes Based Education (OBE), the method of teaching which allows teachers to design appropriate learner-centred activities to meet the learners' learning needs. OBE is based on learner-oriented learning theories such as constructivism and learner centredness. Fourthly, the curriculum has provided assessment guidelines to assist the teachers on how to assess tasks.

English proficiency is essential to the learners' academic success because they are expected to master content in other learning areas and demonstrate progress in English as well. English

First Additional Language policy states that textbooks in Grade 4 demand a reading vocabulary of “several thousand words,” and that learners are expected to develop this vocabulary. The expectation is that the Grade 4 learners should communicate confidently, respond critically to issues, access and process information, and create and interpret texts (Department of Education 2002a). By the end of Grade 9, learners who study English First Additional Language should be able to use it as effectively as possible and with confidence for a variety of purposes, including learning (Ibid).

Teaching learners to understand content is the central focus of any learning area. However, how are learners expected to learn in English when they are not proficient in the language? Is there hope to turn things around? How do teachers conceptualise their teaching practice within this new framework so that they can help learners reach appropriate levels of proficiency in their target language? This calls for a probe into the delivery of the curriculum.

It is hoped that the study will give some insight into the practice of teaching and learning English at primary schools.

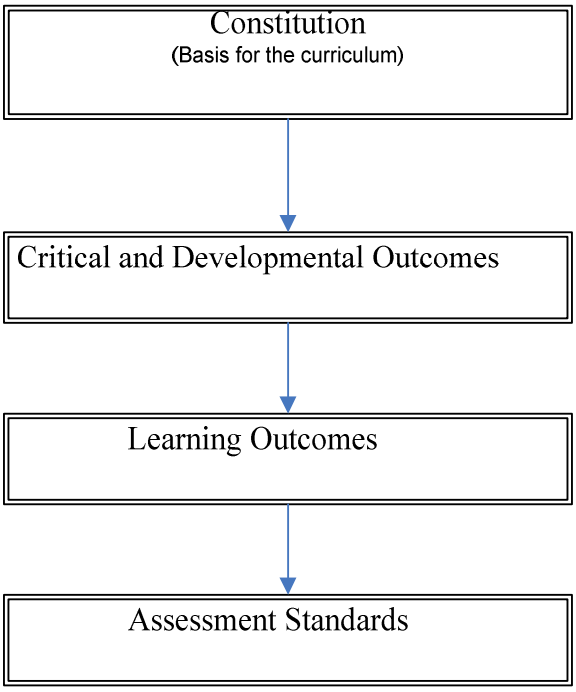
1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The following section will provide clarification on the terms in this study.

1.4.1 National Curriculum Statement (NCS)

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) is South Africa’s post-apartheid curriculum based on the principles of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). The South African Constitution is the basis of NCS. The illustration on page 6 shows the links between the new curriculum and the Constitution, as well as the interaction among the design features of NCS.

Figure 1: The links between NCS and the Constitution



1.4.2 Teaching and Learning

The term 'teaching and learning' is a post-modern thought concept. Doll (1993:101) describes the relationship between these two words thus: "teaching becomes ancillary to learning, with learning dominant, due to the individual's self-organizational abilities. Teaching changes from the didactic to dialogic". The point Doll is putting forward is that there should be interaction between the learner and the educator in executing the curriculum.

1.4.3 Outcomes Based Education (OBE)

OBE is a theory of learning which emphasises that learners should achieve outcomes and demonstrate them at the end of a learning process. OBE is the underlying philosophy behind NCS. It has been adopted in Australia, New Zealand, United States of America and other countries (Donelly 2007) [Online].

1.4.4 Critical and Developmental Outcomes

These are broad outcomes relevant to all learning programmes. They can be described as the core life skills for learners. These outcomes highlight the needs of the society by describing the kind of learner envisioned by the government. There are 6 Critical outcomes and 8 Developmental outcomes. The former describe life skills for learning and the latter help learners to learn effectively. They can be helpful in allowing teachers to design appropriate assessment tasks. They can be integrated into daily activities of the learners.

1.4.5 Learning Outcomes

These are the observable skills and knowledge the learner is expected to demonstrate at the end of a learning experience. Cullingford (1990:195) points out that “at the heart of every curriculum are skills that need to be learned.”

Spady, the advocate of OBE, describes outcomes as “high-quality, culminating demonstrations of significant learning in context” (1994:18). Spady further stresses that the demonstration of significant learning should be, at minimum, “thorough and complete” (ibid).

1.4.6 Assessment Standards

These refer to the content to be taught and learned.

1.4.7 Assessment

Assessment forms part of teaching and learning. It is described as a process of gathering information about the performance of the learner, measured against assessment standards. It should be administered in accordance with Assessment Guidelines for Languages and the National Protocol for Assessment.

1.4.8 Constructivism

Constructivism is a theory of learning whereby a learner tries to make sense of what she/he has learned. It premises that learners actively construct knowledge and meaning as they interact with the environment (Jaworski 1996) [online]. Constructivism can be traced to as far back as Dewey's child-centred theories of learning. Jean Piaget and Lev Vygosky are advocates of constructivist learning.

1.4.9 Curriculum Model

A structured framework which guides curriculum planning and implementation based on learning and teaching theories.

1.4.10 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Teaching approach that believes that language is learned through communication.

1.4.11 Language Proficiency

The ability to speak an acquired language – home, second or third language. It also means conversational fluency and academic language skills in a second language.

1.4.12 Learning Area

A field of knowledge which encompasses a group of subjects. In NCS, English First Additional Language belongs to Languages Learning Area.

1.4.13 Post modernism curriculum

Doll (1993:13) describes a post-modern curriculum as "a process of development, dialogue, inquiry, transformation … the experience an individual undergoes in learning, in transforming and being transformed." Post modern designs are said to be non-technical, emergent, unstable, dynamic and evolving, and do not follow predetermined rules (Orstein and Hunkins 1998).

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This study was an investigation of the implementation of OBE English curriculum in primary schools. In order to understand teaching and learning English, Qualitative Case Study methodology was used to gather the data and interpret the results. Cresswell (1998:61) defines case study as a detailed analysis of a bounded system (bound by time and/or place) of a single case or multiple cases. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:36) point out that case studies provide "a complete understanding of a complex situation, identify uninterested consequences and examine the process of policy implementation."

1.6 SAMPLING

This study focussed on 3 of 58 primary schools in Moshaweng Circuit. The researcher believes that the number of schools served the purpose because this was a classroom based research and the intention was to study and have some understanding of English second language teaching and learning. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:36) remind us that cases are not chosen for their "representativeness" but to illustrate a point. A 'case' is an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon, not the number of people sampled (McMillan and Schumacher 2001:403). The study utilised cluster sampling. The schools were selected from their existing geographically demarcated clusters. For example, 1 school in West Cluster, 1 in Central Cluster and 1 in the East Cluster. Saunders et al. (2000:166) point out that clusters can be based on any naturally occurring grouping.

1.7 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used ethnographic research methods, namely observation and document analysis, to collect data.

1.7.1 Observation

The researcher used "structured" observation technique to collect data. McCormick and James (1983:125) state, "At the heart of every case study, lies a method of observation." The

"structured" observation technique was in the form of checklist. This technique helped the researcher observe certain behaviours decided upon, not everything. Saunders et al. (2000:231) point out that structured observation technique yields "highly reliable results." The researcher designed the observation instrument to be used during the classroom activities. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:40) give examples of behaviours that can be observed. These include how many times students ask questions and the type of questions asked.

1.7.2 Documents

The documents analysed were learners' portfolio files, class-work exercise books, educators' portfolio files, lesson plans and mark schedules.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS

1.8.1 Documents

The sampled learners' assessment activities from the schools were analysed using a checklist. The assessment activities were categorized according to their correlation with the assessment programme for Grade 4 and the Assessment Guidelines for GET (General Education and Training) phase. The analysis was done manually. The findings were recorded.

1.8.2 Observations

Observations were also analysed manually, using line by line coding.

More information on data collection and analysis procedures will be provided in Chapters 3 and 4.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

When South Africa implemented its OBE curriculum in 1998, there was confusion in the country because the content of the curriculum 'had taken off' in new and unanticipated directions. Perhaps the writing was on the wall. Orstein and Hunkins (1998:210) have this warning: the postmodern curriculum planners should be open to surprises and chaos because

the postmodern curriculum can “take off in new directions in consequence of some unanticipated event.” This study is an attempt therefore to understand the curriculum “chaos” in the English classroom for learners whose home language is different from their language of learning and teaching. It is hoped that the results of the study will give curriculum planners and teachers some insight into English first additional language classroom.

The limitation of this research is that it is a case study. The study will evaluate three primary schools only. The aim is to understand second language learning and teaching, not to generalise the results. Nonetheless, the hypotheses generated by the study can be used for future research.

1.10 CHAPTER DIVISION

- **Chapter 1** explains the background of the study, the problem and methodology.
- **Chapter 2** deals with curriculum definitions, curriculum models, language acquisition and learning, second language teaching, and The National Curriculum Statement (NCS).
- **Chapter 3** discusses the research methodology used in the study.
- **Chapter 4** provides data analysis and interpretation.
- **Chapter 5** summarises the research, presents the findings and proposes recommendations.

1.11 CONCLUSION

This study investigated teaching and learning through qualitative case study research approach. This chapter has presented the background of the research and the methodology used. The next chapter will present curriculum concepts relevant to the study.

CHAPTER TWO: CURRICULUM AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses curricula concepts relevant to the study. First to be discussed are curriculum definitions and models. Second, the introduction of South Africa's new curriculum is discussed. Third, theories on language acquisition and different perspectives on second language teaching and learning are analysed. Last, NCS English classroom practice is discussed.

The researcher conducted the literature search using the following keywords: "Curriculum", "English second/foreign language learning and teaching", "Second language acquisition and learning", "Curriculum 2005", "National Curriculum Statement" and "Outcomes Based Education". Most of the literature searched dealt with educational articles, policy documents and books rather than research oriented articles. All the books and educational articles searched were chosen based on their relevance to the study.

2.2 CURRICULUM DEFINITIONS

The researcher found it important to examine different definitions of curriculum because each definition has its own components which can influence policy makers and curriculum developers' choice of curriculum models. Some definitions focus on the traditional based education, while others suggest a new educational approach. It is to the reader to decide which definition is the most relevant and useful to address learning needs.

Orstein and Hunkins (1998:11) state that curriculum can be viewed as a field of study or subjects or a plan for action or learners' experiences at school. Jacobs (2000:97) describes curriculum as a course to be run. The explanation to this is that a learner needs 'desirable knowledge' to run a race of life successfully (Jacobs 2000:97). Doll (1996:15) describes curriculum as "the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills, and alter attitudes, appreciations and values under the auspices of that school." McKernan (2008:12) says it should be understood as "a proposal setting out an educational plan, offering students socially valued knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and abilities, which are made available to students through a variety of educational

experiences, at all levels of the education system." The following definitions (cited in McKernan 2008:11-12) add to the list: structured series of intended outcomes (Johnson 1967:130); experiences planned for students (Wiles & Bondi 2007:347); the program of activities, the course run by students (Hirst 1976:183); subjects such as grammar, reading, logic, rhetoric, mathematics (Marsh & Willis 2007:9).

The following educators cited in Rogan and Luckowski (1990:23) see curriculum in different ways: (1) Miller and Seller (1985) see curriculum as transmission, transaction and transformational; (2) Schurbert (1986) sees curriculum as traditionalist, social behaviourist and experiential; (3) McNeil (1985) sees it as humanistic and social reconstruction; (4) Zais (1976) sees curriculum as a program of studies, course content and planned learned experiences.

Two curriculum trends can be established from these definitions. Hirst's, and Marsh and Willis's (cited in McKernan 2008), definitions for example, emphasise subject knowledge. Doll's (1996) and Mckernan's (2008) definitions on the other hand, break away from the subject matter, and suggest a more holistic and learner centred educational approach. This trend puts emphasis on a type of curriculum, which integrates knowledge, skills and values.
South Africa's new curriculum could have been impacted by the latter trend. It emphasises acquisition of knowledge, skills and values.

2.3 CURRICULUM MODELS

A curriculum model can be described as a structured framework which guides curriculum planning and implementation. Models are based on learning and teaching theories. Models determine what content to be taught. They are implemented using prescribed methods and procedures. Some models are descriptive, while others are prescriptive. Orstein and Hunkins (1998) point out that although curriculum models follow different viewpoints, all curricula have content, experiences and environments.

There are many approaches or models to curriculum design. Examples are the objectives model, process-inquiry model, Bobbit's model, Charters's model, Glatthorn's naturalistic

model, discover model, OBE model, child-centred models, preschool models and literacy models. Five of these models will be discussed.

2.3.1 Objectives Model

The objectives model, which is sometimes called the technical-scientific approach or technical rationality or means-end model, is identified with modernism. It believes in rationality, objectivity and certainty (Orstein & Hunkins 1998:203). This approach puts emphasis on the subject matter. Learning objectives are set and learners are expected to attain them. In accordance with this model, teachers should see to it that learners attain the objectives. Failure to attain the set objectives becomes the responsibility of the teacher. Central to this model is Tyler's four basic steps to curriculum planning, namely: the purpose of school; learning experiences; organisation of learning experiences; and evaluation of learning experiences (Orstein & Hunkins 1998:197).

