

**How English as First Additional Language is taught and used in a quintile one primary school, in Grade 4, where learners officially change from isiXhosa to English as the language of instruction: a Case Study**

by

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## **Declaration**

This work has not been previously submitted as a whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores how learners in a township primary school learn, and are taught through the medium of English, in a community of pre-dominantly Xhosa speakers, and where English is seldom spoken or heard. The school is typical in the sense that learners from Grade 1 to Grade 3 are taught in isiXhosa as home language, with English as subject, after which they switch to English as the language of teaching and learning from Grade 4 onwards. The study concerns itself with the language and literacy practices at this pivotal switch-over point, and investigates to what extent learners in the Grade 4 English classes have learnt / been taught / have developed sufficient basic inter-personal communication skills, BICS, (Cummins, 1984), in English to make the switch to learning all subjects in English. The study also includes analysis of data gathered in two Natural Science lessons, in search of how the same Grade 4 learners learn, and are taught subject-specific knowledge in English. Classroom discourse patterns, which includes *safetalk* (Chick, 1996) and *safetalk and safetime* (Hornberger and Chick, 2001) and the kind of teaching practices prevalent in schools in post-colonial countries are examined to explain the low proficiency level of the typical Grade 4 learner at this critical point in English language learning.

The study confirmed what high school colleagues and I have been suspecting for years: a lack of exposure to English in EFAL lessons in the Foundation -, or at Intermediate Phase of the primary schools feeding our school creates a gap in learners' competency levels. Although English is supposed to be the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) from Grade 4 onwards, this study found that the level of the Grade 4 learners at the focus school too low for teaching and learning in the language. The deficit in English language curriculum coverage, accumulated over the first years of schooling, is most acutely felt at Grade 4 level where the medium of instruction, according to school language policy, is English. The study further found that the kind of classroom discourse that dominates teacher/learner inter-action, namely decontextualized written -, rather than spoken word, one-word presentations, prevents learners from experiencing, through working with texts, how the language is used in real life situations. In the science classroom the study found the *safetalk / safetime / chorusing* practice as the dominant classroom discourses, mainly to circumvent the problem of lack of academic language / vocabulary required for learning, especially in science and other content subjects.

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 Introduction and rationale

My interest in how English as additional language is learnt in township primary schools was aroused after I had experienced first-hand, as teacher of English as additional language for more than ten years the appalling lack of reading, writing and speaking skills in English of Grade 8 learners in their first year in high school. Learners from three different feeder primary schools in the same township all showed similar limitations in their English as second language proficiency, while most new learners from the Eastern Cape Province very seldom had any English language proficiency at all. Sixteen years after the introduction of the country's new Language in Education Policy (DoE, 1997), there is little evidence that learners in township schools are receiving quality language education.

In line with this, the Western Cape Education Department, since 2002, has made available statistics that showed the country was seriously underperforming in literacy and numeracy in its primary schools. The assessment results of the Western Cape Education Department for 2004-2008 for Grade 3 and Grade 6 literacy and numeracy showed that on average, 900 primary schools achieved less than 40% pass rate in numeracy in Grade 6. A total of 786 schools at Grade 3 level also achieved less than 40% in numeracy, while only 53.3% of Grade 3 learners achieved more than 50% for literacy in 2008. Despite this, the report revealed that 95.2% of Grade 6 learners in 2007 were promoted to Grade 7 according to national progression norms (WCED: Media Release, 14 July 2009).

The concern is further that this same under-performing Grade 7 class may have been promoted every year, regardless of their lack of basic skills, including basic English language proficiency, out of the Primary phase (and Grade 7, which in most cases is still attached to the primary school) to Grade 8, (which in most cases is the first grade of high school). The Grade 7 class of 2007 referred to in WCED: Media Release, 14 July 2009, would be the Grade 12 class of 2014, and regardless of the manner in which they had been promoted year after year, the expectation was high for a higher pass rate in 2014 than in any other year before! How did South Africa's school system get to this point?

## **1.2 The Language Question in South African schools.**

In South African schools, like in other oppressed and marginalized post-colonial countries around the world, the majority of the country's speakers of indigenous languages experience school life through the medium of English rather than their own languages. The current language dilemma we face in our schools is the result of attempts by the English colonial government (1854-1910) and Afrikaner Nationalist Party (1948-1994) to use language and education as instruments of political coercion and oppression.

The massive social engineering programme under the Afrikaner-dominated Nationalist Party, which was based on ethno-linguistic identity, segregated South Africa's population into „black“, „white“, „coloured“ and „Indian“, with further separation of „black“ people by „ethnicity“/language under the homeland policy. Apartheid legislation included separate schools under their own education departments for each of the „population groups“ created. School language policy for African schools under „Bantu Education“ dictated mother – tongue education throughout primary schools, extending to Grade 8, thus removing English in senior primary and beyond. It effectively set apart speakers of Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, and other indigenous languages. The opportunity to become more proficient in English was thereby greatly reduced. Africans had therefore internalized the attitude that working in African languages was part of the apartheid strategy of keeping Africans as “hewers of wood and drawers of water” (Soweto Students Representative Council, 1976).

African schoolchildren and their parents had developed the impression that English was the language of advancement and therefore whereas they had rejected Afrikaans this disavowal was done in favour of English, and not the indigenous languages. This impression has more or less persisted to the present period (Prah, 2006: 10).

In examining national language policy in countries with a post-colonial history, Marcia Farr and Juyoung Song (2011: 654) write that „language policy has social and political consequences, e.g., in (re)constructing national identity (Blommaert 2006; David and Govindasamy 2007), delimiting or promoting linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas2006), directing the education of linguistic minorities (Farr 2011; Paulston and Heidemann, 2006), and promoting language

revitalization (Fishman 1991, 2006), as well as legitimizing linguistic practices and cultures of particular groups while imperializing others (Phillipson, 1992)“.

In secondary schools during apartheid, English and Afrikaans were the languages of instruction, with no learning through the mother-tongue. The 1976 Soweto uprising was sparked when the Nationalist Party government tried to enforce the use of Afrikaans for half the subjects taught, and English for the other half, for African learners. The apartheid government was forced to make a number of concessions, including the granting to black communities the right to choose the medium of instruction for their children. The result was an about-turn to home language schooling up to grade 3, then a switch to English as LoLT, with learners“ home language being studied as subject up to Grade 12 level (Probyn, 2002: 126-127).

At primary school level, Dr Carol Macdonald“s 1984 study, the Threshold Project, investigated the impact of the switch to learning in English after the first 4 years of mother tongue education in schools in the former Bophuthatswana bantustan. She found that learners, who had been taught in mother tongue from the first year, when entering Grade 5, were not ready to learn through the new medium of English (Macdonald, 1991). The investigation found that the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of those learners were not sufficient for effective learning from Grade 3 onwards. That was in 1984, under the then Department of Bantu education. The education policy, then, was designed to keep the African child deprived of quality education, and Macdonald“s Threshold project shows the disastrous effects of Bantu education“s language policy in African schools.

McDonald (1990:15) makes the following argument:

If the English teacher did her job properly over three years of schooling (Sub B / Gr 2 to Std. 2 / Gr 4), learners may have a vocabulary of 800 words. Now, in Standard 3, they will suddenly need a vocabulary of about 5000 words in English to cope with all the new subjects. That supposes an increase of 600% which would be unreasonable even for first language speakers of English.

In a later addition to her study, The Threshold Project (1991), Macdonald looked at the experiences of young learners in the year they changed from mother tongue to English medium of instruction, and found that children“s speaking, reading and writing skills, after the first three years of school, were poorly developed in both their mother tongue and in English. The research

found that the syllabus prescribed for the first few grades did not provide a strong enough foundation to use English as language of teaching (MacDonald, 1991:5). The research further attributed the low literacy skills to the fact that the majority of the country's learners are learning through an unfamiliar language. The research does not, however, explain the low literacy levels in the mother tongue, nor why both mother tongue and additional language are so poorly developed after three years of school.

Chick (1996) makes the point that following the shift to English as language of instruction in primary schools, no changes were made to the syllabus for English as a subject to prepare the ground linguistically and conceptually for its use across the curriculum. As a result, black primary school children were found to be under-prepared for the sudden switch to English after the fourth year of schooling which also happened concurrently with the broadening of the curriculum to ten subjects.

Despite calls by language activists such as Heugh (1993), Alexander (1998) and others, for increased status of African languages as media of instruction in schools, on both pedagogical and political grounds, the new LiEP (Language in Education Policy (1997), was introduced with English and Afrikaans included in the 11 official languages. Across the length and breadth of the country it was therefore possible to pursue the goals of additive multilingualism, namely for communities to choose their home languages as LoLT in schools. However, in the absence of an implementation plan, the apartheid practice of HL from Gr 1 – Gr 3, with transition to English in Gr 4 simply continued. The way was left open for a dominant language like English to establish itself unchallenged in South African society and its schools. African languages, since the introduction of the LiEP, have increasingly become languages of communication in the homes and regions, while more and more indigenous language speakers prefer their language of learning and teaching to be English - at school and tertiary level (Probyn, 2005).

Researchers like Neville Alexander would argue from a Marxist perspective that language policies are government strategies, designed most conspicuously, to promote the interest of specific classes and often social groups; they would warn indigenous language speakers to move away from an English only policy and demonstrating the economic value of African languages instead. Nkosana (2011) expresses similar concerns in a research paper where he reveals how the ruling elite in Botswana has used English as the power tool of inclusion into or exclusion from

further education, employment/economic, or social position and Setswana as a tool for national unity. As a consequence an elite class, based on proficiency in English has emerged there. Nkosana quotes Adegbija (1994: 18) who argues that the „western oriented elite class controls, shapes, and virtually creates the economic and political destinies of most countries of sub-Saharan Africa, since it holds the key to power“. The political power it wields, Adegbija perceptively contends, is partly acquired due to competence in the European language.