2.3.2 Process-inquiry Model

The process-inquiry model or the non-technical model stresses that curriculum should focus on the needs of the learner. The key objective of the curriculum is not the content but the individual. Curriculum is negotiated by learners and teachers. It is not developed but evolves from joint teacher-learner interaction (Orstein & Hunkins 1998:203). Stenhouse's process approach and Freire's critical approach are examples of the non-technical approach to curriculum.

2.3.3 Discover Model

The third curriculum model is the discover model. This model follows a constructivist approach to learning. The model recognises that learners come from different backgrounds and that each learner has strengths and interests. Discover model is characterised by different learning and teaching strategies, such as hands-on learning, integration of culture and language, group activities and choice, and multiple intelligences (Maker 2005).

2.3.4 Glatthorn's Naturalistic Model

Glatthorn's naturalistic model, which follows eight steps, is said to be neither modernist nor post- modernist (Orstein and Hunkins 1998:204). The steps are as follows:

1 Examine the alternatives to the current curriculum;
2 Define the parameters, the learning audience and learning activities in order to have a tentative prospectus;
3 Course developers should convince everybody about the 'soundness' of the programme;
4 Build the knowledge;
5 Developers should determine the nature and number of units in order to accommodate different interests and learning styles;
6 Plan quality learning experiences;
7 Teachers and learners should determine the means to document whether learning has occurred. Determine different means of assessment;
8 Create learning scenarios rather than the standard curriculum.

(Orstein & Hunkins 1998:204)

2.3.5 OBE Model

Brady (1996:27) describes OBE as a system whereby:

1 outcomes all students can demonstrate are clearly developed;
2 teaching and learning activities are designed;
3 individual learner's performance is monitored on the basis of demonstrated performance;
4 learners' progress is monitored using the criterion referenced approach;
5 remediation is provided to learners who do not achieve the outcomes.

OBE is based on the principles of the constructivist view of learning. Other learning theories advocated by OBE are, interactive and contextualised learning, learner centred-ness, critical thinking, and problem solving skills and integration of skills.

Curriculum developers can follow one perspective or use a combination of perspectives to develop curriculum; or they can expand on the work done by others. Jacobs (2000:102); Schubert (1994:26); Brady (1983:58); Brady (1997:58); Rogan and Luckowski (1990:18); Orstein and Hunkins (1998:2) and Posner (2002:48) point out that Tyler's four basic steps have had a lot of influence on most curricula. OBE is one of those models which have drawn from Tyler's objectives. OBE has also drawn from constructivist and child-centred theories, the advocates of which were Rousseuau, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Dewey. Furthermore, Reynolds (cited in Doll 1993:54) indicated that Hunter's curriculum Model of the 1980s was an expansion and evaluation of Tyler's second and third steps of curriculum planning. Posner (2002:49) shows that the curriculum procedures of Tyler's critic, Elliot Eisner, are a step-by-step curriculum approach, which differs slightly from Tyler's. In addition, Orstein and Hunkins (1998:86) state that Taba's seven step model is an extension of Tyler's four steps on curriculum. Tyler, on the other hand, is said to have drawn on the work of Dewey (1902) and Bobbitt (1918). Bobbitt's work reflects many of Dewey's ideas (Janesick 2003:3-5). Furthermore, Janesick (2003:5-6) shows that Dewey's ideas influenced post-modernists.

2.4 SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW CURRICULUM

2.4.1 Background to Curriculum 2005

Proposals for the transformation of education and training in South Africa first emerged during the civil society organisations policy activities that led to the 1994 elections (Christie 2002:168); (Cross et al. 2002:175). The civil society was made up of members of different organisations, such as the African National Congress (ANC), The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), scholars, and community members, whose aim was to transform policy in South Africa. These groups engaged in policy discussions on how to transform education after 1994. Different models for South Africa's curriculum were proposed, in preparation for the democratic South Africa.

The 1994 elections marked the end of the apartheid regime, after which democracy was embraced in South Africa. For the first time in the history of South Africa, education issues were openly debated by political groups and the civil society organisations – a contrast to the

apartheid government's "tradition of policy-making as a ritual of secrecy and authoritarianism" (Cross et al 2002:72). The new political dispensation brought about very important political and educational reforms. These reforms had to be strengthened by policies, hence the introduction of different policies in education.

The most relevant policy documents to curriculum development in South Africa were:

- The 1995 White Paper on Education and Training, which emphasised the need to transform teaching and learning in South Africa and the need "for a shift from the traditional aims-objectives approach to outcomes based education" (Department of Education 2002b:4);
- The 1996 Lifelong Learning through a National Curriculum Framework, which was the "first major curriculum statement" (Department of Education 2002b:4);
- The 1995 South Africa Qualifications Act, which formulated the Critical and Developmental Outcomes, which, according to Jacobs (2000:118), was developed to "overhaul" the previous education system completely;
- The 1996 National Education Policy Act, which provided for a new curriculum design for South Africa (Department of Education 2002b:4). The result was the birth of South Africa's OBE Curriculum 2005 (C2005). C2005 follows an outcomes based approach to learning, teaching and assessment, a departure from the traditional content-based approach of the apartheid era.

2.4.2 OBE C2005: The Vision

C2005 is based on the principles outlined in South Africa's Constitution (Department of Education 2002b). The Constitution aims at improving the quality of life of all South Africa's citizens, healing the divisions of the past and establishing a democratic country (Department of Education 2002b:1). In the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training, the government had this vision for South Africa: "A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice" (Department of Education 2002b:4). In order to realise this vision, the government had to introduce a system of education

which would “emancipate learners and teachers from a content-based top-down curriculum” (Jeevanantham 1998:218). Oppression was evident in many forms in the pre-1994 South African education system: there was Bantu Education, under-qualified teachers, lack of resources, and oppressive apartheid policies. There were many curriculum ideologies to pick from in order to design a model to address the mentioned education problems. The government decided on Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

One would like to believe that OBE was not born out of a “desire to conserve the subject of the West” (Spivak 1995, cited in Jeevanantham 1998:221), but to empower the previously disadvantaged communities of South Africa. For decades, black South Africans suffered injustice in terms of the opportunities made available to them in the country’s public life. It is hoped that the new curriculum will bring about required change in the education system.

2.4.3 Implementation of OBE Curriculum in South Africa

The introduction of OBE curriculum in South Africa was a paradigm shift. A whole new system of education came into being. The drastic change from content-based curriculum to learner centred, outcomes based education meant that learning, teaching and assessment in schools would be affected. In fact, the whole system of education was affected in that “a radical break with the previous education” system was initiated (Steyn & Wilkinson 1998:203).

The introduction of C2005 in primary schools in 1998 caused a huge public outcry. Cross et al. (2002:171) explain that the tension was due to two major concerns: (1) the curriculum framework vis-à-vis applicability, conditions of implementation and actual practice in schools, and (2) the expected outcomes vis-à-vis the capacity of teachers to translate them into reality. Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:203) point out that parents, teachers and learners were not involved in the curriculum development process. Christie (2002:172) refers to provincial reports which revealed that some primary schools ignored the launch of the new curriculum. Jansen (2002) raised the issue that disadvantaged groups in South Africa were facing new disadvantages of a non working curriculum. Jeevanantham (1998:218) argued that South Africa’s curriculum was irrelevant because it was “Eurocentric” and based on class. Kraak (cited in Graham-Jolly

2002:27) described the education policy then as one of "great confusion and controversy." It all boiled down to a lack of proper consultation with the relevant stakeholders. Ramparsad (2001:287) states that the decision to implement a national curriculum framework without proper consultation was "highly centralised" and "largely excluded educators".

In 2000, the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, appointed a review committee to evaluate the implementation of C2005. The report by the review committee revealed the following:

- Teachers' understanding of C2005 was "generally weak".
- There was a lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment.
- Teachers still used the old traditional methods of implementing the new curriculum.
- Workshop training for educators was inadequate.

(Department of Education 2000) [Online].

Portenza and Manyokola (cited in Cross et al. 2002:182) and Jansen (2002:74-78) observed similar problems with regard to the implementation of C2005. Critics of C2005 said that schools were not ready for the curriculum implementation.

The research by the Ministerial Committee and other researchers led to the review of C2005. In 2000, South Africa's C2005 was revised. The result was the streamlining of the curriculum by simplifying the language, providing content to be taught at schools and changing the design. Thus, the OBE approach remained.

The revised C2005 was renamed the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), which later changed to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-12.

South Africa was not the only country to change its curriculum to OBE. OBE implementation in other countries, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and in some states in North America, was not a smooth transition either (Steyn & Wilkinson 1998:203). In New Zealand, studies revealed that there were enormous workloads and assessment problems, and that teachers were not familiar with the new curriculum approach (Brady 1997:59-65). Kelly and Laing (2000:40) report that in Canada the public played a minor role in matters revolving

around the curriculum change. According to these authors, Canada's Common Curriculum reflected the political views of its developers (Kelly & Laing 2000:40). Morris (2002) reports negative reactions against the curriculum reform in Hong Kong. In America, OBE was viewed as a mammoth task and a problem (Towers 1992).

Donelly (2004) [Online], reports that many states in the United States of America have since "dropped" OBE and have moved to standards approach curriculum.

2.4.4 The Design of NCS Curriculum

A curriculum design can be described as the manner in which curriculum components are arranged. Orstein and Hunkins (1998:233) note that the design a person selects, reflects his/her approach to curriculum and philosophical orientation. The design of a curriculum consists of objectives of the curriculum, content to be taught and learned, learning experiences and assessment. If the design of the curriculum has flaws, the implementation of the curriculum will not be effective. One of the reasons for ineffective implementation of C2005 was lack of content to be taught and learned.

2.4.5 Design Features of NCS English First Additional Language.

NCS framework for EFAL - Grade R to Grade 9 sets out the following design features:

- Critical and Developmental Outcomes
- Learning Outcomes (LO's)
- Assessment Standards (AS's)
- Assessment procedures

The above components are organised along two organisational dimensions namely: Vertical and Horizontal organisations. Vertical organisation is progression. Progression occurs when the work that is done in one year is introduced again in another year for learners to build on. Department of Education (2000) [online] refers to this as conceptual coherence. Progression can be illustrated using the following example:

Grade 4, 5, 6 LO2, AS1 reads: “The learner interacts in additional language”. Although the topic is the same for each grade, the activities differ in levels of difficulty as shown in the example below.

Grade 4: The learner takes part in a short conversation on a familiar topic.

Grade 5: The learner takes part in a conversation on a familiar topic.

Grade 6: The learner sustains a conversation on a familiar topic.

Horizontal organisation refers to integration with other learning areas. In the EFAL syllabus, integration is found in Grades 4 to 6, LO3, AS2 and LO5, AS1. The LO’s state that during English activities, learners read textbooks, explain concepts and produce text used in other learning areas.

The researcher believes that through this strengthened design structure, teaching and learning is now manageable.

2.5 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.5.1 Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning

Linguists make a distinction between second language acquisition and second language learning. Krashen (1981) [online] defines second language acquisition as a sub-conscious process “very similar” to the one children use when learning their first language. Language learning on the other hand is said to be the result of the “direct” teaching of the rules of language (Krashen 1981) [online]. Haynes (2007) [online] adds that in language learning, learners have “conscious knowledge of the new language and can talk about that knowledge.” Haynes (ibid) contends that language learning is not communicative, and it is not “an age appropriate” language teaching approach for young learners. Referring to studies carried out by Savignon (1972) on communicative language teaching, Savignon (1991) states that communicative language teaching was found to be a more effective way of developing communicative ability in learners. She points out that the replacement of grammar drills with meaning-focused self expression was found to be effective.

Ellis (1985:21), Krashen (1981) [online] and Haynes (2007) [online] contend that the same rules of learning the first language should be applied when children learn their second language. The question is: How do children learn their first, second or even third language?

2.5.2 Theories on Language Acquisition

Many theories have been proposed on how children learn language. Behaviourist Skinner (1957) held the view that children learn language by imitation. Chomsky (1959) argued that human beings have an innate capacity to learn a language. His view was that humans are the only beings who have this unique inborn capacity. Vygotsky's (Schutz 2004) [online] theory of social interaction emphasises the importance of "natural, communicative and experiential" approaches to language learning. Another aspect of Vygotsky's theory is that human interaction plays an important role in the development of cognition in children (Schutz 2004) [online].

Another theory important in language learning is Bandura's Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura (cited in Salzinger (1979:124), children acquire a language by imitating, observing and comprehending the behaviour of others.

Each of these theories has established a useful understanding of language acquisition and learning for this research. The application of some of these theories in the second language classroom can improve teaching and learning. It should be noted that human beings are capable of learning a language because they are born with the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), to acquire language (Chomsky 1959). The most convincing evidence for the innateness to language acquisition is the fact that children are able to speak their home languages without any formal instruction. It is logical to conclude that LAD can 'allow' learners to learn any other language they are exposed to because language rules come to children "naturally", irrespective of their levels of intelligence and cultural backgrounds (Child (1981:166). Furthermore, studies carried out by Bryant (cited in Siann and Ugwuegbu 1980:45) indicated that children as young as four and five showed the ability to be logical.

The theories of Skinner (1957), Bandura (cited in Salzinger 1979), Vygotsky and Krashen (cited in Schutz 2004) suggest that language learning is interactive. This means that, children need people around them, to learn from, talk to and look up to. Dekeyser (cited in Ellis 2008) [online] asserts that to develop true fluency in a second language, learners must be given opportunities to engage in real communication. The teachers should motivate their learners and make them feel that there is real need to communicate in their target language. Bruner (1979:267) states that a child communicates with caretakers before he/she has a language in order to perform certain functions that are "general to the species" by gestures and vocalisations. Bruner (1979) argues that non-verbal communication is the prerequisite for language acquisition. One would like to believe that a child, who communicates before he/she has a language, does so because there is a need to do so. It can also be argued that if classroom activities are relevant to the needs of the learners, the learners will focus on the need to communicate in the target language. So, teachers should be advised to design relevant and interesting activities which will motivate their learners to use the target language.

2.6 EDUCATIONISTS' EXPERIENCES WITH LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.6.1 Language Learning and Teaching

Many language researchers believe that all children are natural language learners. Jones and Coffey (2006:2) note that children have "the cognitive flexibility and physiological apparatus to become competent and creative language users." In their view, children can "parrot" any new word they come across, either in their mother tongue or in a foreign language. They assert that learners have a natural, uninhibited use of language. Their other assertion, which they support with studies by Vilke, Sinleton, and Lenneberg (cited in Jones & Coffey 2006:6), is that a foreign language should be started as early as primary level. Jones and Coffey's Modern Foreign Languages project has achieved success in introducing a foreign language to primary level children (2006:6). In addition, Eyres (2007) notes that children are able to deduce grammatical rules, which allow them to express themselves by imposing their own structures on what they receive.

Haynes (2007) [online] states that all new learners of English language progress through five stages to acquire the language. The first stage is the silent period, in which learners listen attentively as they try to build receptive vocabulary. The second stage (which may last up to six months) is when learners develop a receptive and active vocabulary of about 1000 words. At this stage Haynes (ibid) says that learners speak in one or two word phrases. The third stage is called speech emergence and the learners develop a vocabulary of 3000 words. During this stage learners are able to construct simple sentences, which may or may not be correct. The fourth stage is the intermediate fluency in which a vocabulary of 6000 words is developed, and the last stage is the advanced fluency period (Haynes 2007) [online].

Tabors's (1997) two-year interaction with children learning English for the first time revealed that young learners go through 4 periods of developmental sequence. The first period during her research was home language use. During that period, learners interacted in their home language. The second period was non-verbal, where learners could not say anything because they would not know what to say in the new language they were trying to learn. The third period was the use of Telegraphic Speech during the early language acquisition process. The telegraphic speech used in the classroom consisted of identification of objects in English. The fourth period was marked by the use of Formulaic Speech. During formulaic speech, the learners would use "unanalysed formulaic phrases". Commonly used phrases were 'yes', 'no', 'I don't know', 'hi', 'lookit', and 'this'. As the learners interacted in their second language, they acquired new words and phrases. Tabors (1997:64) advises that when learners have acquired enough vocabulary, they can start a new process called productive language use. They will make mistakes. The teacher should encourage them to speak more.

Children involved in Tabors's (1997) work were three to five year olds, who were learning English for the first time. Some interesting aspects of classroom teaching and learning were noted:

1. A natural language learning classroom setting was created for interaction: Children interacted in their home languages and target language. Clark (n.d.) [online] points out that "preserving and strengthening the home language supports the continuity of cognitive growth in children."

2. The use of learning materials: The materials used included those within the learners' contexts.
3. The need to communicate in English: The "silent period" is important because learners use it to learn "survival phrases" which are later put to use. Krashen and Scarcella (cited in Ellis 1985:168) point out that learners develop formulaic speech as a response to communicative pressure. The focus is on the target language.
4. Application of underpinning learning theories: The second, third and fourth periods of language development are a true representation of Bruner's three stages of cognitive development – enactive, iconic and symbolic (cited in Mwamwenda 1995). Learners are not 'rushed' through, activities but are observed and assessed.

Tough (1995:23) and Yule (1992:6) say that during the teaching and learning process, the teacher should speak English to the learners all the time. Tough (1995) further explains that through every day classroom activities and participation in such activities, the child will become 'attuned' to English sound, pitch, rhythm and intonation. This author goes on to suggest that the teacher should speak clearly, "at a normal pace, at a level where the child can see the movement of the mouth, in a situation which supports the meaning of what is said", and should use simple gestures to reinforce meaning. Listening to the teacher is a very important part of learning because, as Haynes (2007) [online] observed, learners engage in the process of building their own receptive and active vocabulary.

Tough's (1995) strategy can be applied in the Grade 4 classroom. A child in Grade 4 has already completed 3 years of schooling. According to NCS policy for Foundation Phase – Grades R-3, "the additional language should be introduced as a subject in Grade 1" (Department of Education 2002a:5). This means that a child whose first additional language is English is introduced to English words and expressions as early as Grade 1. This is a way of creating an English environment for children, a condition Tough (1995: 23) calls 'readiness' for an additional language. Tough (1995:23) states that such 'readiness' "can only be achieved through hearing English used a great deal". This is the readiness that NCS young learners need. Hearing English used a "great deal" in lower grades (grades 1 to 3) is a way of promoting English language development. When the child starts Grade 4, he/she will be having enough

vocabulary to communicate, and understand school subjects. Bruner (1966) cited in Smith (2002) [online] emphasises that a child at any age of development can learn any subject, provided that that subject is taught effectively.

2.6.2 Teaching and learning listening, speaking, reading and writing

Jones and Coffey (2006:50-65) suggest practical ways of teaching and learning listening, speaking, reading and writing in a language that learners are learning for the first time.

Listening:

- Use visual aids and body language.
- Familiarise learners with different sounds of the language.
- Let learners listen to taped native speakers and ask learners to complete fill-in worksheets.
- Read to children so that they hear different words/sounds in the target language.

Speaking:

- When practising dialogue, make use of 'foreign' objects such as toys. Let the toys speak.
- Encourage learners to use the language in the classroom and around the school.
- Use pictures to create new linguistic links in the target language.
- Singing activities should be in the target language.

Reading:

- Read the textbooks found at school.
- Make story cards with the learners.
- Make paper clouds (from Hurrell's 1999 phonic clouds concepts) when teaching. Let learners identify words with -ough sounds, e.g. though, bough, cough, touch, and bought.

Writing:

Jones and Coffey (2006:65) suggest short dialogues and brief descriptions and provide this progression in writing, in the table below.

Table 2.1: Writing activities

TASK	DESCRIPTION
Copy Words	Colours: make labels for school furniture.
Gap-fill letter into words	Complete a partially completed crossword puzzle or word search.
Copy short phrases	Short dialogues.
Gap-fill words with short phrases	Complete learnt songs with words gapped.
Copy sentences	From board or dictation.
Gap-fill short phrases into sentences	Description of topics, e.g daily routine, talking about hobbies, ordering food.
Produce words	Labelling, writing topic lists in games.
Produce short phrases	Answer listening activity questions describing pictures, gap-filling in dialogue, finishing off sentences.
Produce sentences	Answering questions on a text, picture; writing a fuller description; translating sentences from mother tongue to second language.

2.6.3 Reading

Learners acquire reading skills by reading different texts. Haigh (1980:57-59) suggests that the teacher should read to the class, and learners should be allowed to read as well. Cambourne and Turbill (2007:10) and Haigh (1980) point out that learners should be immersed in books. Furthermore, parents should also be involved in the learning process by reading to children and encouraging them to read. Tizard and Hughes (1984) and Wells (1981) (cited in Tann 1991:146) found out that children to whom stories are read at home acquire basic concepts

about books and develop positive attitudes and motivation towards reading. Czerniewska (1996:103-107) adds that listening to stories helps children learn how to read, and to become independent and confident readers. Wells (1987:151) cited in Weinberger (1996:9) says that the benefit of listening to stories is that learners gain experience of "sustained meaning-building organisation of written language and its characteristics, rhythm and structures." Furthermore, Cambourne and Turbill (2007:10) add that skills such as rhyme, rhythm and repetition can be taught during reading.

2.6.4 Spelling

Although some people can read words they cannot spell, it is important to address spelling difficulties whenever observed. Westwood (1999:16) and Haigh (1980) point out that spelling and reading are interrelated. Bouffler (cited in Westwood 1999) says that learning to spell involves integration of phonemic, graphophonic, morphemic, semantic and syntactic knowledge. Furthermore, referring to research done by Ball and Blachman (1991) and Goswami (1992) on early stages of learning to read and spell, Westwood (1999) says it is important for children to identify different sound units within spoken words. For example, the teacher can teach rhyming. Haigh (1980:102-103) points out that although some 'authorities' are against teaching learners spelling rules, there are conditions under which one can teach such rules. Firstly, rules can be taught to learners in higher grades who battle with spelling. Secondly, if children make a particular kind of error, the teacher should give examples of sentences containing the conventions they have spelt wrongly and tell them the rule.

The table on page 29 indicates that if children are taught a language and they hear words in it, they will be able to produce the words, even though they may misspell them. They are beginning to notice sounds and are trying to represent the sounds with appropriate letters (Westwood 1999:12). This information can help teachers to establish at what stage of word spelling their learners are.

Table 2.2: Different Spelling Stages

STAGE	PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES:	
			Words	**Child spelling**
1. Pre-Phonemic	3+ yrs to 5+ yrs	'Pretend writing'		
2. Early Phonetic	4+ yrs to 6+ yrs	Use of acquired letter names and sounds	van, jam, sit, lost while, elephant, aeroplane, ask	vin, jem, set, las, yl, lefnt, erpln, rsk
3. Phonic	5+ yrs to 7+ yrs	1. Making sound / symbol relations. Most irregular words written as if phonetically regular	said, because, was, done, fight, eye, stopped, beautiful	sed, becos, wos, dun, fite, Iee, stopd, Bartfoll
		2. Still have difficulty in discriminating certain sounds. Difficulty reflected in words they write	truck, drive, train spoon (teach strategies such as visual imagery and spelling by analogy)	druck, grive chrane sboon
4. Transitional	6+ yrs to 11yrs	Confidence developing. Stored mental bank of words	-ough -ious -ai -aw	
5. Independence	11+ years	Almost perfect mastery of most complex grapho-phonic principles		

The researcher's observation is that one of the reasons learners cannot read and write is lack of or minimal exposure to words. Learners are supposed to see the words they interact with, and should practise writing them. According to NCS policy, Grade 4 learners are supposed to demonstrate a reading vocabulary of between 1000 and 2500 words. Learners whose language of learning and teaching is English should aim at 2500. Grade 5 learners should demonstrate between 2000 and 3500 and Grade 6 between 3000 and 5000. Learners are definitely expected to know how to spell these words.

Westwood (1999:9-11) gives the following suggestions on how spelling difficulties can be overcome:

- Learners who have spelling problems at phonetic stage should be taught strategies such as visual imagery and spelling analogy.
- A child whose work exhibits a high proportion of phonetic spellings will almost certainly benefit from being taught different word-attack strategies than a child whose errors indicate a lack of phonetic awareness.
- Lack of exposure to written words will make learners resort to phonetic approach.
- Working with sounds of spelling can lead to proficiency in spelling.
- It is important for children to identity different sounds within spoken words.

2.7 EFAL CURRICULUM DELIVERY

2.7.1 Stakeholders' Expectations of Implementers

Parents, learners and other stakeholders expect teachers to turn things around and improve the state of education in South Africa. One way of turning things around will be to improve the standard of English teaching and learning because English proficiency is essential to learners' educational needs and their chances of becoming successful in life. De Kadt's (1993) study conducted in Durban, which sampled workers and students, indicated that English was seen as a job requirement and lingua franca, and that there was a link between English and education. PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa), an independent research unit attached to the University of Cape Town, also pointed out that most South

Africans wanted to be taught in English because of the "obvious" economic and social benefits (PRAESA 2007 [online]).

The Department of Education has stipulated its own expectations of a South African teacher, too. Firstly, the Department of Education envisions teachers who are "qualified, competent, dedicated and caring" to implement NCS (Department of Education 2002a:3). Secondly, the Department has introduced seven roles of educators in the Norms and Standards for Educators. Teachers are expected to be mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of learning programmes, researchers and lifelong learners, assessors and Learning Area specialists (Department of Education 2002a:3). Indeed, "the role of the teacher as an agent of change has never been more obvious than today" Delors (1998:14).

What all the above expectations mean is that teaching has to be reshaped in order to meet the needs of learners, the government and other stakeholders. The question is: are there tools to meet these expectations? .As indicated earlier, NCS framework sets out clear learning outcomes to be demonstrated by the learners after being taught. The teacher's role is to plan, design, teach, facilitate and assess. In addition, the teacher sets his/her own goals for teaching and learning; chooses experiences to be carried out by the learners, and looks for methods which will help learners achieve the learning outcomes. Teachers have to help learners attain all the learning outcomes in their first additional language so that the learners can communicate confidently, respond critically to issues, access and process information, and create and interpret texts (Department of Education 2002a).

The implication therefore, is that English teachers should have competence similar or "near" similar to that of English native speakers in order to help learners reach appropriate levels of proficiency in English First Additional Language. This is supported by Klu's (2000:84) assertion that teachers of English need to be proficient in the language so that they can assist their learners.