Kathleen Heugh (Heugh, 2013: 218) concurred with international research on the subject that „a language-in-education policy will not succeed unless an accompanying plan is implemented“. She argued strongly against bilingual and multilingual education if bilingualism meant greater proficiency in English and a proportionate decrease in the use of the mother-tongue. She further critiqued the fact that an implementation plan was never developed for the LiEP, and that the curriculum was planned separately from language policy, making it questionable as to whether the LiEP was ever intended for implementation (p218). The LiEP of 1997 empowers school governing bodies (SGB's), with the responsibility to decide on their own school's language policies. Probyn (2009) wrote that small-scale research studies have shown a steady shift towards English as LoLT, instead of extending learners' grounding in their home language. Generally in primary schools today, the chosen language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is: home language from gr 1 – 3, then English from Grade 4 (beginning Intermediate Phase) to Grade 12, with the home language being studied as a subject (Heugh, 2013:221).

In a paper entitled „The Promise of Multilingualism and Education in South Africa“, Heugh (1995), argues that curriculum change and language policy should have been two integrated processes from the earliest planning stages. These processes, however, developed independently, resulting in a lack of materials development in African languages, a lack of terminology development, and the need for bilingual/multilingual teacher training not being acknowledged.

### **1.3 Introducing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)**

The national concern over the appalling state of the nation's education system as expressed over a wide front by academics, teacher unions, school governing bodies and individuals appeared to have finally moved the present Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angie Motshekga. In 2009 the Minister appointed a Task Team to identify and investigate the challenges that impacted

negatively on the quality of teaching in schools, and to propose recommendations to address these. After a period of public hearings with stakeholders across the board, the Minister announced her decision to implement the recommendations of the Task Team's Report on the implementation of the revised national curriculum. The Minister made decisions that came into effect immediately from January 2010, and decisions with a longer-term effect for implementation during the period 2012 -2014.

Recognition has been given to different learning contexts, where learners learn in a language which they do not speak as their mother tongue with time allocation per grade adjusted accordingly. From 2012 the teaching of English as a First Additional language (EFAL) would be given priority alongside mother-tongue and should be taught from Grade 1. Time allocation to EFAL has been increased by 1 hour per week in the Foundation and Intermediate phases as from 2012.

The implementation of the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) required the following adjustments:

- (a) new time-tables in the Foundation and Intermediate phases;
- (b) new textbooks for all grades;
- (c) training of provincial officials, principals, heads of departments and teachers;
- (d) communication with parents and learners;
- (e) in-depth training of teachers over the next few years;
- (f) new textbooks, workbooks and readers.

The introduction of CAPS as it pertains to English First Additional language in the Foundation Phase offers more time for the teaching of EFAL from as early as Grade 1 on, thus acknowledging the need for greater exposure to English in the Foundation Phase before transition to English as LoLT in grade 4.

## **1.4 Research focus and questions**

Against this backdrop of a long history of concerns regarding language in education policy and the underperformance of children who have an African language as a home language in our schooling system, I wanted to conduct research which would give me insight into the teaching and learning of English in the year of transition to English as Language of learning and teaching (i.e. Grade 4). I have selected a typical township school where isiXhosa is the mother-tongue and the language of teaching and learning from Grade R to Grade 3. The Grade 4 (year 5 of school) in this primary school is the transition year where, according to their language policy, isiXhosa is replaced by English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). This is not to suggest that I expect to find the reasons for poor language learning at this specific point. There may be a range of problems from grade R onwards, but my focus will be on the transition year of Grade 4 as a critical point in the primary school in regard to LOLT.

### **1.4.1 Research Question:**

*How is English as an additional language taught and used in a primary school in Grade 4, the transition year, where learners officially change from isiXhosa to English as the language of instruction?*

Sub-questions that arise from this over-arching question, and support the investigation:

*(a) How much and what kind of English is being used in classroom discourse in English first additional language curriculum time and in Science curriculum time?*

*(b) What kinds of activities / tasks are children engaged in and what opportunities do they have to develop their proficiency in English?*

These questions are answered mainly through classroom observation sessions, audio-recordings of teacher/learner interaction during lessons; listening to learners' speaking, observing how teaching materials and teaching methods are used; the use of language during lessons; teacher / learner interaction in group sessions and learner / learner interaction during group sessions.

The research was carried out over a period of 12 weeks, and consisted of class visits of two to three hours per day, every day for one week, followed by one-hour class visits once a week for ten weeks. A final week of whole-day observation four hours per day, concluded the observation period. During the observation sessions I sat in on lessons, observing language use in the Grade 4 class in English lessons. I was particularly keen to find out how, and how much, English is used in language and Natural Science lessons, how learners respond to questions during English and Natural Science lessons, and what strategies teachers employ to teach under the circumstances. I wanted to gain insight into the reading, writing and oral programmes for the grade, and how these are used to teach English.

## **1.5 Outline of the research report**

### **1.5.1 Chapter One: Introduction**

In this chapter I explain my interest as teacher of English additional language in a black township high school, in the large number of learners fresh from primary school who struggle to cope with English as the language of learning after being exposed to learning in English for four years. I explain the rationale and goals behind a case study that took me inside a Grade 4 classroom of a township primary school, where learners for the first time begin learning all subjects through English.

### **1.5.2 Chapter 2 Conceptual Framework and literature review**

This chapter contains the theoretical framework as well as reviews the literature that underpins the case study. The main themes dealt with are the following: language and literacy as cultural and social practice; language methodologies suitable for teaching English; traditional conceptions and practices such as the „language-as-conduit“ model, comprehensible input and – output, and classroom discourse in post-colonial countries, as well as the place of code-switching when teaching in English under conditions that prevail in township primary schools.

### **1.5.3 Chapter Three: Methodology**

In this chapter I discuss the research design and methodology used in this study. I also discuss the methods of data collection and analysis.

#### **1.5.4 Chapter Four: Analysis of Three English language Lessons**

This chapter analyses extracts from three English language lessons to determine how language is used in the class room, how much English and what kind of language is used, and what opportunities are created for learners to use language. I discuss this by referring to transcripts of extracts from the lessons. Two of the lessons are language lessons, while the third lesson is a reading lesson.

#### **1.5.5 Chapter Five: Analysis of Two Natural Science Lessons**

I have analyzed the teaching of two Natural Science lessons with a view to determining how English is used in content-based subjects. I look at how much English is used in the science lessons compared to the amount of English used during English language lessons, what opportunities are created for learners to hear, and use, English in the course of a Natural science lesson. I do this by using extracts from two Natural Science lessons I have observed.

#### **1.5.6 Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter deals with the findings of the research goals and theoretical framework. I draw conclusions from my analysis.

## CHAPTER 2

### Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will give an overview of the theoretical framework, key concepts, as well as the research literature that underpins this study of language learning, in post-apartheid South Africa.

My discussion of language learning and teaching is anchored in the theoretical framework of language and literacy as socio-cultural practice (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 1996; Scribner and Cole, 1981; Street, 1984; Prinsloo and Breier, 1996), namely the centrality of the relationship between learning the language and the situations in which this learning occurs. This approach is also known as the New Literacy Studies, and refers to the work of researchers within the field of cultural anthropology, applied linguistics and psychology, including those mentioned above, who examine how language and literacy is used by people in everyday situations and for a variety of social and educational purposes. I discuss those classroom practices that take into account the existing knowledge base of learners, their beliefs and attitudes and what linguistic resources they have in accessing the curriculum. I look at theories of language learning; language teaching methodologies suitable for English additional language teaching; how classroom atmosphere that is comfortable and that draws learners into wanting to volunteer responses, is created; how the teacher creates interest, supports and motivates learners, despite the language limitations they both may have. I also discuss traditional conceptions and practices such as the „language-as-conduit“ model, comprehensible input and –output, and classroom discourse in post-colonial countries.

I then look at typical classroom discourse in classrooms where the language of learning is English, whether rote-learning still has a place in primary schools today, or whether new teaching strategies have been developed by schools to deal with the complexities of teaching in a multilingual environment. I lastly look at the role code-switching occupies when teaching in English under conditions that prevail in township primary schools. Particularly important is evidence of activities designed to stimulate critical thinking and problem solving appropriate for that grade, the use of language for learners to express themselves in speech and writing, as well as time given for developing higher-order thinking skills and academic language. I am looking at

language use, informally in class between learners, and formally and informally between teacher and learners.

## **2.2 Language as Social Practice**

The focus of a socio-cultural approach is on how language and literacy are used by people in their everyday lives in an ever-changing world. People use language and literacy to communicate ideas, and with each other in a variety of ways, using a variety of different texts in a variety of contexts. An important aspect of this approach is the understanding that language and knowledge change the way people perceive the world around them; people change their social practices as they gain new knowledge, and as new technologies impact their lives and work. Literacy and language, therefore, are part and parcel of the social and cultural practices of people, with practices changing from one context to another, rather than generic skills to be learned in school. Literacy causes people to act in a certain way, but also to change and act differently, in different socio-cultural contexts, as new knowledge brings new perspective.

Street (1984) makes a distinction between „autonomous“ and „ideological“ models of literacy. With „autonomous“ he refers to the view of literacy as a set of decontextualized, technical skills that are expected to be acquired in settings such as schools, where beginner-learners of a language are taught a set of generic skills to decode text, detached from any social activity. Literacy thus acquired, it is assumed, will have an effect on other social, cultural and cognitive practices. In this case study I will show through extracts from English lessons I observed, how this „autonomous“ model of teaching language is firmly entrenched in the teaching practices in the Grade 4 class of the focus school.

Street (1993) provides an alternative model, the ideological model, as a „more theoretically sound and ethnographic understanding of the actual significance of literacy practices in people’s lives“ (p.30). The primary focus of the model is on what people can do with literacy in their everyday lives, rather than on what literacy does to them (Hamilton and Barton, 1994: 25). This model views literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, with particular and important roles in reproducing and challenging structures of power in society. Researchers study literacy in its social settings believing that reading and writing practices are best understood and studied as social activities with specific functions in specific social contexts.

As social practice, literacy is not about learning basic skills, but how the acquired social practices, and acquired genres can be applied in different circumstances for different activities in school, at home, or in the place of work. Learners, learning through English as additional language, need to be exposed to a variety of meaningful activities to develop their language and literacy abilities. Placing language learners in particular social situations in class discussions, such as „At the station“, „Shopping at the Mall“, „Playing for my Team“, can provide the social contexts which require learners to use particular kinds of language and literacy.

A classic study within New Literacy Studies is Heath's account of how three different local communities in the Piedmont Carolinas in North America had different rules and practices for social interaction and sharing knowledge in literacy events (Heath, 1983). Prinsloo (2012), in a discussion paper, „Literacy in Community Settings“, argues that Heath's work made the case that there are multiple ways of taking and making meaning in reading and writing practices, and the selection of one of those ways as the standard, or as normative in school and formal institutions, depended „on the way each community structured its family life, defined the roles that community members could assume and their concepts that guided child socialization (p.2). One aspect of Prinsloo's study, „Making Sense in Kwezi Park“, focused on how school children reshape the semiotic resources taken from school and home in the games that they play. He observed how in their games, a group of Khayelitsha children, displayed many of the cognitive abilities said to underpin literacy development. He noted with concern the distressing gap between the multimodal exuberance of the resources deployed in play and the „narrow band“ focus of writing in school. Learners, especially those faced with learning in a new language, are forced to draw on their accumulated experience in their interactions with others in and outside the classroom. How learners respond to language and literacy production, as in school writing and speaking tasks depends on what the learner finds in the classroom. Is the environment a strange, unfamiliar one, with no link to the learner's world experience, or are there recognizable elements present in the learning situation to which the learner can attach herself to survive? It is widely accepted that context is central to meaning making. To English language learners, such as the Khayelitsha children described above, ways of making meaning in the English classroom will come easier if such learning takes place against the background of their social practices, which includes their prior knowledge, games, dance, work and songs. According to Gee (2000:186)

„words and contexts are two mirrors facing each other, infinitely and simultaneously reflecting each other“.

Hymes“ theory of communicative competence is relevant to our understanding of language as social practice. Much of his work focuses on the „language problems of disadvantaged children“ (Hymes, 2005: 53). He introduced the term „communicative competence“ as a reaction to Noam Chomsky“s abstract notion of linguistic competence: „Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal listener-speaker, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interests, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance“ (Chomsky,1965: 3). In contrast to this position, Hymes (2005) argues that „from the standpoint of the children we seek to understand and help, such a statement may seem almost a declaration of irrelevance. All the difficulties that confront the children and ourselves, seem swept from view“ (Hymes, 1971: 270).

Hymes contends that „to cope with the realities of children as communicating beings requires a theory within which socio-cultural factors have an explicit and constitutive role...“ (p 54). His views on the socio-cultural nature of language acquisition are confirmed when he proposes for linguistics, the idea of language as a set of „ways of speaking“ - an alternative to the idea of language as grammar, as an abstracted set of rules or norms (1989). With „ways of speaking“, Hymes offers a bipartite conception of speech that according to him cannot be separated, namely what speakers can and do say, and the social and cultural context / background against which they speak:

„when the meaning of speech styles are analyzed, we realize that they entail dimensions of participant, setting, channel, and the like, which partly govern their meanings“ (Hymes, 1989: 444).

Hymes does not consider speech separate from the social and cultural context in which it originates, and which help shape and create meaning. Instead, Hymes distinguishes speech acts (that which is being said) from grammatical conceptions like sentences, because the meaning, status, and function of a speech act are not solely dependent upon grammatical form. The interpretation of speech acts is equally (at times more) dependent upon the social status and

relationship of participants, as well as the immediate context of the utterance, and so „the level of speech acts mediates immediately between the usual levels of grammar and the rest of a speech event or situation in that it implicates both linguistic form and social norms“ (57). It is this notion of communicative competence: „...rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless“ (Hymes in Mitchell, 1994, p33), which forms the basis of what has become the communicative approach to second language teaching and learning.

### **2.3 The language demands of schooling**

Cummins (2000) distinguishes between two different types of language proficiency. Conversational language, referred to in his earlier work as BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills), is social language, also called playground language. This type of language is developed more rapidly, takes about two years to develop in immersion contexts or contexts of high exposure to the language, and is used for meeting basic needs and everyday conversation. Academic language use, initially referred to as CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency), is the type of language necessary for success in school: it is the discourse specific language of the school books of mathematics, natural science and the social sciences. According to Cummins (2000) academic language proficiency takes between five and seven years to develop in a context of high exposure to the language.

The BICS/CALP distinction is a refined form of the earlier Threshold Theory of Cummins (1976) and Toukamma and Skutnabb-Kangas (1977) in which Cummins explains that immigrant learners in North America who were in pull out programmes in order to learn English appeared to have achieved surface fluency, or playground proficiency, in the second language, i.e. communicative skills (BICS), but struggled when they were placed in mainstream classes as they had not acquired the academic language proficiency needed to learn through the medium of English in all their subjects. The conversational/academic language distinction will assist the research in understanding how language is acquired and learnt, and why so many second language learners fail to meet formative assessment requirements of the Foundation and Intermediate phases in primary schools when they are expected to be able to converse satisfactorily in the medium of instruction. I draw on Cummins“ distinction between conversational and academic language in order to categorize the different kinds of English language found in the Grade 4 classrooms of the focus school.

Cummins' conversational / academic proficiency distinction is not without its criticisms, though.

Edelsky, Hudelson, Flores, Barkin, Altweger, Jilbert, (1983, in Baker, 2006) have criticized the theory for reflecting an autonomous perspective on language and ignoring the location of language in social practice and power relations. Major criticisms from these works include: the focus is too much on the individual learner and learner cognition instead of on the learner as individual in a particular social context; before we ascribe a learner's failure to cope in school to low proficiency in language, we need to consider the availability of resources and infrastructural support of the school, and the socio-economic conditions prevailing.

What does Cummins' conversational / academic language distinction mean for policy and practice in South African township primary and high schools? It firstly means that teachers in these schools, and particularly the English language teachers, should have a sound understanding of the different kinds of language needed for different communicative purposes and subjects/disciplines; that teachers be aware of the special language needs of learners learning and being taught in another language; that teaching such learners requires methodological skills and teaching practices and strategies suited to the needs of English language learners, and that to acquire conversational fluency and confidence in English does not necessarily translate into proficiency in academic registers. Gibbons (2006) refers to Christie's (1995) work where Christie draws on Bernstein in her discussion of pedagogic discourse as involving all social practices of the classroom. Christie identified two registers in operation in the classrooms she studied: the *instructional* register which conveys specialized knowledge (e.g. science) and has to do with the content knowledge being taught, and the *regulative* register, which involves the social order, the relationships (between participants) that determine how best the instructional register (the learning of the content) is going to be realized. Gibbons points out that where you have large numbers of English language learners, the *regulative* may co-exist with the *instructional* register: that aspects such as values and attitudes, working cooperatively in groups, valuing each other's work and responses, and providing criticism constructively, are valued as important teaching objectives in their own right and should be taught explicitly to English language learners as „new“ language, and as social rules of the classroom. Gibbons (2006, 105-106) argues that (1) how to be a student, and (2) developing proficiency in the second language, is additional, and enabling of (3) the learning of field-specific knowledge. Gibbons draws

attention to how learners are positioned through the discourse of the classroom and how their identity is constructed through their participation in classroom activities. She contends that learner progress in class is linked to the institutional and societal power relations in which classroom communication occurs. Instead of denying minority language speakers, or ESL learners their linguistic and cultural identity, it is vital that both intellect and identity be affirmed through classroom interactions; their voices must be heard, and contributions acknowledged in the various instructional practices in the classroom.

## **2.4 Classroom discourse**

Courtney Cazden in her work, *Classroom Discourse* (2001), draws our attention to how differences in how something is said, and even when it is said, can seriously impair effective teaching and accurate evaluation. Cazden raises three questions about classroom discourse: How do patterns of language use affect teaching and learning in the classroom? How does the use of these patterns ensure that all learners enjoy equal learning opportunities? What competencies do these patterns require learners to have? She focuses on different types of discourse that may occur in the classroom. The initiation, response, evaluation/feedback IRE/F pattern of classroom discourse, first described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) could easily be the most common of all classroom discourses. The teacher initiates a topic for consideration, usually in the form of a question; one or more students respond to that initiation; then the teacher offers an evaluation or feedback on that response. The Initiation-Response- Evaluation/ Feedback triad is repeated during lessons. In this case study I will show how teacher-learner talk revolves around this IRE/F sequence, how teachers use this sequence to elicit and manage learner responses, rephrase questions that learners find difficult, and attempt to draw learners into responding in sentences instead of with single word answers.

Cazden identifies the following typical patterns of classroom discourse:

1. Firstly, the spoken language dominates in class. It is the medium through which teaching takes place, and in which learners demonstrate to teachers what they have learnt;
2. The teacher is in control of the speaking rights in class-allocating roughly two-thirds of speaking time to herself – presenting, clarifying, asking, evaluating, responding, directing, probing, rephrasing. Teachers have the right to speak to anybody, at any time;

teachers allocate turns or select speakers; turn-taking is rapid with limited wait time; teachers ask more questions than learners; learners generally are expected to make eye contact when addressing the teacher.

She contends further that language use in the classroom causes the learner to make a slight adjustment, or it can seriously impede her learning, especially if the teaching and learning is in another language. Cazden presents the following as ideal in the classroom discourse to support language learning:

- The spoken language of the teacher is varied to take into account the different linguistic backgrounds of learners. Words spoken in class during lessons, and understood by learners, realize the ultimate goal of education, namely, to bring about the change *within* learners.
- Teachers try and plan classroom talk taking into account the relationship between how learners think or process information, and the group interactions in the classroom. Teachers are mindful that learners may learn better from their peers in group sessions, even if the sessions are noisy, than in formal classroom sessions.
- Classroom language use changes all the time as the teacher searches to create the best possible conditions / opportunities to realize the goals of language learning and academic development.

## **2.5 Second Language Teaching Methodologies**

### **2.5.1 The Communicative Approach**

The Curriculum and Assessment Statement (CAPS) for South African state schools, now fully implemented from Grade R – 12, outlines the Communicative Language Approach (CLA) as one of its main recommended approaches to teaching English as additional language. The aim is to get learners to speak to each other, as well as to express their views coherently on a variety of subjects, preferably drawn from their own experiences. The communicative approach provides for learners to interact with each other in groups, where they can learn and draw confidence from each other; to create opportunities to hear and use the language in less formal classroom language learning activities; and for teachers, through their input, to link classroom learning with learners' own home experiences, and prior knowledge. The aim is not to get the learners

entangled in the technicalities of language structure, but rather to learn the language for use in everyday situations (Hymes, 2005).