2.7.2 NCS Classroom Practice: English First Additional Language (EFAL)

The adoption of the OBE curriculum has fundamental implications for the EFAL classroom. The relationship between the teacher and the learner is no longer that of "the knower/informer and information seeker," but, "producer/ referee and actor /player" (Ellis 2007) [online]. Doll (1993) points out that in the teaching and learning relationship, learning is dominant because the learner is self-directed and participates actively in the learning and teaching process. This means that the learner is responsible for his/her own learning, and teachers should direct the learning process. This does not imply that the teacher's work' has become less, though.

Teaching and learning a second language should be a challenge for NCS teachers. The teachers of EFAL should create "rich" linguistic environments to promote the development of English in their schools. Stubbs (1983:17) notes that schools and classrooms are pervasive language environments. Mercer (1996:140) states that classrooms create certain patterns of language use, which reflect the nature of learning and teaching.

In order to create language environments, young learners need to interact in their target language. Cummins (1984) identifies language proficiency skills, namely: interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. The former refers to everyday communication skills, which learners can acquire through interaction with others in the target language. The latter refers to cognitive academic language, which helps a learner cope with other school subjects. Haynes (2007) [online] points out that academic language acquisition includes comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating and inferring skills. Tabors (1997:81) adds, "Young children, then, certainly seem to understand that learning a second language is a cognitively challenging and time-consuming activity."

NCS enforces communicative language teaching (CTL) approach. Thompson (1996) cited in Alcon (2004:175) claims that (CTL) "is accepted as the dominant paradigm in language teaching." In addition, Alcon (2004:176) states that CTL is valid to set the goals in language learning and that teachers should find different methodologies for specific educational

contexts. The author's research on CTL showed that factors such as input, task design and focus on form can facilitate second language acquisition.

CTL is not the only approach to language teaching enforced by NCS. Other approaches are text-based, process writing and reading. The government has provided NCS policy documents as a framework from which teachers can operate. The title of each document and a short description follow:

1. *Overview*: Grades R-9. It is a 29 page booklet which provides information on NCS, OBE, definitions of learning areas, LO's, AS's and Assessment.
2. *Languages – English First Additional Language. Grades R-9 Policy*: It consists of 130 pages. It is the English syllabus for the General Education and Training Band (GET). It provides features, scope, LO's and the AS's of EFAL, and information on learner assessment.
3. *Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes: Languages – Grades R-9*. This is a 54 page document that helps teachers with planning.
4. *Assessment Guidelines for Languages: GET Grade 4-9* provides guidelines on learner assessment.

According to Department of Education (2003:1), the curriculum is implemented in schools by means of Learning Programmes, which are developed by teachers, and this has to happen within the NCS policy framework. The learning programme guidelines help teachers to execute learning, teaching and assessment practices effectively and help learners to achieve LO's.

In terms of NCS, Languages Learning Programme in the Intermediate Phase is a "distinct" Learning Programme. The focus is to ensure that all the prescribed learning outcomes are effectively treated by means of integrating LO's and clustering AS's (Department of Education 2003).

In English, skills, knowledge and values are acquired through the four language skills embedded in the six learning outcomes of EFAL, namely, listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing, thinking and reasoning, and language. These are elaborated on the next page.

EFAL for Grades R to 9 has 6 learning outcomes (LO). These are:

- *LO 1: Listening*

The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.

- *LO 2: Speaking*

The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.

- *LO 3: Reading and Viewing*

The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.

- *LO 4: Writing*

The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

- *LO 5: Thinking and Reasoning*

The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.

- *LO 6: Language Structure and Use*

The learner will know and be able to use sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts.
(Department of Education 2002a)

Each learning outcome has its own assessment standards (AS's), and an AS can have sub assessment standards.

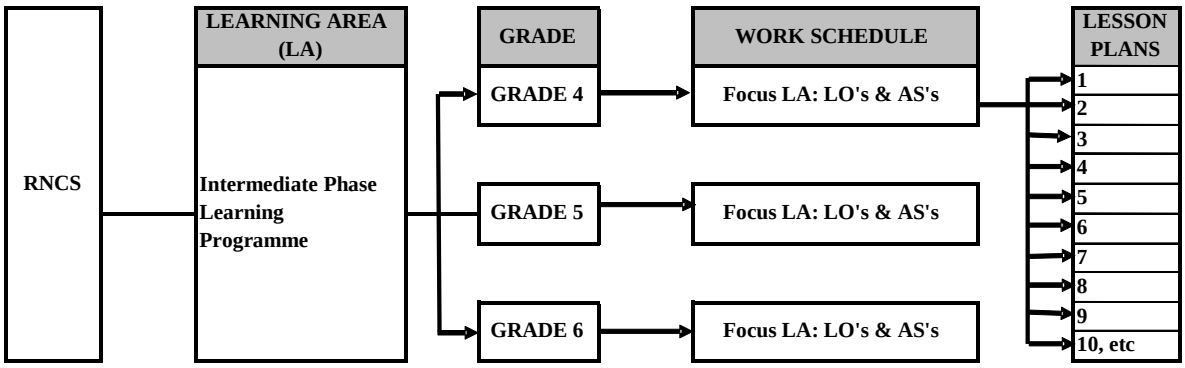
When one analyses the AS's, they show progression. The table on the next page shows the progression of assessment standards from Grades 4 to 6.

Table 2.3 Assessment Standards Progression

	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6
LO 1	AS's	AS's	AS's
	▪ Understands oral descriptions: • Identifies people, objects or places • Labels a diagram	▪ Understands oral descriptions: • Identifies people, objects or places • Labels a diagram • Notes relevant information e.g. on a chart	▪ Understands oral descriptions: • Identifies people, objects or places • Labels a diagram • Notes relevant information e.g. on a chart • Answers questions

In order to ensure that Learning Outcomes and their Assessment Standards, are covered and achieved, teachers have to follow NCS planning. NCS planning follows three stages. These are: Learning Programme, (phase planning), Work schedule (term planning) and Lesson Planning. The diagram on the next page shows the relationship among the three stages of planning, adopted from Teacher's Guide for Development of Learning Programmes.

Figure 2.1 Stages of Planning



In accordance with the NCS policy, the following factors should be taken into account when planning:

1. NCS principles e.g. social justice, a healthy environment, human rights, inclusivity.
2. NCS Policy.
3. Resources available.
4. Social, emotional and physical needs of the learners.
5. Barriers to learning and different learning styles.

This type of planning shows that teachers need to have in-depth knowledge of the curriculum. Planned classroom tasks and activities should be policy compliant. Learning theories in OBE approach should be key to all activities. Furthermore, all classroom activities should be varied in order to promote language development and to cater for different learning styles. In addition, the teachers should understand the linguistic needs of their language learners and address them. Moreover, the activities should relate to the Critical and Developmental Outcomes. Spady (1994) stresses that at the end of a teaching and learning process, learners should demonstrate high quality outcomes as well as significant learning.

2.8 ASSESSMENT

2.8.1 Definition

Brady (1983:130) defines assessment as the means by which learners' performance is determined. The purpose of assessment is to gather information about the learners' academic development. In NCS, assessment is part of learning and teaching, and should be done in accordance with OBE approach.

2.8.2 Continuous Assessment

According to the Department of Education (2002a:115) Continuous Assessment (CASS) is the main method by which assessment takes place. This school based assessment process is ongoing. In EFAL, all learning outcomes are assessed using NCS policy document for GET: Grades R-9 and the national assessment guidelines. In Grades 4-8, CASS comprises 100% of the final mark.

CASS is divided into two parts, namely, Formal and Informal Assessment. The former refers to all recorded assessment tasks, and the latter refers to daily activities. Furthermore, the policy states that all formal recorded assessment tasks to be covered over a year give learners and teachers an opportunity to cover all the LO's and AS's.

2.8.3 Forms of Assessment

Assessment Guidelines for Languages GET: Grade 4-9 (Department of Education n.d.:31) and Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes (Department of Education 2003:26) list the following aspects of learning and teaching for languages:

- Text-based approach (response to text).
- Process approach to creative, functional or transactional writing.
- Reading strategies.
- Communicative approach (spoken language – oral work).

2.8.4 Assessment Tasks

According to the Department of Education (n.d.:16), Grades 4-6 learners taking EFAL are required to complete 8 formal recorded assessment tasks, that is, 2 tasks in each term. In languages, a formal task consists of a number of assessment activities (Department of Education n.d.:24-25). This means that each assessment task should assess different skills. Tasks are used to measure whether learners achieve the learning outcomes.

When planning tasks, the teacher should follow the following guidelines derived from Assessment Guidelines for Languages GET: Grade 4-9 (Department of Education n.d.:26-29):

- The purpose of assessment should be clear and the tasks should be on community, national and international issues.
- Each task should indicate clearly what outcomes will be covered.
- All learners should be given the opportunity to learn what is being measured.
- Consider resources and time.
- Give clear instructions on how the task will be assessed.

Johnson (1989:190) states that a valid language-learning task has five components:

1. Task Objectives.
2. Task Content.
3. Task procedures.
4. Learner contributions to the task in terms of knowledge, skills or abilities.
5. Task situation in terms of conditions and resources.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented curriculum definitions and models; theories on language acquisition; different perspectives on second language teaching and learning and South Africa's OBE curriculum.

The next chapter presents the research methodology for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is, firstly, to discuss research approaches to be considered when embarking on social science research. Secondly, the chapter will demonstrate why the qualitative case study approach was chosen. Thirdly, it will show how the credibility/trustworthiness of the study was established, and, finally, explain the procedures adopted.

3.2 CHOOSING A RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research designs assist researchers to answer the research question. The design chosen for this research is case study. Case study method has influenced the choice of methodology for this research. During the planning of this research, the researcher considered and reviewed two research approaches; positivism and the qualitative approach, the reason being that a case study research can be either positivist or qualitative.

3.2.1 Positivism

Description

Positivism is a research methodology based on a scientific approach to inquiry. Wikipedia Encyclopaedia [online] describes scientific enquiry as a method of enquiry based on "gathering observable, empirical and measurable evidence, subject to specific principles of reasoning". Positivism assumes that reality is objective and observable. It also assumes that the researcher is "independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research" (Remenyi et al. cited in Saunders et al. 2000:85).

Positivism aims at explaining causal links between variables. Quantitative, deductive and experimental approaches are associated with positivism.

Criticism of Positivism

Positivism has been criticised for applying natural science rules to the social world. Positivist researchers are criticised as being external observers who detach themselves from the research world. Another criticism against positivism is its stance towards the prediction of human behaviour and generalisation of research results. Usher (1996:18) argues that "knowledge is concerned not with generalisation, prediction and control, but with interpretation, meaning and illumination." Lincoln and Guba (1987) raise the issue of ethics. They point out that research participants are treated as though they are objects in the name of "reality". In addition, positivism is said to lead to the depersonalization and devaluing of human life (Keller cited in Lincoln & Guba 1987:10).

3.2.2 Qualitative Approach

Description

Qualitative methodology is a social science research approach which was developed to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena (Myers 1997). Qualitative methodology helps researchers to have understanding of behaviours and experiences of research participants and their social and cultural context. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:4) state that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world. They explain that qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of the phenomena being studied and interpret them "in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Ibid). Qualitative research interprets these behaviours and experiences in words, not in figures, thus providing depth and "thick" description of social reality. In addition, Cresswell (1994:147) points out that qualitative research is interpretive research. Interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding and making sense of the social world.

Furthermore, Krauss (2005:760) points out that qualitative research is based on a "relativistic, constructivist ontology that posits that there is no objective reality, rather … multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest."

Qualitative approach allows researcher to study subjects in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). Another attribute and strength of qualitative research is its potential to form new hypotheses (Brown 2003 cited in Mackey & Gass 2005:164) which can later be tested.

Criticism of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has been criticised for its subjective stance. Proponents of positivism say that it uses unscientific methods, and this becomes a threat to credibility and validity of the research results.

Having examined the two research approaches, the researcher intends to employ qualitative case study approach in this research.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN: WHY THE CHOICE OF A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY RESEARCH METHOD

The design used in this research is case study. Case studies can be either positivist or qualitative. This research is going to follow qualitative case study method to carry out observations and document analysis in the Grade 4 English classroom. McBeath and Richards (1988) [online] add that the case study method is approved by researchers working within interpretive or critical theoretical frameworks because it allows researchers to explore "in a more holistic fashion the multifaceted and complex nature of social reality." The choice of case study method has been influenced by a number of reasons.

Firstly, the nature of the research questions necessitated the use of case study methodology. The main question in this study is: How do grade 4 teachers implement English First Additional Language curriculum in Moshaweng Circuit? In other words, "How do teachers teach English first additional language?" and "How do learners learn and what do they learn?" In order to address the research question, the researcher has to examine and understand teachers' engagement with NCS, and their pedagogical practice. The researcher aims at collecting detailed and relevant information during classroom observations and from documents. Cohen and Manion (1994:106) state that the case study researcher "typically

observes the characteristics of an individual unit," with the intention of probing "deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of that unit." So, it is hoped that the case study will provide detailed description on English teaching and learning and that the empirical data and information generated will address the needs of the research question. Furthermore, it is hoped that the data collected in this study will provide important insights into South Africa's NCS and will "shed light" on problems associated with teaching and learning English first additional language in South Africa's primary schools. Saunders et al. (2000:94) point out that the case study technique can be a worthwhile way of exploring existing theory. In addition, the data could provide sufficient information for the reader to draw his or her own conclusions other than those presented by the researcher (Nunan: 1992:77).

Secondly, the focus of this study is to investigate what teachers and learners ("a bounded system bound by time and place") (Cresswell 1998:61) do in the classroom during the process of teaching and learning. The teachers and learners have to interact and form relationships. The case study method is suitable for analysing interactions between teachers and their learners as they construct meaning and try to make sense of their world. According to Miller (1997) [online], case studies have a potential "to reveal rich contextual findings of a personal, social and pedagogical nature which cannot be easily obtained by other methods."

Thirdly, using the case study method is advantageous because it allows the researcher to study the phenomenon under investigation in its own natural context.

Fourthly, another advantage is that it allows the researcher to use a number of data collection techniques (Yin 2003). In this study, observations and document analysis are going to be used to collect data. Qualitative approach and interpretive epistemology will also be used to analyse data and interpret the findings.

Lastly, as a curriculum advisor, the researcher had to interact with teachers at professional level. During the planning of this research and the negotiation, the researcher had to consider the research approach which would make her part of the teaching and learning world, not be

detached from the research. As a qualitative case study researcher, the researcher had to be part of the research process, be understanding and sensitive throughout the whole research process. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:8) reiterate that qualitative research emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and the situational constraint that shapes the enquiry. If the researcher had remained objective and uninvolved in the whole process of investigation, she would have defeated the purpose of her job. The work of curriculum advisors is to support and guide teachers all the time, and they do this through interaction and forming relationships. They have to be mindful of people's context and their circumstances. In addition, they have to gain understanding of what takes place in the classroom and this cannot happen if they are "outside" the social contexts. Therefore, the qualitative case study method is the most appropriate for this study.

The case study method has its limitations and weaknesses too. The most common criticism levelled against case study is its lack of generalisation of the results. Critics argue that generalisations cannot be made from a single case. Stake (cited in Brown 2008:6) states that case studies' subjective procedures are weaker than the experimental or co-relational studies for explaining things. Further criticisms cited in Yin (2003:10) are the lack of rigour and the fact that the process takes too long. Strydom (2002:156) states that the case study technique is a weak evaluation design and should be utilised as the last resort.

This study is concerned with understanding English curriculum implementation in Grade 4 classroom. The assumption is that the results obtained will provide insight into complexities surrounding English First Additional Language teaching and learning. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:36) point out that, case studies provide "a complete understanding of a complex situation, identify uninterested consequences and examine the process of policy implementation." Yin (1994:10) points out that the goal of case study method is to generalise theories not to make statistical generalisation. In conclusion, the researcher believes that a research of this nature requires the qualitative case study approach because learning and teaching cannot be measured in terms of mathematical figures only. Woods (1992:349) emphasises that a research method should respect the nature of reality and enquiry.

3.4 THE REJECTION OF A POSITIVIST PARADIGM

This study is conducted as an attempt to understand the complexities surrounding the teaching and learning of English First Additional Language. In this study, the researcher attempts to examine how the participants (learners and teachers) construct meaning through interaction with their school environment. In addition, the researcher attempts to understand how curriculum implementation is carried out in the English classroom. A method that describes and interprets people's experiences and circumstances is most appropriate in this regard. A scientific method will inhibit the researcher from describing and interpreting the results of this research. Nielson (1990:7) states that social science researchers are concerned with the importance of meaning in research and the limiting of research to observable human action misses "the most important part of the story." In this study, the most important part of the story is to know whether learners in the cases selected acquire necessary skills in English.

In language, actions play an important part. Examples of classroom actions are interactions and non-verbal communication. The positivist approach cannot analyse such behaviours. Human actions are observed, recorded and interpreted using qualitative or interpretive research. Positivism is more appropriate in experimental studies than in studies involving human beings.

3.5 PROCEDURES

The value of any research lies in the nature of the research questions, the ways in which data are collected and the ways in which findings are generated and reported. This section will be a discussion of the sampling, data collection methods, data analysis and credibility of the study.

3.5.1 Sampling and Sample Participants

This study focussed on 3 of 58 primary schools in former Moshaweng Circuit, in the Northern Cape. The study utilised cluster sampling. In other words, the schools were selected from their existing geographically demarcated clusters. For example, schools in the western part of former Moshaweng Circuit were termed West schools, those in the central part were

Central schools and those in the eastern part were termed East schools. The researcher selected one school from each cluster. The selection was done based on how accessible the school was. For the purpose of this research, the researcher uses codes for the selected schools in order to conceal their identity. Thus, the terms East, Central and West will be the codes used to identify the schools. The choice of sampling method is supported by the view of Saunders et al. (2000:166) that clusters can be based on any naturally occurring groupings.

Since the case study approach was used in this study, the sampling method was appropriate. A 'case' is an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon, not the number of people sampled (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:403). In addition, the sole criterion for choosing cases for a case study should be the opportunity to learn (Stake cited in Fouche 2002:275).

The participants in this study were two primary school teachers and Grade 4 primary learners whose age ranged from 9 to 11. The third primary school was not included in the classroom observations. Only document analysis was carried out for the third school.

3.5.2 Data Collection Method

During the planning of this research, the intention was to use the questionnaire as one of the data collection tools. However, it was later realised that questionnaires would not provide useful/adequate data to answer the research question. Therefore, the two data collection methods employed in this study are classroom observation and document analysis.

Observations

Classroom observations took place at two selected schools; one in the east, the other in the west. Central was not included in the observation plan.The following evidence was sought from the observations:

- Whether learning outcomes were the focus of the lesson.
- Whether the activities embedded skills, knowledge and values.

- What form of teaching and learning strategy was used – communicative, reading, process writing or text based.
- Any assessment as part of learning and teaching.
- Planning.

The researcher was responsible for the classroom observations. During these observations the researcher took notes of all the activities. Cameras and video cameras were not used. These were avoided for the following reasons: First, the researcher wanted learning to take place in as naturally a setting as possible; cameras would interfere with the natural process of learning and teaching. Secondly, she did not want to look intimidating and to make everybody around the school feel her presence. She wanted to establish trust between herself and the participants and did not want to be viewed as a reporter. Thirdly, she wanted her research to follow the natural and unobtrusive pattern of observation advocated by Woods (1992:349).

The researcher devised an observation checklist (Appendix A) based on OBE, since the researcher was observing a model. The checklist included the ideas of McMillan and Schumacher (2001:40) and Saunders et al. (2000:231) on structured observations.

Document Analysis

The documents analysed were learners' portfolio files, class-work exercise books, educators' portfolio files and lesson plans, and mark schedules. Learners' profiles were left out of this analysis as their evidence would not help.

An audit of a sample of learner portfolios was done to check the number of tasks given to learners. The tasks were then analysed to check whether relevant assessment tasks were treated for continuous assessment. The researcher carried out classroom observations in the West and in the East only. Document analysis was carried out for the East and Central. The following evidence was sought from the document analysis

- Whether learning outcomes had been covered.
- Whether activities and tasks embedded skills, knowledge and values.
- Whether adequate number of tasks had been given for continuous assessment.

- Whether communicative, reading, process writing and text-based tasks were given.

3.5.3 Data Analysis

Webb and Glesne (1992:796) describe data analysis as an effort to construct order out of "the booming, buzzing confusion" that usually stands before the researcher.

There were two stages of data analysis. The first stage was during the collection of the data. The second was after the completion of the field work. Data were analysed manually. The line by line coding proffered by Webb and Glesne (1992:799) was followed. Webb and Glesne explain that the advantage of this method is that it opens up room for hypotheses, questions and other possibilities. The notes on classroom observations were analysed using this method. The analysis method made room for questions about teaching and learning. Two other methods used to analyse the classroom observation data were conceptual analysis and discourse analysis. These methods are described in Chapter 4.

To analyse documents (learners and teachers' portfolios), a checklist was used. (Appendix B). The checklist showed the number of learning outcomes and assessment standards covered, skills and knowledge (purpose of assessment) acquired, as well as the number of tasks covered.

3.5.4 Credibility of the study

Qualitative approach provides different ways of demonstrating the credibility and validity of research findings. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) describe validity as the degree to which "the interpretations and concepts have mutual meaning between the participants and the researcher." The most commonly used is triangulation. Pitman and Maxwell (1992:762-763) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) point out that a combination of data collection techniques can ensure validity. In this research, the credibility or trustworthiness of the results was established through the use of the multiple methods mentioned below.

Ethnographic methods were used to collect data. Furthermore, the qualitative method, conceptual analysis and discourse analysis were used to understand and analyse the learning

process. Using a number of methods allows for triangulation that generates a greater degree of rigour, authenticity and validity.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed firstly, research approaches to be considered when embarking on a research. Secondly, it demonstrated why the qualitative case study approach was chosen. Thirdly, it showed how the credibility/trustworthiness of the study was established, and, finally, explained the procedures adopted.

In the next chapter, the findings of this study will be analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher reports on the data collection and analysis processes of the research. The data collection and analysis techniques used in this study were in line with qualitative case study methodology. In addition, the researcher drew from the guidelines provided in the literature on ways of collecting, analysing and interpreting data. Ethnographic methods were used to collect data. Conceptual analysis, discourse analysis and checklist matrix were used to analyse data.

This chapter is sectioned according to the following headings: the ethical principles, the role of the researcher, the profile of the Grade 4 learner, lesson observations analysis and documents analysis.

4.2 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the two principals and the English teachers of the schools where observations were carried out. The Coordinator of Curriculum Unit granted the researcher permission to use information on documents for the Central school. The researcher gave the principals and the teachers verbal explanations why she was interested in investigating the learning and teaching of English. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participating schools, it was agreed that names would not be used.

4.3 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE

My role at the research site was not only to observe lessons, but to give support and guidance to the teachers. Carrying out research among the people one works with can be an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time. In my case it was an advantage because I had already established good rapport with the teachers I worked with. It was a disadvantage because teachers were likely to hold back, lose trust in me and be less cooperative for fear that the results would be used against them. I explained that I believed that the findings of the

research would help me do my work better and would help other educators responsible for English first additional language. After conducting lesson observations at the schools, I sat with the teachers and discussed the problems identified.

4.4 THE PROFILE OF THE GRADE 4 LEARNER

The home language of the Grade 4 learners involved in this study is Setswana, and English is their additional language. English is the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) as well as a subject. According to NCS policy, these learners are expected to have acquired certain skills and knowledge in English at the Foundation Phase – Grades 1-3. According to Krashen (1982) and Haynes (2007), a learner at the intermediate fluency stage has the ability to generate sentences. Thus, it was assumed that the Grade 4 learners in the sampled schools, or elsewhere in the country, had acquired the knowledge and skills similar to the ones outlined below (in table 4.1), to help them cope with Grade 4 work. Another assumption was that since these learners were in grade 4, they had developed language proficiency in their home language. The table below illustrates the assessment standards or the content that Foundation Phase learners are supposed to have covered at the end of the phase (Grade 3).

Table 4.1 Foundation Phase Assessment Standards

<table>
<tr><th>L O 1
Listening</th><th>L O 2
Speaking</th><th>L O 3
Reading and Viewing</th><th>L O 4
Writing</th><th>L O 5
Thinking and Reasoning</th><th>L O 6
Language Structure and Use</th></tr>
<tr><td>Recalls and retells stories</td><td>Performs a rhyme, poem</td><td>Understands picture story</td><td>Writes labels</td><td rowspan="2">Compares things critically</td><td>Understands tenses</td></tr>
<tr><td>Answers literal comprehension questions</td><td>Answers questions using phrases</td><td>Relates story to visuals</td><td>Spells common words</td><td rowspan="3">Participates in group discussions</td><td rowspan="2">Understands sequencing language</td></tr>
<tr><td>Completes simple charts</td><td>Makes requests</td><td rowspan="2">Predicts delete on</td><td>Writes sentences</td><td>Uses adjectives</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Recognises</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

		words			
Follows instructions Correctly	Talks about pictures and objects	Discusses pictures critically	Uses punctuation	Uses language to understand concepts and vocabulary relating to different Learning Areas	Uses adverbs
Has developed phonic awareness	Pays attention to pronunciation		Enters words in personal dictionary Writes short pieces of writing e.g. dialogue		Understands how to express possibilities
Listens to others when using their additional language	Recounts a sequence of experiences/ events	Reads aloud, with increasing speed and fluency			Understands and uses question forms
	Participates in conversations	Reads on his/ her own	Sequences sentences to make paragraphs Writes recounts		
Expresses feelings about stories		Demonstrates a reading vocabulary of 700-1500		Carries out simple survey, records	
Summaries stories with teacher's support	Gives instructions				Understands between 1500 and 3000 words

(The contents of this table have been adapted from NCS policy document for English First Additional Language Grade R-9)

4.5 OBSERVATIONS

4.5.1 East School

4.5.1.1 Profile of East School

This school is situated in a village about 60km from the Kgalagadi Education District Office in Mothibistad. I visited the school on 4 October 2007 for portfolio analysis and on 9 October

2007 for lesson observation. The school accommodates learners from Grades 1 to 7. There were 6 teachers at the school – 3 in the Foundation Phase and 3 in the Intermediate Phase.