The potential problem with this understanding of CLT in township schools is that it focuses on informal, or in Cummins' terms conversational, language use while learners are expected to develop their English proficiency in order to use the language for learning in all of their curriculum subjects. The English First Additional Language curriculum informed by Communicative Language Teaching may result in learners remaining with the basic conversational-type language well into the general education and training phase (grades 7-9), and may fail to develop the academic-type language in the last three years of school that would enable them to learn across the curriculum successfully.

We need to keep in mind that we do not have specialist ESL classes in our schools, nor do we have government funding for these ESL classes: in all our classes in township schools, from Grade 1 onwards, English is taught as additional language, and from Grade 4 onwards, in the case of the focus school in this study, as language of instruction as well. Gibbons (2006: 247) recognizes that for English language learners „English is both the aim and the medium of education: they are not only learning English as a school curriculum subject, and as a new language, but they are learning in it and through it as well“, and that they need extensive language support.

Without extensive language support, or well-trained foundation and intermediate phase teachers, the comprehensible input that Krashen speaks about (Krashen, 1985, 1989), namely that learners progress in language acquisition when they are exposed to and understand language input that is slightly higher than their current level, at best becomes a two-way interaction with input modified to the learners' level of proficiency. Gibbons (2006) draws on Pica et al.'s study (Pica, et al, 1987) to illustrate that where learners were free to seek clarification from each other, a greater degree of understanding is reached than when input is pre-modified. This suggests that interactional modification in the group can lead to better and more learning opportunities.

Merrill Swain (1995a, 1995b.) in her research into French immersion classes made a case for a lack of comprehensible output to be considered as possible reason for low levels of learner proficiency output. She pointed to a lack of opportunities to engage with the language that might

be the cause of low achievements in the language arguing that the opportunities to produce the language/„output“ are central to language learning:

output encourages learners to process the language more deeply than comprehension alone may do: it „stretches“ or „pushes“ their inter-language, by stimulating them to focus on form more than is necessary when listening. Output can thus be considered „to represent the leading edge of a learner’s inter-language...

(Swain 1995b:12).

Here Swain differs with Krashen who downplayed the role of talk in the learning process. Swain argued that learners need interactions, and when these interactions are understood by them it leads to „communicative consensus“ between the interactants. Gibbons regards this as a first step to grammatical control: because the message is understood, the learner pays attention to form (i.e. the way it is grammatically structured), thus paving the way for future exchanges. Gibbons (2006: 45) also challenged Krashen’s view that speaking is merely an outcome of learning, and not a contributing factor to learning. She concurs with others, like Swain, that „collaborative talk is not simply an outcome of previous learning, but the process of learning itself“ (2006: 47).

### **2.5.2 The text-based approach**

The text-based approach is also promoted in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). Like the task-based and communicative approaches, it seeks to prepare learners for language use in real world situations. According to Richards, (2006: 36) a text-based approach explores how texts work. The purpose of a text-based approach is to enable learners to become competent, confident and critical readers, writers and viewers of texts. It involves listening to, reading, viewing and analyzing texts to understand how they are produced, what their effects are, and how these texts are linked to the cultural context of their use.

Through this critical interaction, learners develop the ability to evaluate texts. The text-based approach also involves producing different kinds of texts for particular purposes and audiences. This approach will require quite a lot of modeling, support and scaffolding in the First Additional Language classroom.

The curriculum and assessment policy statements: Intermediate Phase (CAPS Document 2011): refer to the following kinds of text types:

- Procedures e.g. procedures used in carrying out a task
- Explanations e.g. explaining how and why things happen
- Expositions e.g. reviews, arguments, debates
- Factual recounts e.g. magazine articles
- Personal recounts e.g. anecdotes, diary/journal entries, biographies, autobiographies
- Information reports e.g. fact sheets
- Narratives e.g. stories, fables
- Conversations and e.g. dialogues, formal/informal letters, postcards, e-mail.

## **2.6 Classroom Discourses in Postcolonial Contexts**

### **2.6.1 *Teacher volubility, Learner taciturnity and Group chorsing***

Chick (1996), who became aware of the particular styles of teacher / learner classroom interaction in black schools, and its potential negative educational effects through his involvement with in-service teacher education in the KwaZulu Natal province, agreed with observers such as Schlemmer and Bot (1986), and Thembela (1986) that the essential characteristics of teacher / learner interaction in schools for black people in South Africa under the apartheid system included features such as: highly centralized classes, teachers adopting authoritarian roles, doing most of the talking, few learner initiations, and group chorus responses by learners.

Chick found the following ways of teacher / learner collusion in preserving their dignity, in what he termed *safe-talk*, by hiding the fact that little or no learning is taking place:

1. Teacher volubility and
2. Learner taciturnity
3. Group-chorsing, which includes two kinds of cues: a set of yes / no questions (do you understand?); and rising tone questions with emphasis on the accented syllable, where learners complete the stressed syllable of the given word, e.g. ***complete*** (***com***= rising tone; ***-plete***: chorused by learners).

In respect of teacher volubility and learner taciturnity, Chick quotes Scollon and Scollon (1983) who described teacher volubility as a solidarity strategy, and learner taciturnity as a deference strategy. Teacher volubility entails the teacher speaking for most of the teaching time, with little or no input from learners. Chick contends further that „there is, of course, nothing unusual about teachers needing to resort to face-saving strategies, since the asymmetrical role relations between teachers and students to be found in most parts of the world ensure that the risk of face-threat is great“ (p.9). As Cazden (1979: 147) explains, „teachers, by the very nature of their professional role, are continuously threatening both aspects of their students“ face constraining their freedom of action; evaluating, often negatively, a high proportion of student acts and utterances; and often interrupting student work and student talk“.

The fact that the information value of items chorused is often low prompted Chick to conclude that the primary function of the chorusing elicited by this kind of cue is social rather than academic. The social function of chorusing became even more clearly evident when he examined the lesson as a whole. He discovered that the students are required, in response to both kinds of cue, to provide mainly confirmative one- or two-word responses, or responses which repeat information on the board or information which has been recycled again and again by the teacher. This suggests to Chick that „chorusing gives the students opportunities to participate in ways that reduce the possibility of the loss of face associated with providing incorrect responses to teacher elicitations, or not being able to provide responses at all“ (1996: 9). He then discovers that the chorused responses are without exception „yes“. This suggests that the questions are not really open questions, and that their function is to signal participation rather than level of understanding, i.e. it is again social rather than academic in purpose. They help the students to avoid the loss of face associated with being wrong in a public situation, and provide them with a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Something not examined by Chick here, but considered equally important, is that these styles also help teachers avoid the loss of face associated with displays of incompetence. This is because they ensure that the lesson develops along predetermined lines, and that the opportunities for students to raise issues and problems that teachers may not be competent to handle are few. It is for such reasons that Chick refers to discourse associated with these styles as „safe-talk“.

### 2.6.2 „Safetalk“ and „Safetime“

Hornberger and Chick (2001), likewise, examined the nature and functions of classroom talk in two classrooms – a mathematics class in South Africa, and a language class in Peru. In both of these two countries the medium of instruction is the language of the former colonizer, rather than the language best known to the teachers and learners. The researchers set out to seek and understand how teachers and learners contend with the problems that that kind of learning situation brings. They found that „teachers and learners... opt for interactional practices (such as safetalk and safetime) that have nothing to do with learning“, but instead serve social functions (p.42). In the South African case, taciturnity and group – chorusing helped learners and teacher avoid „loss of face“ associated with „not knowing“, while in the Peruvian case „teacher-prompt oral interaction, reading consisting of repeating after the teacher, and writing consisting of copying from the board served the same purpose“ (p. 42). In such circumstances little actual learning takes place. Teacher and learners have a sense of having completed lessons, despite learner participation being limited to questions and problems which can easily be dealt with.

Gibbons (2006) highlights the critical role of teacher-learner talk in children’s language development, in particular in learning a new register, such as is required in school subjects like mathematics and sciences. The context in which learning takes place becomes important, but more important is the prior knowledge on which new knowledge can be built. This study will show, inter alia, how a lack of prior knowledge, or even insufficient prior knowledge, can hamper movement along the continuum from more spoken-like discourse to more written discourse , and how teachers find themselves trapped between what the curriculum demands, and what they are able to deliver given the proficiency level of learners in the LoLT.

The research of Arthur and Martin (2006) investigated patterns of classroom interaction in primary schools in Botswana and Brunei, both former English colonies. The study found remarkable similarities in the two contexts, namely the relative absence of task-focused group talk among learners; domination of teacher-led discourse; whole–class chorus responses to teacher questions, or individual responses; and the pervasive use of IRF/E exchanges in both contexts. The investigation associates classroom practices with „safe“, inflexible and routinized interaction conducted mono-lingually through English in the two contexts. In the Botswana classrooms, monolingual English recitation routines occurred more frequently which suggests

the importance attached to grammatically correct formulation in English. Extensive use of IRF/E exchanges was found to be a fundamental feature of the discourse of these classrooms. The research identified the „safe-talk“ teacher / learner collusion of rising intonation, incomplete sentence, and group chorusing (compare Chick, 2006) in both contexts, with insistence on questions being answered in full English sentences appearing to be a ground rule of all classroom discourse in Botswana, but not in Brunei. Arthur and Martin found that in both countries there was considerable prestige attached to English. The teacher played the central role in relaying knowledge, drawing learners into IRF/E exchanges. The transmission model dominated learning and teaching: knowledge is transmitted to learners who recite and memorize facts. Gibbons uses the „conduit“ metaphor to refer to this model where „knowledge is transmitted as a commodity to learners, with language as the „conduit“ by which this transmission occurs (Gibbons, 2006: 16).

### **2.6.3 Code switching**

One of the language practices most widely used in South African schools is code-switching. Code switching is defined as the switching from one language to another within phrases or sentences (Lawrence, 1999:266; Heugh et al, 1995:vii). Adendorff, has found in his study of language use in Botswana“s ESL classrooms that code-switching was highly functional in the content subjects. It serves mostly as a communicative resource which enables teachers, who lack a full mastery of the language, and learners to create an environment of warmth and friendliness conducive to learning (p 21). In South Africa with its diversity of cultures and languages it is not uncommon to find people in informal, or even formal conversation, easily switching between languages several times in the same conversation. In South African township primary and high schools it is not uncommon to find in one class learners who speak a variety of indigenous languages. The language of instruction in these schools may be English, but English may be heard and spoken only in classrooms in the course of a lesson.