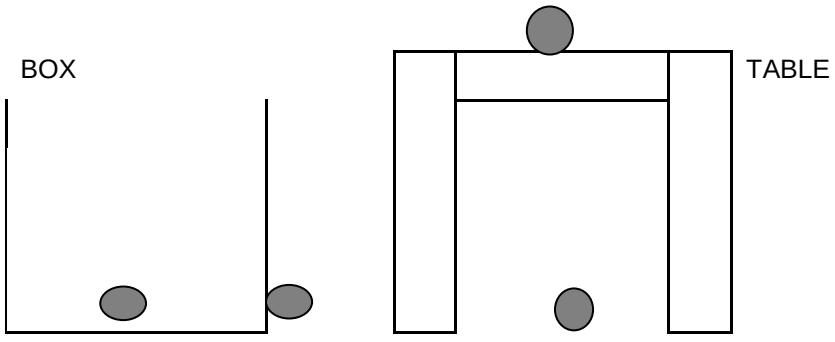
4.5.1.2 The lesson observation

I arrived at the school at 9 am. The lesson to be observed was to start at 12 noon. The Grade 4 classroom was neat. There were 34 learners in the classroom. There was not much furniture. The following items were on the walls of the classroom, all written in English: The Lord's prayer, classroom rules, and a poster about children and choices.

The duration of the lesson was an hour – from 12 noon to 1 pm. I requested to see the lesson plan but the teacher had not drafted it. The learners greeted me and greeted the teacher. The teacher introduced me to the learners, speaking in a mixture of English and Setswana.

The teacher introduced his lesson: "Today's topic is Preposition of place". The teacher explained what the phrase meant in Setswana. (Setswana is the learners' home languge). The teacher drew 2 sketches, one of a box and the other of a table, and drew balls at different positions. The teacher asked the learners, in Setswana, to construct sentences orally using the given illustrations – (figure 4.1 below).

Figure 4.1 Class activity



Learner 1: The ball is in the box.

Learner 2: The ball of the box.

Teacher: Leka hape (meaning “try again”)
Learner 3: The ball of the box.
The teacher corrected Learners 2 and 3 in Setswana: “Ho bapa le” (meaning “next to”).
Learner 4: The ball is under the table.
Learner 5: The ball is top the box..
Teacher: O lekile. (meaning “He has tried.”)
The teacher corrected Learner 5, saying, “The ball is on top of the box.” He asked the learners to repeat after him, and translated “on top” into Setswana: “Mo godimo ga box.” (It was not clear which ball the learner was talking about because there was no ball on top of the box.)

The teacher went on in Setswana: “Sheba moo classeng. Sheba gore where that thing is. Sheba sengwe u bolele se ko kae.” (This, when translated, means “Look around and tell us where the item you are talking about is.”) The learners raised their hands up to answer.

Learner 6: The books are in the cupboard.
Learner 7: The file is in the shelf.
Learner 8: The table is in the classroom.
Learner 9: The chalkboard is next to… [The learner pauses].
The teacher asked in English and Setswana, “Next to what? / E bapile leng?” There was no answer from the learner. Speaking in Setswana, the teacher asked one learner to stand up.
Teacher: This learner o eme fa kae? O eme mo classroom. Is next to table. No, o bapile le tafole.He is next to Olebogeng. Girls, bua sengwe. Ke ekare wena o didimetse.
(Translated: Where is the learner standing? He is standing in the classroom. No, he is next to the table. Girls, say something. Why are you quiet?).

The teacher wrote the following words on the chalkboard: (a) in (b) on (c) next to (d) under (e) between, and gave the following instruction orally:
“Look around the classroom and use (a) in (b) on (c) next to (d) under (e) between. Ke classwork e khutshwane.”

Learners took out their class work books. The teacher gave more oral instructions in Setswana, as follows:

1. O se ke wa kwala tse dikwadilweng.
2. O shebe gore sentence tsa gao di se tshwane le tsa ba bang.
3. U underline preposition ya gao.

As the learners wrote the work, the teacher moved round to mark the class work. I managed to go round to check the learners' work as well. Some learners had correct sentences. Examples of these are: "I am in the classroom", "The book is on the table", "Peace is next to the table", "Thuto is between Thabo and Tumelo". One learner's sentence read, "My feet is under the table". That was marked correctly. One other sentence read, "The children is in the classroom". The teacher had cancelled 'is', replaced it with 'are' and put a tick. Another sentence was, "The blezn in under the box". The teacher had corrected 'blezn' to 'basin'. Chair was spelled 'cair', cardboard as 'cardport', and notice board as 'notece bord'. The teacher marked all the books. It was the end of the lesson. There was no feedback.

4.5.1.3 Analysis and interpretation of East School observation

During the planning of this research, I never anticipated conducting conceptual analysis for classroom observation. I never expected the teacher to teach an English lesson in Setswana (the home language of the learners). He really took me by surprise! (After the lesson, I asked the teacher why the lesson was in Setswana and the explanation was that learners did not know English.) I decided to conduct a conceptual analysis to determine how many times Setswana phrases and words were used. I followed Busch et al. (2005) [online] guidelines.

Conceptual analysis is a research tool, which involves establishing the existence and frequency of concepts in a text (Busch, et al. 2005) [online]. The term 'text' includes books, discussions, speeches, conversations and communicative language. In this study, this technique was used to analyse teaching, learning and assessment at East school, during the classroom observation.

To conduct conceptual analysis, a researcher needs to code the concepts to be examined from the text at different levels – words, phrases or themes. I decided to code all Setswana words

appearing in the observation data. So the analysis was based on, firstly, the existence of Setswana words and, secondly, their frequency. I did line by line coding and coded all the Setswana sentences, phrases and words uttered by the teacher. All that was left were the English words. I coded them as well.

The analysis revealed that the teacher uttered 20 Setswana sentences/phrases, comprising 90 words. The teacher uttered 14 English words. Two full English sentences were coded. The following are the examples of what was coded: The teacher introduced me to the learners in Setswana. The greeting was in Setswana and the introduction of the lesson was in English and Setswana. Most sentences were in Setswana mixed with English, as illustrated in the lesson observation above.

Should we assume that this situation happens every day of school, then the learners would be hearing 4680 Setswana words per term, if a term is 52 days, and 13140 words per year, if a year is 146 school days. That would leave them with only 728 English words in a term of 52 days and 2 044 words in a year of 146 school days. This analysis revealed there was more Setswana than English in an English lesson. This means that the learners were developing Setswana vocabulary, instead of English vocabulary. Apart from the prepositions introduced to the learners, there were no other "rare" words or phrases introduced to the learners. To promote English language development, the learners ought to hear many words and phrases in their target language.

Setswana interference was also noticed in learners' work, for example, 'cardport' for card board and 'notece bord' for notice board. The same interference was noted during the analysis of learners' portfolios. Some interference from either Setswana or Setswana-borrowed words was evident in portfolio activities as well. For example, potatoes was spelled as 'potatose', meal as 'mealie' by the teacher and 'imealie' by learners, and pineapple as 'appel nepi' / 'appel peni'.

Although the teacher interacted quite well with the learners, he did not do so in the target language. Again, the activity was based on "out of context" grammar. Linguists encourage

teachers to teach grammar within the context of texts. Furthermore, NCS policy for English First Additional Language states that Grade 4 learners whose LOLT is their additional language should develop a vocabulary of 2500 common spoken words. Experienced educationists such as Tough (1995) and Yule (1992) say that during teaching and learning, teachers should speak English to the learners all the time. This means that learners should hear more words in the target language and get used to its sound. Furthermore, the researcher observed that, the use of Setswana was not to clarify concepts or make learning easier for the learners, but was used indiscriminately.

Strauss cited in Webb & Glesne (1992:799) says that during qualitative research observations and data analysis, questions emerge from the phenomenon being studied. In this study, the following questions emerged:

1. Was the teacher's style of teaching effective in terms of the teacher's objectives for this lesson?
2. Was the selected activity helpful to the learners?
3. What were the teacher's objectives for this lesson? Did the teacher achieve these objectives?
4. Were any of the learners' language needs met?

It was obvious that the learners had not acquired the knowledge appropriate for their grade level. Grade 4 content does not include prepositions. The teacher did not plan for the lesson. There was no evidence of NCS planning in the teacher's portfolio file. From the work given to learners, it is clear that the teacher picks any aspect of English grammar and teaches this, because none of the work that was done at the school covered the designed assessment standards. During our discussion after the lesson, the teacher admitted to not having used NCS standards at all and to not having planned for the lesson. Furthermore, the teacher did not give any feedback.

There were strong points in the lesson, though. The interaction between the teacher and the learners was appropriate. The teacher used drawings to illustrate the lesson, and according to learner centred theories, children learn better with pictures, objects and illustrations. What I

noticed was that learners interpreted what they saw written on the board (illustrations) using the words they had learned. Learners did not speak Setswana. They were able to construct knowledge and meaning for themselves from what they already knew. This means that they had acquired their own formulaic sentences which they used when answering questions. If they were to hear more English words, they would improve their vocabulary base.

4.5.2 West School

4.5.2.1 Profile of West school

The school is situated in one of the villages in Heinenvlei, about 150 km from the Education District Office. There were four teachers in the school: two for Foundation Phase and two for Intermediate Phase. I visited the school on 11 October 2007. The Grade 4 classroom was neat. There were no posters on the walls. The only document found on the wall was the classroom rules.

4.5.2.2 The lesson observation

The duration of the lesson was one hour, from 10 am to 11 am. The teacher had drafted a lesson plan for the lesson. The Learning Outcome (LO) to be treated was indicated. However, the Assessment Standards (AS's) were not indicated.

I was introduced to the learners. The teacher introduced her lesson. The lesson was about a poem titled 'Mother', adapted from the Human Sciences Research Council's Assessment Resource Banks Pilot Application. The poem was written on the chalk board. The name of the author of the poem was not written.

The lesson was based on Learning Outcome 3 (LO3) - Reading and Viewing. The teacher read the poem to the learners twice. No learner was given a chance to read. After reading, the teacher explained what the poem was about. The teacher explained the unfamiliar words to the learners, verbally. None of the learners attempted to write down the meaning of the words. They sat quietly, listening to the teacher. There were a few instances of code switching to Setswana, for example, "Lea tlhaloganya" ("Do you understand?"). The learners would reply, "Ee mma" ("Yes, Madam"). None of them said "No".

The teacher told the learners to take out their class-work books. The teacher then handed out question papers and told the learners to answer all the questions. Answers were supposed to be written on the question papers. After writing, the teacher collected the answer sheets. That was the end of the lesson. The teacher allowed me to make copies of the class-work. That gave me the opportunity to analyse the work of the learners and to examine their literacy level in English. It was an opportunity for me to construct my own interpretation of the learning and teaching of English to the Grade 4 learners.

4.5.2.3 Analysis and interpretation of West school observation

In this part of the section, I attempt to analyse the lesson by interpreting learning and teaching using the principles of discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis is concerned with the form and function of spoken and written language (Demo 2001) [online]. Stubbs (1983:1) states that discourse analysis is involved with language use in a social context, for instance, interactive language. Stubbs (Ibid) further states that discourse analysis is an attempt to study language organisation beyond a sentence or phrase. In this study, discourse analysis is going to be used to analyse the classroom observations at West school.

My analysis will follow four steps: the first step will be the analysis of the poem; the second will be AS's, the third will be the analysis of the questions and how the learners performed (learner scores on the class-work are shown in Table 4.2); and the last will be language literacy.

Below are the ten-line poem and subsequent questions given to the learners. This analysis should be read in line with the scores presented in Table 4.2 on page 62-63.

Mother

1. Mother's a person who's always
2. For food and clothing, somehow money is found
3. She's kept me safe and made me strong

4. and taught me the difference between right and wrong

5. She once was a child so she knows how it feels
6. Her love and wisdom are always real
7. Sometimes I get angry when I can't have my way
8. But I know she's right at the end of the day

9. Taking mothers for granted is something we do
10. So today let's just thank her and say, "I love you."

Questions

1. Fill in the correct answer in the blank spaces: This poem is about (a)….. It has (b)…..verses. Each verse has (c) …. lines, except for verse 3 which has (d) …. lines. Altogether there are (e) ….lines in this poem.
2. Find the words in the poem that rhyme with the following:
   (a) around (line 1); (b) wrong (line 4); (c) day (line 8); (d) do (line 9).
3. Can you think of two other words in the poem that rhyme with the following:
   food, money, love?
4. Which word, beginning with an 'r' is repeated in lines 4 and 8?
5. Name two things that mothers provide (verse 1): …….. and ……
6. When does the writer get angry? (verse 2) …….
7. What does the writer suggest we should say to our mothers today? (verse 3)

Step 1: Poem

The teacher did not explain the title of the poem. Perhaps the feeling was that 'mother' was a known word. That was not the case though, because out of 23 learners only 6 got question 1 (a) right. Learners may not have known what the word 'mother' meant. Learners were not given the opportunity to construct their own knowledge, based on their experiences, about what they already knew about mothers. Learners have mothers and should have been allowed to share ideas and experiences about their own mothers. The educator did not relate the lesson to the real life situation.

LO3 is about reading and viewing, but there was nothing to view. I was expecting pictures or illustrations of ‘a mother’, ‘food’, ‘clothes’, ‘money’ or ‘objects’ representing any of these because objects and pictures help children learn effectively.