Probyn (2001, 2006a, 2006b) has found that the rationale of South African teachers for the practices of code switching are remarkably similar to code switching patterns reported in similar post-colonial contexts in Africa and Asia (Arthur, 1994 in Botswana; Lin, 1996 in Hong Kong; Martin 1996 in Brunei; Merrit 1992 in Kenya).

In the context where Probyn conducted her investigation, Grade 8 Science classes in rural Eastern Cape schools, there appeared to be two broad categories:

- a. teachers who find they need to code-switch from English to Xhosa (the home language of learners) for cognitive reasons in response to learners' limited English proficiency;
- b. teachers who choose to code-switch from English to Xhosa (the home language of learners) to achieve various affective goals (Probyn, 2006:130).

She concludes her analysis of language use in Science classes by stating that the language-in-education policy,

combined with continued lack of adequate resourcing and infrastructure in historically disadvantaged schools, continues to contribute to a widening educational gap between the desegregated urban middle-class and the black township and rural poor – contrary to the democratic government's educational goals of equity, access and redress.

(Probyn; 2006; 133).

Setati et al, (2002) contend that that which makes the bi-/multilingual learner an integrated whole is code-switching (CS), or the ability to move across and draw on all their language resources. The switch from the learners' first or home language provides the learner with a powerful means to explore ideas. Rollnick and Rutherford (1996) in their studies in Swaziland have found that without the use of CS some students' alternative conceptions would remain unexposed. Setati writes further that studies in mathematics education in some southern African states have shown that the use of learners' first language through CS in teaching and learning mathematics „provides the support needed while the learners continue to develop proficiency in the language of learning and teaching“(p.134). „Learning from talk“, CS, must be complemented by strategies to „learn to talk“ i.e. learning subject-specific academic discourses. This is the challenge faced by teachers: to move learners from „their ways with words“ to subject-specific spoken and written academic language.

Chimbutane (2013:315-316) outlines the debate about the use of „mother tongues“ or indigenous languages (L1) in Mozambican schools where Portuguese is politically dominant as follows:

„There are at least three main positions about the use of L1 in L2 or foreign language (FL) classrooms: (1) total exclusion of L1 or exclusive use of L2/FL; (2) minimal use of L1 or

maximum exposure to L2/FL; and (3) optimal use of L1 (see Cook 2001; Macaro 2001, 2009; Turnbull 2001).

## **2.7 Summary**

In this study I draw on a sociocultural approach to language and literacy which views language as a socially situated and context-embedded practice. I will further be drawing on the traditions of classroom discourse research in the analysis of data to follow, particularly the IRE/F structure, notions of input/output and „safetalk“. Cummins“ conversational/academic language distinction between the different kinds of language use for different purposes will be used to analyze the kinds of language produced in the Grade 4 English and Science lessons.

In the next chapter I present the methodology for this study.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I give an overview of the research methodology, methods of data collection and tools of analysis used in this research project. I introduce the research site, explain the approach to my research, as well as the data collection methods used in the study. Lastly, I deal with the process of data analysis and the ethical considerations of the study.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

This research uses a qualitative approach to data collection. Qualitative research, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:21), „is inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings“. A qualitative case-study approach was selected because this research is concerned with social and cultural phenomena, where the researcher gains insight into how social, environmental and cultural contexts influence human behaviour, and lastly, because of the intimate classroom-based nature of the study.

#### **3.3 Case Study**

A case-study, according to Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000:3), is the in-depth „study of a particular phenomenon, or multiple phenomena, within their real-life context“. Such an in-depth investigation describes the interaction of significant factors with those phenomena in order to holistically describe them (Yin, 1994: 13). The qualitative case-study lends itself best to situations where the phenomena being investigated cannot be separated from the context. What is being examined, or the case in this study is classroom discourse and practice used when teaching through the medium of English in both EFAL and Natural Science within a Grade 4 classroom context at a particular township school. The particular focus is on how English is being used and taught in Grade 4 English and Natural Science classes where the children are learners of English and English is the language of instruction.

The case study undertaken here allowed me into the classroom of three Grade 4 teachers, two of them teaching English as second language (or First additional Language in official curriculum terms) to Xhosa-speaking Grade 4 learners, and one teaching Natural Science through the medium of English to the same Xhosa-speaking learners. It was possible for me to observe and record naturally occurring situations where teachers interacted with learners in an uncontrolled way, and where real-life classroom situations unfolded to lay bare unique moments of teaching and learning in English. It was possible for me to gain an understanding of typical teaching practices being employed by observing the same teacher teaching the same English lesson to four different Grade 4 classes. In the Natural Science class I was able to observe the teacher teaching two different lessons on „Matter“ to two different Grade 4 classes. This enabled me to gauge the effectiveness of those teaching practices under the circumstances, to study whether, and how, teaching practices change under different circumstances, and what challenges teachers face when teaching in English to learners who are seldom spoken to in English outside the classroom. Likewise, the challenges faced by learners, who had been exposed to three years of being taught English as a subject, are also foregrounded, giving a better insight into whether or not they are able to cope with the demands of the Grade 4 curricula as set out by CAPS.

I then followed the same learners to the Natural Science class to gain an insight into how they would respond to English as language of instruction in a content subject with a different teacher, and to observe what teaching strategies the science teacher employs in explaining scientific concepts to learners at that level. I have tried to include all activities that impacted on lesson delivery such as inter-com announcements, long pauses (periods of silence between questions and answers; handing out of worksheets; taking out of books). I did not intervene when the teacher had to leave the class for short periods, nor did I interact with any learner in any of the classrooms. I would be seated at the back of the class, and do most video-recordings from there. During written activities I would move around among the tables, careful not to attract much attention to the video- recorder, and record instances of learners engaging in table work. Learners soon became used to my presence.

### **3.4 Research Site**

The research took place in a primary school, one of four primary schools in a rapidly developing township within Kraaifontein. The township grew from a few make-shift wood and iron

structures of new arrivals from the Eastern Cape Province in the late 1990's, to a sprawling modern township of RDP houses, tarred roads, shops, a taxi terminus, churches, two high schools and the four primary schools 15 years later. In-between lay years of peaceful, and sometimes violent, struggle for the right to be included in, and recognized by, the municipality of Kraaifontein as residents of that municipality, employed within the municipal boundaries of Kraaifontein and contributing to its economic life. This primary school was built in response to the rapid development of the area, and the great demand for schools as a result of this development.

The school draws its learners from a predominantly Xhosa-speaking community, with a strong representation of Sotho mother-tongue speakers, and a smaller Afrikaans speaking „Coloured“ community. The community has deep levels of poverty, the unemployment rate is high, single-parenting is common, and violence and crime is part of the every-day experience of learners. Churches and organizations in the community make use of the school facilities for church services, church activities, meetings and gatherings.

### **3.4.1 School organization.**

The school is organized into three distinct blocks:

- (a) the Grade R section, occupying their own building separate from the main buildings;
- (b) the Foundation Phase block occupying one wing of the school building; and
- (c) the main building, which houses the Administration block, the Intermediary and Junior Secondary Phases (up to Grade 7);
- (d) a library, equipped with reading books suitable for all grades, with a small research section;
- (e) the school hall and toilet facilities are neat and adequate, while the large playgrounds appeared well-kept for sports activities.
- (f) There is fencing right around the school perimeter, with one main entrance leading to the administration block, and smaller gates leading from the street directly to the Grade R section and the Foundation Phase block. All gates are locked when the school day starts.
- (g) The school had a full complement of teaching and support staff at the time of my fieldwork.

### **3.4.2 The Grade 4 classroom**

The four Grade 4 class sizes vary between 32 and 36 learners per class with enough physical space for the teacher and learners to move comfortably around. Walls are bedecked with colourful WCED-issued educational charts, posters, pictures from newspapers, and mostly hand-made teaching aids, columns of words in present and past tense, male / female gender, etc. Each learner has a table and chair. In the English class I saw stacks of workbooks and readers on a table in the corner. Flashcards with names of objects are pasted on those objects all over the class, e.g. the word „door“ is written on a flashcard and pasted on the door. All classes are swept in the afternoon, the tables and chairs stacked along the walls till the next morning. The rooms are in close proximity to each other. The windows and doors of all rooms are fitted with burglar bars.

There is a large, green chalkboard in each of the Grade 4 classes. Each of the Grade 4 classes has a fixed pull-down screen and data projector facilities installed in the front of the class.

### **3.4.3 A typical day at school for a Grade 4 learner.**

The whole school assembles in the mornings for daily prayer and announcements. Learners then file to their rooms where they stay throughout the day. Teachers move from classroom to classroom. Each class has a class teacher responsible for administration of that class, which includes attendance, academic progress, and the general well-being of learners in that class. The school has 4 x Grade 4 classes: 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D.

Period 1 starts immediately after assembly. After coming in from assembly, learners arrange desks in clusters, seating about six learners each. The classes are cleaned after school and the desks and chairs stacked along the wall. Once the desks are arranged the learner attendance register is completed. The absentees are noted, after which the first lesson starts. The class preparation takes between 5 and 8 minutes of the 30 minute period.

The school day consists of 12 x 30 minute periods, from 08h00 till 14h30. There are two breaks: a 10 minute (feeding scheme) break at 10h30 – 10h40, and a longer break from 12h30 till 13h00.

#### **3.4.4 The School's time-table**

The school's time-table for 2012 is attached (see **Annexure A**) and shows the following allocations for English lessons per Grade 4 class:

4A – 6 x 30 minute periods per week = 3 hours

4B – 7 x 30 minute periods per week = 3 hours 30 minutes

4C – 7 x 30 minute periods per week = 3 hours 30 minutes

4D – 7 x 30 minute periods per week = 3 hours 30 minutes

5 x 30 minute reading periods per week per class (1 x 30 minute reading period per day)

The above allocation should be examined against the (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement - CAPS) document which came into effect in January 2012, and which stipulates teaching time for the First Additional Language in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 – 6) as 5 hours per week. All language content is provided within a two-week cycle (10 hours).

It should be noted further that the 4A class has one period fewer than the other classes; that 4C does not have a double period like the other classes; and that all four classes have been allocated less time than the stipulated 5 hours per week as required by CAPS.