Features of poetry such as lines, verses and rhyming were not treated at all, even though there were questions on them. The teacher did not identify and explain the meanings of these features to the learners. Questions 1 and 2 were on lines, verses and rhyming. The scores for question 1 were: (a) 6 (b) 1 (c) 0 (d) 0 (e) 0. The scores for question 2 were: (a) 4 (b) 1 (c) 1 (d) 2.

The researcher found this original version of the poem inappropriate for second language Grade 4 learners. The teacher should have reconstructed the poem by writing it in simpler and clearer language. For example, the first and second lines should have read: ‘Mother is a person who gives me food, clothes and money.’ Perhaps some learners would have even suggested that they get money from their fathers too. That would have been appropriate, since learners would have been allowed to construct their learning from their own experiences. After all, “children see the world differently from adults, not more stupidly” (Cullingford 1990:39). Thus, the teacher’s task is to help learners modify their knowledge “by negotiating new positions” (Jawaorski 1996): [online].

Step 2: Assessment Standards (AS’s)

The teacher did not choose assessment standards to treat, from LO3. It was not clear what skill or knowledge the teacher wanted the learners to acquire. LO3, has several activities on poetry. For example AS2 of the same LO gives elements of poetry to be taught to the learners. These are rhyming pattern, words which begin with the same sound, and words which represent their sounds. The teacher should have decided on a skill and the knowledge to be learned for that lesson and assess that particular skill or knowledge. From the performance of the learners, as indicated in Table 4.2, it is evident that effective learning did not take place.

Step 3: Questions

The question paper given to learners was not audited to check whether it matched the abilities of the learners. Question 5 may sound like an easy question but it is not. Learners did not know the meaning of the word 'provide'. The teacher should have taken into consideration the language level of the learners. The word 'provide' should have been replaced with a familiar one e.g. 'give'. It must have been very confusing for the learners to see two words which were unfamiliar ('provide' and 'verse') appearing in a question, one after the other. Answers given by learners indicate such confusion. These were the learners' answers: 'who's always', 'was a child', 'I get', 'poem', 'taking mother', 'so', 'today', 'provide', 'beginning', 'always', 'person', 'around', 'arong', 'granted', 'difference', 'something', 'sing', 'mothers', 'she once was a child', 'verse 2'. Out of 23 learners, 1 learner's answer was close to the correct one: 'life'.

Furthermore, Question 6 should not have been included because it is a high order question. Question 7 should have been rephrased, for example, "What should we say to our mothers today?"

The questions were not appropriate for the learners. Learners at lower grades need to be exposed to parts of English literacy skills relevant to and suitable for their level.

Step 4: Literacy in English (Vocabulary, Spelling, Reading and Letters of the Alphabet)

It was observed that learners still lacked an appropriate vocabulary. Question 3 required learners to come up with their own words. Almost all learners copied words from the poem. The scores for this question were as follows: 4 children scored 6; 4 scored 5; 4 scored 4; 2 scored 3; 2 scored 2; 3 scored 1; and 4 scored 0. The learners' inability to even copy from the poem indicated a more serious lack of aptitude for the grade. The kind of words written by the learners were 'filld', 'foud', 'landload', 'worss', and the rest of the words were copied from the poem. This shows that learners did not have "survival phrases" learned from previous lessons to retrieve from. They lacked vocabulary and if they were placed on Westhood's spelling chart (1999:7), their spelling would still be at the early phonic stage of 4, 5 and 6 year olds. Such is a challenge to be addressed, because Grade 4 learners are

expected to acquire a reading vocabulary of 2500 words to communicate and understand other learning areas.

Learners did not have knowledge of the letters of the alphabet. They also lacked numeracy and critical thinking skills. For example, they could not answer questions 1 and 4, which required those skills. The lines in the poem were numbered, but learners could not see that.

Reading and understanding meaning were skills that had not yet been developed in the learners, given the way questions were answered. The answers indicated that learners were just looking at the words without comprehending. This means they cannot understand other learning areas.

The presentation of the lesson and the activity were not appropriate for the age and the language level of the learners. This indicates that the teacher did not know the amount of English the learners had.

Table 4.2 below indicates the scores for the class-work activity observed at West School.

Table 4.2 Class-work scores

QUESTIONS	CORRECT	NOT CORRECT
1.		
(a)	6	17
(b)	1	22
(c)	0	23
(d)	0	23
(e)	0	23
2.		
(a)	4	19
(b)	1	22
(c)	1	22
(d)	2	21

3 See analysis shown above		
4	4	19
5. (a) (b)	 0 0	 23 23
6	1	22
7	2	21

4.6 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Two methods were used to analyse the learners' and the teachers' portfolios. These are the checklist matrix and discourse analysis principles. Discourse analysis was used to analyse the quality of the activities given to learners and the checklist was used to check the number of activities given.

4.6.1 East School

Ten learner portfolio files were analysed. Two tests were given to the learners: one on 27 March 2007 and the other on 27 July 2007. There were numerous activities in the class-work books.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show class-work activities and tests given during the year – from January to September 2007, as well as their compliance with grade level.

Table 4.3 Class-work Activities

CLASS ACTIVITIES	COMPLIANT WITH GRADE LEVEL	NOT COMPLIANT WITH GRADE LEVEL
Writing figures in words	LO5 AS1	
Plural/singular	LO6 AS4	
Present tense, Past tense	LO6 AS2	
Alphabets between I and K		Not Grade 4 work
Names of animals	LO5 AS1	

Words to be arranged in alphabetical order	Dictionary	
Diminutives		Not Grade 4 work
Spelling dictation (3)	LO6	
Vegetables and fruits	LO5 AS1 (concepts in other Learning Areas)	Not Grade 4 work
5 sentences about school	LO3 AS5 (paragraphs)	
Relations (2)	LO6	
Words with same sound	LO6	

Table 4.4 below shows the components of the two tests given.

Table 4.4 Test Activities

MARCH TEST	JULY TEST
Question 1: (Sounds) A donkey …… A pig …… A dog ….. A hen ….. A horse ….	Question 1: Punctuation Questions were on the following marks: Period, comma, question mark, exclamation mark
Question 2: Words with ‘ea’ e.g. health, teach	Question 2: Diminutives A baby dog is ‘ ‘ pig ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ hen ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘ sheep ‘ ‘
Question 3: Punctuation Period, comma, question mark, exclamation mark	Question 3 Which letter comes after C? Which letter comes after M?
	Question 4: Arrange alphabetically Can

MARCH TEST	JULY TEST
	Carpenter Minister Nurse

4.6.2 Central School

The school is about 50 kilometres from the Education District Office. This two-teacher school is located in a very tiny village. The school is multi-graded. There was no intention to conduct classroom observations at the school. The researcher was given permission to use the school's information for this study, which was available at the District Office. Portfolios for learners and teachers had already been analysed by the subject advisor, and the information was available. The portfolios were analysed on 27 September 2007 as part of routine monitoring and moderation of portfolio files by subject advisors.

The subject advisor's records showed that eight Grade 4 learners' work was moderated. The learners did not have portfolio files. Learners' work was kept in one folder. There were short grammar activities: two tests and three class-work pieces. The class-work activities were two spelling activities, two activities on animal sounds and one on diminutives. These were the only activities covered from January to September 2007.

There was no evidence of planning in the teacher's portfolio file. The activities given to learners were not set against the assessment standards.

4.6.3 The Results of Documents Analysis

Hoy and Gregg (1994:9) describe learner portfolio as the summary of learners' progress over a period of time. *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines the word 'progress' as the process of getting better at doing something or getting closer to achieving something. The learners' work which the researcher analysed did not fit this meaning of portfolio at all. The work did not indicate any progress or achievement by the learners. The activities were not helpful in enabling learners acquire the required competencies in English.

The analysis revealed a number of issues. Firstly, very few activities were covered by both schools - (East and Central). According to NCS assessment guidelines for English First Additional Language, Grade 4 learners are supposed to do 8 formal tasks per year – 2 each term. According to assessment policy guidelines, a task is not a short class-work activity. A task should constitute a number of AS's. Furthermore, learners are expected to cover the "full scope" of the LO's and AS's. Table 4.6, on page 67 to 68, shows the AS's (activities) which are supposed to be covered by learners. The two schools covered only grammar activities, some of which did not align with the grade syllabus. There was no evidence of communicative activities (LO1: listening, LO2: speaking), reading activities (LO3), text-based and process writing activities, (LO4, LO5 and LO6).

Secondly, the assessment guideline documents and NCS policy documents were not followed. There seemed to be no attempt by the educators to change their assessment practices from the traditional paradigm to outcomes based assessment. There was no assessment criteria. The activities given to the learners did not match the description of assessment tasks stipulated in the assessment guidelines of the Department of Education (2003).

Thirdly, the work given to learners did not indicate any learning. NCS English First Additional Language is embedded with knowledge and skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Lastly, there was no evidence of planning in the teachers' portfolio files.

Table 4.5 below shows the number of activities covered by Central and East schools between January and September 2007.

Table 4.5 Number of Class Activities Covered

	TESTS	CLASS ACTIVITIES	TOTAL
CENTRAL SCHOOL	2	3	5
EAST SCHOOL	2	15	17

Table 4.6 on pages 67 to 68 is derived from NCS policy document for English First Additional Language, Grades R-9. The table illustrates the content (syllabus) for the Grade 4 learners. This is the work that teachers and learners are supposed to cover, and which should be reflected in teachers' planning grids or schedules.

Table 4.6: Content for Grade 4 Learners

Listening Activities	**Speaking Activities**	**Reading and Viewing Activities**	**Writing Activities**	**Thinking and Reasoning**	**Language Structure and Use**
*Answering questions *Discussing issues *Retelling and summarising stories *Responding to instructions *Labelling diagrams *Encouraging other learners to speak their additional	*Asking simple questions, giving short answers and taking part in short conversations *Expressing politeness in additional language. *Describing actions using connecting words e.g. then *Describing	*Elements of stories: title, characters, plot *Understan-ding picture stories *Elements of poetry: rhyme, words with same sounds, onomatopoeia *Reading maps, plans, posters, timetable, diagrams, and	*Writing the following: lists, opinions, instructions, recounts, book reviews, messages, notes, plays, dialogue and simple stories *Designing posters and notices *Writing paragraphs	Uses language across the curriculum *Uses language to some complex questions *Classifies things *identifies similarities and differences between things *Writes simple	*Singular / plural nouns *Analysing simple sentences *Opposites and synonyms *Dictionary usage *Using can, can't, could, must, mustn't, will, and may

Listening Activities	**Speaking Activities**	**Reading and Viewing Activities**	**Writing Activities**	**Thinking and Reasoning**	**Language Structure and Use**
language	people, objects, and processes *Telling simple stories *Creating and performing simple play scripts *Performing rhyme, poem etc *Showing awareness of the way language constructs knowledge, and identifies and positions people	charts *Summarising paragraph (with help of teacher) *Reading fiction and non fiction *Solving puzzles	*Spelling familiar words correctly	definitions *Sequences things according to criteria *Discusses advantages and disadvantages with support *Transfers information from one mode to another *Collects and records information in different ways	*Tenses: present, past, and future *Adverb of frequency *Some question forms: Why didn't you …? Do you think….?

(The contents of this table have been adapted from NCS policy document for English First Additional Language Grades R-9).

The qualitative data processes generated the following questions about teaching English in schools:

1. Do the assessment activities create opportunities for learners to speak English, which is the target language?
2. Do teachers' teaching styles impact on the learners' learning?
3. Do learners acquire any knowledge and skills in the target language?
4. Are learners' linguistic needs addressed in the overall teaching process?
5. Are learners exposed to vocabulary or concepts in other learning areas?

The data processes used in this research tried to illuminate some realities at the sampled schools. English is a problem in most schools and will remain a problem if the government does not devise strategies to address the problem. History and studies on English teaching in South Africa reveal that black teachers of English received inferior education – Bantu Education. Klu (2000:188) notes that correspondence courses do not do much to better teachers' education. He asserts that teachers do not engage in further education to improve their skills but simply to avoid being retrenched.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the data collection and analysis processes. Techniques in line with case study methodology were used to collect, analyse and interpret data. Conceptual and discourse analysis as well as checklist matrix were used to analyse data.

The next chapter discusses the summary of the research, presents the findings and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the information presented in the four chapters of this study, presents the findings and proposes recommendations. The summary of the research is presented under subsection 5.2, the findings under subsection 5.3 and the recommendations under subsection 5.4.

5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

The study examined learning, teaching and assessment practices for Grade 4 English First Additional Language learners in three primary schools in Moshaweng Circuit, in the Northern Cape Province. The three schools were located in the remote rural areas of the district.

This study was conducted using the qualitative case studies approach. The interpretation of the results was done using qualitative methods.

The researcher used different techniques to collect and analyse data. The major data collection techniques used were observation and document analysis. Field notes and diary techniques were also used to collect data. Two lesson observations from two different schools were conducted and document analysis from two schools was carried out. The documents analysed were learners' and teachers' portfolio files.

The researcher had intended to use questionnaires but this technique was later decided against because it was felt that it would not provide authentic data to help answer the research questions. In addition, the researcher used other methods of analysing and interpreting data, which were not in the initial plan. Those methods were conceptual analysis and discourse analysis.

Data were analysed during the collection and when the collection was complete. Line by line coding informed by Webb & Glesne (1992:799) was followed. Different data techniques were used in order to ensure the rigour and credibility of the study.