#### **3.5 Data Collection**

Data collection tools consisted mainly of classroom observation, audio-recordings of Teacher Francis' English lessons, video - recordings of Teacher Margie's lessons, audio-recordings of two of Teacher Cynthia's Natural Science lessons, field notes, and brief informal conversations with the teachers involved in the research. All of the above data were collected on different days, at different times of a school day, over a period of six months, from May 2012 to October 2012. During this period I met three different teachers for English in Grade 4. When I visited the school in April 2012, to request permission for the research, I was introduced to Teacher X as the English teacher of Grade 4. I made all arrangements for my further visits with her. When the official visits started in May 2012 I found a different teacher teaching English to Grade 4: Teacher Francis. I observed and audio-recorded 12 lessons in her classes. Teacher Francis retired

from teaching at the end of June 2012, and was replaced by Teacher Margie. I video - recorded 16 English language lessons in her classes in the third term.

During the month of June 2012, I also observed two Natural Science lessons taught by Teacher Cynthia to the same learners in Grade 4. Both these lessons have been audio-recorded.

The full data set consists of 30 lessons in all:

- 14 audio recorded lessons of which 12 are English language lessons by Teacher Francis, and 2 are Natural Science lessons by Teacher Sophia;
- 16 video recorded lessons, and extracts of lessons, taken during Teacher Margie's lessons.

I have selected extracts from a number of lessons which were typical of what I observed over the duration of the research. I thus draw on the following five lessons for close analysis in this report: two audio – recordings from Teacher Francis' English lessons; one video – recording from Teacher Margie's English lessons; and two audio – recordings of the Natural Science lessons which I will discuss extensively in my data analysis chapters. This was the first time the school has had a student-researcher on premises observing lessons for research purposes. Throughout the period of observation I was aware of the discomfort my visit was causing some of the teachers involved, though I was well-received in class, and treated with great courtesy by all teachers. Teacher Francis was an experienced teacher, and in the last months of her long teaching career. She had not taught English before, and was very nervous in front of class. On some days she would speak very softly, having lost her voice, and on other days she would complain of a tight chest, some days of not feeling well. It was in the heart of winter - cold in class, wet and unpleasant outside, like in most houses around the school. Under the circumstances I was reluctant to ask whether I could video - record some of her lessons. When the third term started, I explained to the new English teacher that the video-recordings would be for research purposes, would only focus on the learners, and that all information would be treated confidentially. I now have a better understanding of what Stake (1995; cited in Merriam, 2001: 101) meant with „qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world“ in reference to ethical considerations.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

In this section I will discuss the process of data analysis I followed in organizing, analyzing and interpreting the data collected. I began by reading through all the field notes collected, listening to all audio-recordings, and viewing all video-recordings to get a sense of what data I had at my disposal and which of the lessons I would focus on to answer my research questions the best.

I was able to track the patterns of classroom discourse, particularly the patterns of language use by teacher and learners. I was able to see the effects on language learning of the teaching practice where English language is taught as decontextualized, autonomous skill. I witnessed the inhibiting effect on learner response of the dominant teacher authority figure in the classroom, and whether learners enjoyed equal learning opportunities under conditions created in the classroom. I noted how learners responded to teacher prompts in the IRE sequence, the patterns of turn-taking and the kinds of questions (e.g. open or closed) used in the lessons. I devote space to a discussion on the features of teacher volubility, learner taciturnity, as well as group chorusing which I found in all lessons I observed. The reasons why teachers dominate class time, leaving little time for learner output, is examined against the „safe-talk“ and „safe-time“ findings of Chick (1996) and Hornberger and Chick (2001) as discussed in the previous chapter. I have come to appreciate the dilemma faced by teachers at the primary level who find themselves unable to proceed from barely conversational language registers to more academically proficient registers because of the mismatch between what learners are supposed to know from previous different grade levels, and the considerably lower levels they had managed to accomplish.

I found extensive use of code-switching only in the case of one English language teacher during a reading lesson. I discuss how extensive use of the practice, according to researchers, result in nullifying much of the benefits of group work among learners, how teacher-dominated classroom discourses, whole-class responses to teacher questions, ultimately constrains the academic progress of L2 learners. My own experience over many years is that the strategic use of code-switching can only enhance language learning and assist teachers and learners who find themselves trapped by the mismatch between what the curriculum demands, and what they are able to achieve in class given the proficiency levels of learners in the LoLT.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

With this research I have entered the private spaces of the teachers in whose classes I would be sitting (Stake 1995, quoted above). I have received ethical clearance from UCT's school of education and received the required WCED permission to conduct my research at the school. I wrote a letter to the principal of the school, asking permission to conduct the research at the school. I also wrote a letter to the teachers concerned asking their participation in the research. I also sought permission from the teachers concerned to be interviewed, and to audio-and video record some of the lessons. (See Appendix 1 for consent forms). In April 2012, I met with the principal and teacher concerned, then Teacher X, where I introduced myself, and explained the purpose of my research. It was understood that all information gathered would be treated with respect and confidentiality, as would the names of all participants, including the name of the school. It is for this reason that the following pseudonyms have been used to refer to teacher participants in this research, namely Teacher Francis (TF later on; Teacher Margie (TM); and Teacher Cynthia (TC).

Despite the official process of informed consent and guaranteeing privacy and confidentiality for all participants including learners, there were still the human factors that the researcher encounters in class, and has to contend with. Teacher Francis did her best to conceal her discomfort with my presence in class. As discussed earlier, at various points she succumbed to the strain. Teacher Margie proceeded with her teaching, while lessons were being video – recorded, bravely trying to control her nerves, and keeping learners from staring, waving or pulling faces at the camera. Teacher Cynthia did not seem to notice or mind my presence in the Natural Science class at all.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter has given an overview of the research design as a qualitative case-study of classroom discourse in Grade 4 classes in a particular setting. I have given an overview of the research site and the approach to the research. I also indicated how data - collecting proceeded, and what data set would be drawn from for my analysis; finally I expounded on what ethical considerations relevant to the study and the participants, were observed.

In the following chapter I will begin to present the data that was produced through these methods and provide a detailed analysis based on the conceptual and analytical framework on which this study is based.

## Chapter 4

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present and analyze the findings of the case study conducted into how English, as First Additional Language, is taught in grade 4 in a township quintile 1 primary school. The research seeks to throw light on the question why teachers of English at GET phase of high school still struggle with learners who have not yet developed basic proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing in English, four years after making the switch from isiXhosa to English as medium of instruction.

I will further attempt to give answers to the questions:

- (a) How much, and what kind of English is being used in this transition year in Grade 4, in English First Additional Language curriculum time in two weeks of EFAL lessons?
- (b) What kinds of activities / tasks are children engaged in to develop the traditional language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as tools for learning in EFAL curriculum time?

These questions will be answered through classroom observation data of two Grade 4 EFAL teachers, audio-recordings of teacher/learner interaction during lessons; and by studying the tasks set for learners. The analysis includes an exploration of the use of language during lessons; teacher / learner interaction in group sessions and learner/learner interaction during group sessions, as well as of the teaching materials, methods and tasks set.

I conclude that English as taught in this grade at this school would not be sufficient to equip learners to learn through the medium of English successfully, nor would the requirements of the English FAL curriculum for Grade 4 be met. I reach this conclusion after observing two teachers in their classroom discourse teaching English to Grade 4 over 30 lessons<sup>1</sup>. The 30 language lessons that I observed over these two terms were all revision lessons, namely – identification of nouns and verbs, with occasional references to subject/verb agreement, as well as three reading lessons. There were no specific lessons designed to develop oral proficiency, reading comprehension, or writing. There was one reading lesson where the teacher read to the class,

after which groups of learners read together as they sat at their tables. At no point in any of the lessons I observed was there an opportunity for learners to speak more than a sentence, which is typical in tightly structured IRE/F classroom discourses in a range of postcolonial contexts (Arthur and Martin, 2006). Most responses from learners consisted of one-word answers.

## **4.2 English Language Teachers at the school**

### **4.2.1 Teacher 1 – Term 1**

In March 2012 when I visited the school for the first time, I was introduced to the English teacher for Grade 4, Teacher 1. I visited her class for one period only on that day. She was revising a lesson: Parts of Speech – The Noun. Lesson notes were still on the board, dated the day before, and I noted that learners had the same notes in their classwork books. When I arrived in the second term to start my official observation period, Teacher 1 had been replaced by Teacher Francis.

### **4.2.2 Teacher Francis – Term 2**

Teacher Francis is Afrikaans / English speaking, and has taught at the school since its inception when it occupied a number of shipping containers converted into classrooms for the first few years of its existence. She has taught different subjects to different grades over the years, and in her last months at the school had been allocated the Grade 4 English classes. She is not trained to teach English, but has agreed to teach English to Grade 4 because of the difficulty in getting suitably qualified English teachers at the school. She was looking forward to June 2014 when she would reach retirement age. Being Afrikaans / English-speaking and not being proficient in Xhosa, her classes, consisting of mainly Xhosa speakers, therefore, heard only English during English classes. Whilst this could be seen as an impediment to interacting with learners informally, it could also be seen as positive: learners have no easy recourse to the home language when confronted with an English language problem. Most of the lessons I audio-recorded were from her classes.

### 4.2.3. Teacher Margie – Term 3

Teacher Margie is Xhosa-speaking. She took over the Grade 4 classes for English from Francis after June 2012. She is also not a trained English teacher, but only filled the vacancy until a suitable substitute is appointed. All the video-recorded lessons were done in her classes.

### 4.3 Transcription and Analysis of English lesson 1- Audio recording: 0514-092611

The lesson transcript that follows provides an insight into, what was described to me as a language revision lesson in a Grade 4 class in this primary school.

#### 4.3.1 Extract 1 of English lesson 1

(Learners had just arrived from outside, and take their time to arrange the desks in 5 groups of 6 or 7 tables).

1: Teacher: What did I tell you? Look at your time table... it's English now. Take out your English books. Make quick.

Look on the board...You are not going to write now...Look on the board...Look on the board...

Which letter is this, guys? (The teacher has drawn five columns on board with vowel headings: a, e, i, o, u, at the top of each of the columns)

2: Learner: a (in chorus)

3: Teacher: Give me some words with a...short words with a...