The research revealed that NCS policy was not followed. All the research sub questions were answered in the negative.

The study revealed that teachers' pedagogical practices were not in line with NCS EFAL policy and OBE principles. Firstly, there were no activities to encourage acquisition of language. For example, learners were not given opportunities to interact in the target language. Furthermore, learners heard very few English words being spoken to them. Secondly, there were no activities based on communicative learning, texts, reading activities and process writing. Activities given to the learners were based on grammar and were irrelevant. Thirdly, the assessment practices of the teachers did not meet the assessment requirements stipulated in the Assessment guidelines for Grade 4 English First Additional Language. Portfolio analysis revealed that learners were given fewer activities than recommended by the NCS policy and that Learning Outcomes (LO's) 5 and 6 were partially covered. LO's 1, 2, 3 and 4 were not covered at all. In addition, most activities covered by learners were of low quality and did not cover the required Assessment Standards (AS's). Lastly, there was no evidence of planning in the teachers' portfolio files.

5.3 THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section, the empirical findings of this study are presented. This study sought to answer the following questions:

- Are all English First Additional Language learning outcomes (LO's) covered?
- Do learning activities include skills and knowledge that can be demonstrated in real life situations?
- Have the teachers changed their teaching practices to meet the requirements of the new curriculum policy. Does the classroom practice indicate the understanding of the NCS policy as well as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) methodology?

- Do the teachers follow NCS planning and Assessment?

5.3.1 The learning outcomes were not covered.

The study discovered that all the three schools did not cover the full scope of the learning outcomes (LO's) which appear in the EFAL policy document. This is contrary to Spady's (1994) assertion that the demonstration of significant learning should be, at minimum, "thorough and complete".

- **LO 1: Listening and LO 3: Reading and Viewing.**

  There was no evidence of listening and reading tasks or activities in the learners' work books and portfolio files. Cambourne and Turbill (2007) and Haigh (1980) emphasise that learners should be "immersed in books." Jones and Coffey (2006) point out that the advantages of reading to the learners is that they hear different words/sounds in the target language. Another advantage of listening to stories is that it helps learners learn how to read, and to become independent and confident readers (Jones and Coffey (2006). Tough (1995), Yule (1992) and Haynes (2007) [Online] also emphasize that listening to the teacher is an important part of learning because learners engage in the process of building their own vocabulary.

  Furthermore, Cambourne and Turbill (2007) point out that reading activities are a resource for the teaching and learning of writing. This explains why the learners in the West school could not even copy words from the poem. They had misspelled most of the words they had copied from the poem.

- **LO 2: Speaking.**

  The study discovered that English learning was not communicative, but was based solely on grammar. There was no evidence of this LO in the learners' portfolio files. The learners were not engaged in any communicative activities to address this learning outcome, although NCS enforces communicative approach to teaching and learning EFAL. The learners were not given opportunities to interact in the target language. According to Haynes (2007) [online] all learners go through 5 stages of

language development before they become proficient users of their additional language. Authors on language development (Haynes 2007 [online]; Ellis 1985; Alcon 2004; Krashen 1981 [online]) believe that the appropriate methodology for teaching young learners an additional language is the communicative approach. The advantage of this methodology is that learners interact in their target language and as they do so, they acquire new words. They point out that grammar activities are appropriate for learners who have reached advanced fluency stage of language development.

Furthermore, the theories of Bandura (cited in Salzinger 1979), Vygotsky and Krashen (cited in Schutz 2004) suggest that language learning is interactive.

- **LO 4: Writing.**

  There was no evidence of process writing activities in the learners' portfolio files, such as short dialogue pieces and descriptions. Jones and Coffey (2006:65) explain that these activities provide progression in writing.

5.3.2 Lack of planning .

There was no proper planning for the lessons. Both the document analysis and the lesson observation results revealed that planning was not done. The East teacher had neither planned for the lesson nor adequately prepared the activities to be carried out by the learners. The West teacher had drafted a lesson plan, but had not selected assessment standards to enable the learners demonstrate some degree of learning at the end of the lesson.

NCS has 3 stages of planning which the three sampled schools did not follow. These are phase planning for the whole year, grade planning, and lesson planning for daily activities. During the discussions with the teachers (after observation and document analysis), the teachers said they knew the stages but found planning to be a difficult task. The researcher's observation is that NCS is very 'bulky' and needs to be broken into manageable tasks.

5.3.3 Learners do not acquire skills in their first additional language.

The policy for EFAL clearly states that learners should reach high levels of proficiency in English First Additional Language in order to communicate and understand other learning areas. The policy further states that NCS learners should achieve the same degree of proficiency in their additional language as they do in their home language. However, the study discovered that the grade 4 learners in the West school had not built any linguistic structures needed to understand other learning areas. The data revealed that the West school learners had not even gone through the first stage of language development They had neither receptive nor active vocabulary, although they had completed 3 years in the Foundation Phase and were in the last term of grade 4 (intermediate phase). According to the data, all the learners at the West school were at the introductory (pre emergent) stage of EFAL. The only words that few learners were able to retrieve from their existing knowledge were: filld, foud, landload, worss, life, beginning, sing. The rest of the words they used to answer the questions were just copied from the poem. They did not understand what they were reading as evidenced in the data of their classwork activity. According to Westhood's spelling chart (1999), 6 to 11 year olds are able to store a mental bank of words. In addition, Haynes (2007) [online] says that it takes a second language learner who is at the first stage of language development 6 months to build receptive and active vocabulary of 1000 words.

According to William's (1994) acquisition chart (cited in Alcon 2004), characteristics of learners at the introductory stage of language development are: no speech production, minimal comprehension and up to 500 receptive words vocabulary. Haynes (2007) [Online] points out that learners at the introductory stage listen and try to concentrate as they figure out the meaning of words, "without necessarily being able to produce them." Indeed, words were somehow strange to the West school learners. This explains why the learners were very quiet. The only words which they uttered when being questioned by their teacher were, "Yes, Ma," in their home language. They were only receiving words without any comprehension. Furthermore, if they were placed on Westhood's spelling chart (1999:7), their spelling would still be at the early phonic stage of 4, 5 and 6 year olds. The irony is that the grade 4 learners were still at the pre-emergent/introductory/silent period of their first additional language development, whereas the expectation was that they should have completed the first four

stages of language development and starting the 5th stage - the academic language use. According to Cummins (1981), it takes 3 years to achieve proficiency in an additional language if given good “comprehensible input”.

The East school data on the other hand showed that learners had built a receptive and active vocabulary. The class observation data revealed that they were able to retrieve words from memory and could construct sentences orally and in written form. In addition, they were able to write words properly, without making sound symbol relations (Westhood 1999). Nonetheless, they were given low amounts of information which limited their progress in their additional language. So it was not easy to determine how big their stored mental words bank was and whether they had mastered most complex graphophonic principles (Westhood 1999).

Furthermore, there was no evidence from the classroom observation and document analysis that learners had acquired academic language skills such as summary writing, reading across the curriculum, dictionary usage, designing posters, analysing sentences and labelling diagrams, which are stipulated in the curriculum framework. Haynes (2007) points out that, young learners need to demonstrate comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating and inferring language skills. Furthermore, in grade 4, learners are expected to learn in their additional language, yet, in the 3 schools, there was no foundation in their EFAL that would enable them to succeed in other learning areas. The question is how many of these learners will study beyond the level of secondary education?

It can be concluded that those learners were not yet ready to learn in their additional language because they did not have any foundation in the language to do so. Tough (1995:23) states that ‘readiness’ for an additional language can “only be achieved through hearing English used a great deal.” This is the readiness that NCS young learners need.

5.3.4 The teachers have not yet changed their teaching practices to meet the requirements of the new curriculum policy.

NCS has brought a new dimension to EFAL teaching and learning. The framework focuses on 6 learning outcomes and assessment standards. As indicated earlier, NCS enforces communicative, process writing, reading and text- based approaches to teaching and learning EFAL. The results of the lesson observations and documents analysis showed that teachers' classroom practices were still based on traditional methodology. This study discovered that the three schools had not adopted any informed strategies appropriate for the grade and age of the learners. The data for the observation showed that the learners were taught grammar. However, Krashen (1981) and Haynes (2007) [Online] argue that grammar teaching is not communicative, and it is not an appropriate language teaching methodology for young learners. The two authors contend that grammar activities are appropriate for learners who are fluent in the language. In addition, research (Savignon 1991) showed that communicative language teaching methodology was a more effective way of developing communicative ability in learners.

5.3.5 Assessment and Assessment tasks.

The study revealed that the teachers in the 3 schools did not follow the assessment guidelines for EFAL. There was no evidence of communicative, text-based, process writing and reading activities in the learners' work books and portfolio files.

Furthermore, the tasks were not designed, learning outcomes were not stated and the assessment method was not indicated. The teachers just assigned activities, most of which were irrelevant. This contravened the Norms and Standards for Educators policy, which states that one of the seven roles of educators is to design learning programmes (Department of Education 2002a:3).

Moreover, Johnson (1989) points out that all English language tasks have five components, namely, objectives, content, procedures, knowledge and skills, and resources. The activities given to the learners did not have purpose and were not helpful in addressing the language needs of the learners. This was contrary to Outcomes Based Assessment (OBA) which

premises that assessment should have a purpose and it should state clearly what skill and/or knowledge the teacher is assessing.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Teacher Development

The purpose of teacher development is to help teachers to grow and to be effective in their practice. In order for teachers to have professional growth, they require good programmes to re-skill them and increase their knowledge to address the demands of the curriculum. Research by C2005 Review Committee revealed that the workshops held for teachers on OBE curriculum were inadequate. This study has also revealed that teachers still lack skills and knowledge to accommodate learners' learning needs.

The government should introduce a programme on teacher development. The programme should focus on, 1. Training teachers on English teaching strategies appropriate for the language levels and age of the learners. 2. The teachers should be trained on language acquisition and language learning.

5.4.2 School Based Support

The teachers should be guided on NCS planning, and assessment. The teachers need to know how much content or how many standards from NCS can be covered in a year. Moreover, each teacher should have curriculum documents for the language level they are responsible for. Furthermore, the teachers should be guided on how to design tasks that target the learners' learning needs.

5.4.3 Monitoring

There should be monitoring and evaluation of the teachers' work to ensure that they cover all the learning outcomes and assess in accordance with the NCS assessment guidelines.

5.4.4 Standardised Testing System

All grades at primary schools should be given standardised tests in EFAL. This system will increase accountability and improve the learners' achievement in EFAL. It will ensure learners' progress in their additional language. Quite often, learners do not progress from one stage of language development to the other and nobody wants to account for that. For example, when learners fail to read and write, it becomes headline news. Where is the accountability?

5.4.5 Correspondence Education and In-service Training

Correspondence education seems to have taken the place of in-service education in South Africa. History and research tell us that teachers in black schools were poorly trained during the apartheid era. Studies show that they are still not equipped well enough in their practice. Klu's observation that teachers are "engaged in further education and training, not to improve their content knowledge, but in order not to be retrenched" seems valid. It can be concluded that further education and training for teachers through correspondence does not address the problem of teacher incompetence. This study would like to pose the following question with regard to correspondence education:

- Do the courses prepare teachers for the multiple contexts of teaching?
- Are teachers fully prepared or equipped with skills to help second English learners to reach appropriate levels of proficiency in English?

It is therefore recommended that correspondence education be coupled with in-service training.

5.4.6 Parents involvement

It is recommended that parents be involved in their children's learning. For example, parents should be encouraged to read to children at home. It has been indicated in the literature that learners to whom stories are read (at home) develop the love for books.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This case study research examined the implementation of English First Additional Language curriculum in the grade 4 classroom. The National Curriculum Statement provides a renewed approach to learning and teaching in South Africa. However, the study reveals that the teachers do not work within the framework of the new curriculum. It is evident that the teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver the curriculum.

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The qualitative data processes employed in this study have “opened up” questions about teaching and learning English first additional language in our schools. It is hoped that the teachers will be motivated enough to investigate some of these questions in their classrooms.

Although the findings of this study cannot be generalised, to the wider population, they can be used to understand the complexity of teaching and learning English first additional language in schools. It is recommended that more case studies be conducted on the English learning, teaching and assessment in all schools, in the future, in order to illuminate problems inside the classroom of learners whose home language is not English.

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APPENDIX A

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

TEACHER:

SCHOOL:

NUMBER OF LEARNERS:

DATE OF OBSERVATION:

TIME OF OBSERVATION:

BEHAVIOUR/PHENOMENON OBSERVED	**COMMENT**
NCS Planning: Learning outcomes: Assessment Standards: Form of Assessment: Resources:	
Facilitation skill	
Lesson preparation	
Interaction with learners	
Use of concrete examples	
Teacher asks questions	
Learner answers	
Learner asks questions	
Teacher answers	
Teacher gives feedback	

APPENDIX B

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

NAME OF SCHOOL:

DATE:

CHECKLIST 1: AUDIT FORM

Activities	Number done	Formal Assessment	Informal Assessment
Listening		e.g. Assignment	
Speaking			
Reading and viewing			
Writing			
Language			

CHECKLIST 2: Skills/Knowledge/Values

Activities	Learning Outcome	Assessment Standards	Knowledge/Skills/ Values
Listening			
Speaking			
Reading and viewing			
Writing			
Language			