4: Learner: baby

5: Teacher: baby...what else?

6: Learner: day

7: Teacher: day...yes...what else?

8: Learner: bag

9: Teacher: bag?...OK

10: Learner: chalk.

11: Teacher: OK...what else?

12: Teacher: chalk...OK...what else?

13: Learner: (inaudible)

14: Teacher: Yes? Hey? What? Take? OK...must open your mouth...that I can hear...

15: Learner: Bake

16: Teacher: Bake? What did you say?

17: Learner: pay. Teacher: Yes?

18: Learner: cap.

19: Teacher: Cap? OK, now the next letter. What is the next letter?

The above lines are the opening sentences of the lesson. Francis did not introduce a specific topic or goal for the lesson (see turn 1); she did not say she was revising nouns and/or verbs, or what she was going to teach. The talk in this extract of the lesson appeared to cover identification of letters (a; e; i; o; u), later in the lesson referred to as *sounds* by the teacher; and giving words containing these letters / sounds.

In the Extract (t1 – t18) learners had given seven different words (**baby**, **day**, bag, chalk, **bake**, **pay**, cap), with the letter *a* sounding the same in four of the words: baby, day, bake, and pay; and the same letter *a* sounding different in three of the words; **bag**, with the a-sound, as in [kæɪ]<sup>1</sup>; and **chalk**, with the *a*-sound as in [tɔk]. These words are then written on the board in columns, each under the headings of its vowel letter.

The difference between the sounds of these letters in different words was not explained to learners. It seemed as if *-letter* and *-sound* is understood as the same concept. At this stage of the lesson the words are taught in isolation. Words in text would give the learners opportunity: to *see* words (in English word-order) functioning in context; to *hear* words being spoken/read in English by the teacher; *read* the text aloud, individually or in chorus, and then be better able to derive meaning. The learner (t10) correctly ventures the word „chalk“ with letter „a“, but although responding with „ok“, Francis twice dismisses the answer (t11 – 12) as unsuitable by not asking the learner to write it on the board, possibly because it would require extensive explanation, and then asking for a different example „what else?“.

The following extract from a little later on in the same lesson confirms that learners in this revision lesson appear not to have a large enough vocabulary to draw from, and seem to have problems identifying words with the same vowel sounds, or vowel letters; they seem to lack sufficient background knowledge of nouns and verbs to make the revision lesson a success. (The

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<sup>1</sup> [Transcription in square brackets used the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). See IPA symbols in Appendix:3]

lesson, being a revision lesson, drifts from noun and verb identification to noun / verb agreement.)

In this extract from the same lesson the teacher continues to call for words with vowel letters / sounds as in t37. Learners continue to give words, not necessarily nouns or verbs, with the required letter, regardless of the sound when pronounced (see extract below). She avoids potentially difficult explanations (t39 – 41) of same letters with different sounds in the same word (t40): *even* [i:vən], and does not explain the difference in sound between the „i“ of *shirt* and *iron* and *big* hereunder.

#### 4.3.2 Extract 2 of English lesson 1

37: T: Good. What else? [referring to the –e letter.]

38: L: Shirt.

39: T: Uh-uh. I am ...Uh-uh, [signaling incorrect answer] *babetjie* (baby)

40 L: Even

41 T: Even?...OK. (T writes the word down)...This letter is...i.

42 Ls (in chorus): i

43 T: Give me a word...

44 L: shirt.

45 T: Shirt. You see, there it comes now. Shirt.

46 Learner 1: iron

47 T: Hey? What? Uh...mm... Yes. Make a sentence with the word iron...make a sentence with the word iron...make a sentence with the word iron...

48 Learner 1: The iron is so hot.

49 T: Good! You know what is iron? Where is iron in the class? It's like the door...What is this lock made of? What do you do with iron at home? What do you do with an iron at home? What do you do with an iron at home? Yes...?

50 Learner 1: I iron my shirt.

51 T: Can you see? There are two meanings: iron the shirt and made of iron. You don't hear the r...you don't hear the sound r. Next word with i...?

52 Learner 2: Big

53 T: Good. Sentence with big...?

54 Learner 2: My foot is big.

55 T: Good. You must listen what I ask...Give me a sentence with ice...Give me a sentence with ice...Come...I didn't hear you. Give me a sentence...

56 Learner 1: The ice is cold.

57 T: Repeat , class: The ice is cold.

58: Class (in chorus): The ice is cold.

59: T: Where do we find ice in our house?

60: Learner 1: In the fridge.

61: T: Where In the fridge do we find a lot of ice?

62: Learner 1: In the deep freezer.

63: T: What do we get in there? What do we use the ice for? If we take the ice out of the freezer, where do we put the ice in? ... to have what kind of water? Which days do we use ice water?

64: L: Summer.

65: T: Which season is that? Which season is that?

66: L: summer.

67: T: Good. It is summer. What do we use in summer?

68: Learner 1: Ice.

69: T: Next word?

70: L: into.

71: T: Give me a sentence with *into*. Who can give me a sentence with *into*? (Teacher encourages, gives examples: I put my clothes *into* the bag. I throw ice *into* the water. (Teacher helps out further: there's a word missing: He says: I \_\_\_\_\_into the house.(There's a word missing. (Teacher writes on the board; asks different learners to fill in the missing word. Teacher demonstrates walking: What am I doing...?)

72: L: I walking

73: T: not walking...walk. I walk into the house.

74 T: What kind of word is walk? What do we call that word?

75: Ls: (in chorus) verb.

Whilst teacher Francis did not make clear at the start of the lesson what she would be teaching, the lesson ended as a revision lesson covering the following areas: identification of vowel letters, identification of words where these letters / sounds appeared (t1-18); sentence construction: using the words (t47-48); testing general background knowledge (t58-67), and ended in verb-identification (parts of speech) (t71-74). The teacher initiates with questions to draw learners into the lesson: she prompts, encourages, demonstrates, and in different ways tries to get learners to respond. The learners seem uncertain of answers, or answer in chorus only when led to the answer by give-away questions (t62). The teacher relies mostly on a small group of learners for answers (t48; 50; 52). The IRE/F sequence as used by the teacher in this lesson to some extent reveals what the learners know, and what deficiencies still exist. What learners had been taught previously also becomes evident through this question - answer method. In this case they seemed to remember very little of what they had been taught.

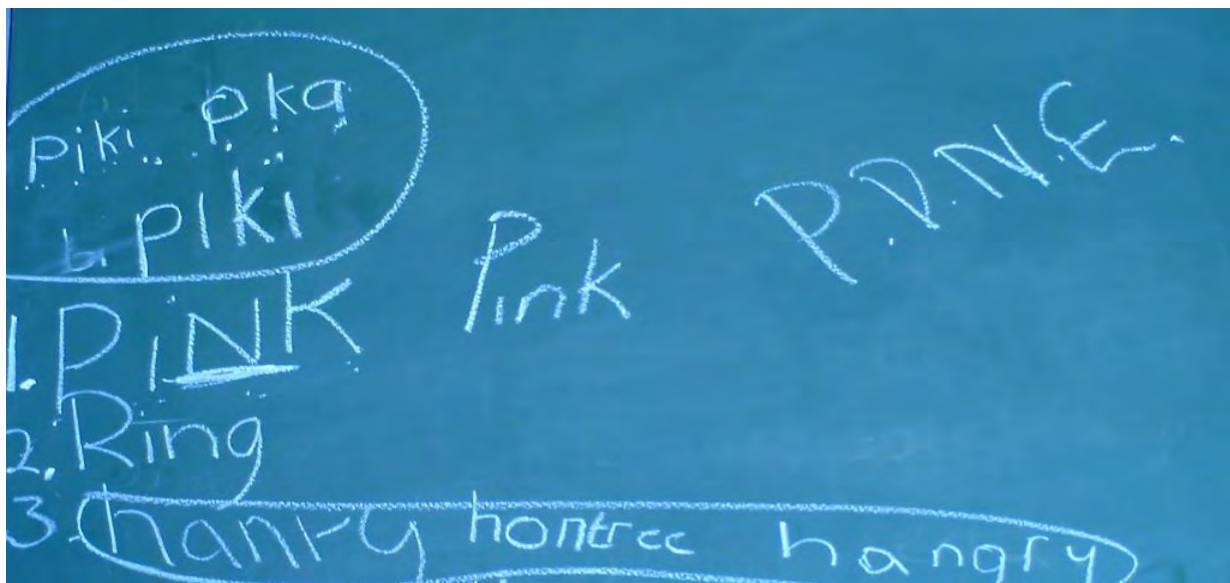
The teacher keeps the lesson focus on identification of words with vowel letters despite learners showing their confusion by identifying words with vowel sound *-i {ai}* as in *iron* (T46), and *ice* (T67) correctly, but then they find that words such as *shirt* (T38), *big* (T52) and *into* (T69) are also accepted as correct. The latter three words, *shirt*, *big* and *into* have the following i-sounds: *shirt* as in *liver*, and the i-sound of *big* and *into* pronounced as in the word *stick*. All seven words have the same vowel letter, but represent different sounds in words. It is here that the text and/or the simple sentence are brought into the lesson to show how the same letters are pronounced differently in different English words, whereas in the learners' mother-tongue one vowel-sound is pronounced the same regardless of where it appears. Teacher Francis does not explain this important difference to learners. The word *amandla*, for example, is pronounced with the same rounded and stressed a-sounds for all a-'s in the word: [<sup>m</sup>^:ntl<sup>^</sup>]; there is no pronunciation in isiXhosa such as [imendlah] for this word: *amandla*. The learner who is sufficiently proficient in her / his mother tongue is then able to hear the difference in pronunciation between vowel sounds in her/his home language and the pronunciations of vowel sounds of English words. If this

difference is not taught to the learners as early as possible they will continue to pronounce words such as *apple*, as [aipil].

In the two extracts from classroom discourse above, the teacher engages learners to determine what they know, albeit with great difficulty. The teacher demonstrates, dramatizes, rephrases the questions, and leads with questions that require only one word as the answer. The silence of the learners and their reluctance to venture answers, points, in my view, to their lack of confidence, or vocabulary, or both. The teacher takes the learning material to the learners' home environment, (T59: „Where do we find ice in our houses?') in order to draw on the learners' home experience. However, one or two learners continue to provide most of the answers – either one-word answers, or in short sentences (t48; 50; 52).

In several of the lessons I observed learners were called to the board to write simple three - to five-letter words on the chalk board as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1a



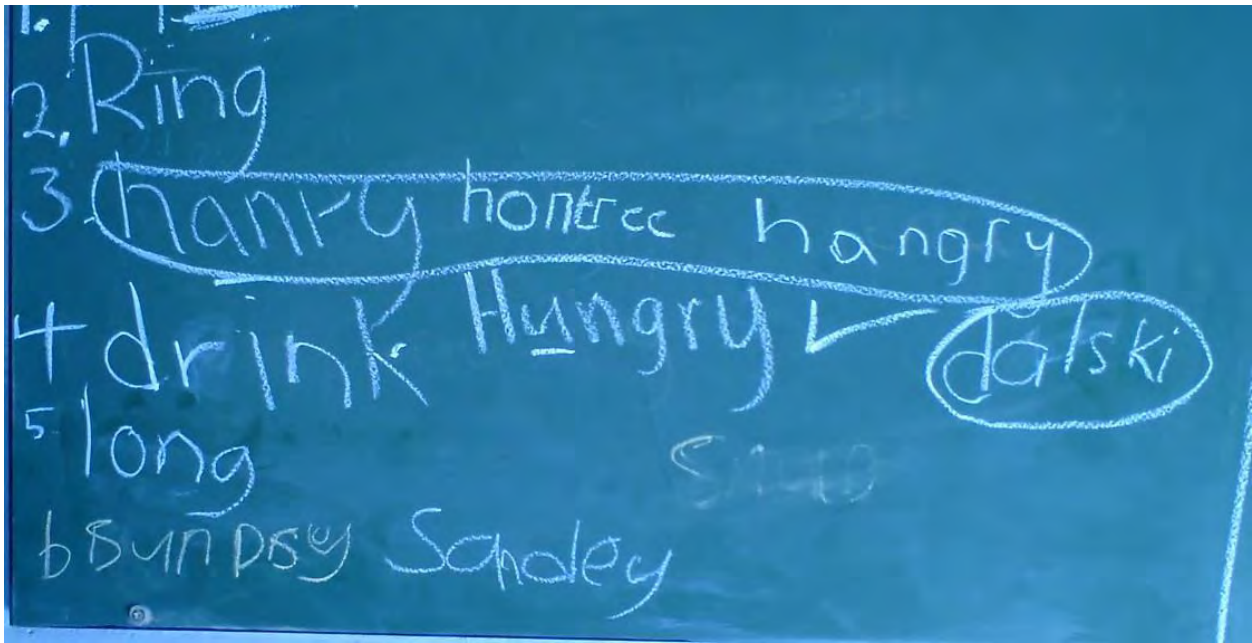


Figure 1b

Many learners could not spell the words with more than one syllable such as „hungry“ and „Sunday“ correctly. The pictures above show the attempts at spelling the words: pink; ring; hungry; drink; long; Sunday, with the words: *hungry* and *Sunday* providing the biggest challenge. These words were given as isolated words outside of context, repeated orally several times for learners to memorize, and then to be written on the board. Moreover, learners have just switched from print to cursive writing, making the writing down of words from the board into their books a painfully slow exercise. In one lesson on 16 May 2012, the Grade 4B class took 30 minutes of their double period of 60 minutes to copy 28 words (nouns and verbs) from the board. Their homework was to construct simple sentences with those words.

It has become clear to me that the vast majority of the Grade 4 learners have not mastered the basic literacy taught in Grade 2 and 3, which might explain why the teacher was revising / teaching basic grammatical elements still in July of Grade 4, instead of teaching the Grade 4 curriculum.

A summary of the above language lesson, taught by teacher Francis, is given in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1:**

	Speaking turns	English words exposed to/heard	Xhosa words used/heard	INPUT:Q's/A's, explanations, clarifications, instructions, feedback in English	INPUT: Q's/A's, explanations, clarifications, instructions, feedback in Xhosa	Number of questions / answers	Closed / open – ended q's
TF (teacher)	39	697	0	39 ts	0	47	closed q's
Learners	34	50	0	34 ts	0	29 answers / responses: 20 x 1 word answers; 7 short sentences / phrases; 1 x answer written on board; 1x written activity as class wk	-
Announcements by principal	0	-	-	-		-	
Total:	73	747		73			

The summary in Table 1 shows the teacher-input at 697 English words used throughout the lesson against 50 English words used by learners, with at least 66 words repeated in the course of t1 –t74. In this lesson learners were exposed to hearing English words only. (The teacher does not speak isiXhosa.) Teacher Francis has asked 47 lesson-related questions. Learner participation is restricted to giving one-word answers or writing single words on the board; giving simple sentences; and writing simple sentences in their class work books using words taken from the lesson. Of the 29 answers given, 20 were one-word answers, seven answers in short sentences / phrases were given, one answer was written on the board, and the last learner response was the written activity in the classwork book.

Extract 2 shows how the teacher varies her questions to include different words and their meanings; how she searches through her questioning to find what learners know and don't know. The extract ends with a question on what kind of word a verb is, and teacher demonstrating *walking*, as example of present continuous tense. Evident again is the length to which the teacher goes to draw answers from learners. The teacher darts from nouns to verbs in her questioning, asking some general questions, as well as testing learners' knowledge of present continuous tense. She writes sentences on the board where learners must fill in the missing word.

In the process she reformulates incorrect answers so as not to discourage learners. She knows the answers are given by the same learners every time, and directs her questions across the class to include the rest.

The teacher continues to conflate letter and sound, and accepts words with the *-i* sound (*shirt, iron, big, ice*), despite the *-i* sounds in *shirt, big* and *ice* being so different. The learners see the same letter *-i* representing different sounds in different words, but do not get an explanation of why this is so.

#### 4.4 Transcription and analysis of second language lesson

The extracts that follow here are from a different language lesson to Grade 4's in the second term by teacher Francis. In these extracts I will show how the IRE/F teaching strategy as used by Francis again consists of mainly closed question and one-word answers; how the pattern of limited teacher-input limits learner-output. I will show the general de-contextualized nature of the language-input; that no images, illustrations or texts are used to support the lessons. I want to show how language is being taught in a decontextualized manner, and how little English language learning actually takes place as a result of this teaching practice.

##### 4.4.1 Extract 1 of English lesson 2: closed questions and one-word answers

**AUDIO-RECORDING: 0514-102300 (LENGTH: 17:44)**

*(The teacher had already started the lesson by the time I had cleared a table at the back of the class to sit at and record the lesson. This recording starts not more than two minutes into the lesson.)*

1:T OK...We only use one word , ne? He said...she said...uhm...bake...OK one word is bake. Who can write the word bake for me? Bake...? the word bake. OK, there she's coming...*(Learner comes forward to write the word on the board.)*

Cursive writing...All eyes on the board...All eyes on the board...OK...Good!..Which word is this?

2:L (in chorus) Bake

3: T: OK. When we talk about more than one, we use the word bake, but if we say she, we then we say bakes. We put the 's' there. When we say she or he, or mother...father...listen...how many people is she...? If I say she, how many people is this? (Who's talking?)

4:L: Babalwa

5: T: Yes? ...One. Yes! It's one person, ne? We also use the s, hey? If I say mother...one, or more than one? ...Yes? Mother?

6: T: one

7:T: Father?

8: L: One

9: T: The dog?

10:T: One.

11:T: The donkey?

12:T: One

13:T: You understand now, ne? When we use only one person, or one thing, we add an s, ne? OK. I want you to give me a sentence with one person ...uhm... uhm...Give me a sentence with mother. Use mother to do something...mother with...what is she doing...

14:L: (inaudible)

15:T: uh-uh (negative)...mother...What must you do? Look there...

16:L: Cook.

17:T: Is that one person, or more than one? Hey? We must add by cook...?

18:T: s

19:T: So it's cooks. We must add an s. Mother cooks the food. Can I take this off? (referring to notes left on board from previous lesson. (Teacher writes on board: *Mother cooks food.*)

Give me more sentences with only one person.

20:L: Father run. (Teacher writes on board: Father run)

21:T: What must I do?

22: Ls:add s

23:T: Why must I add s? Because it is...? Because it is ...?

24:Ls: (in chorus) One

25:T: Another sentence ...Give me another sentence...Give me another sentence... (To class): What are you doing now?

26:L: (inaudible)

27:T: What is Somila doing? ...Hey?...Somila?

28:L: Somila...(inaudible)

29:T: Uh-uh (negative) Somila, what are you doing now? What is Somila doing? What is she doing?

The pattern of limited teacher-input / limited learner-output of earlier lessons is continued in the opening remarks of this lesson. There was no indication, or introduction of what was going to be taught, no connection with previous lessons. There is no text; the lesson starts with one word on the board: *bake*. From this word, the intended lesson: subject / verb agreement, will be developed (t3).

In t3 Francis explains the basis of the subject / verb agreement convention: when the noun is singular, the verb takes an *s*. For the rest of the lesson she attempts to consolidate this language rule. There is no text to work with, just one word on the board and the explanation in t3 above to start the lesson. A series of one-word answers then follows on a series of one-word questions by Francis to consolidate t5: namely, that when the noun is singular (t5;7;9;11), the verb takes an *s*. By t13 it is clear that learners don't really understand the language rule: they fail / hesitate to respond (t13-15; 25-29), showing their uncertainty about what is being taught. The practice of rising intonation in teacher-talk in t5 and t23 guides learners towards the required response, and may be misleading as it gives the impression that there is sufficient understanding of what is being taught when they answer in chorus. What extract three shows is that this language convention, or any language, cannot be taught successfully to second language learners if words are de-contextualized as in the above extract. In the extract, learners responded in one-word answers nine times; in simple sentences only once: *father run* (t20).

#### **4.4.2 Extract 2 of English lesson 2: Decontextualized nature of language teaching**

In extract 2 below, the effects of decontextualized learning are beginning to show: Francis has to give certain answers herself, because learners are unable to: t31 – 36. She uses different techniques (raised intonation - t49) to bring learners closer to answers, but does not succeed in getting the answers she wants (t50); she uses chorusing to consolidate (t48; 55; 57; 61), while in other instances she simply gives the answers herself to keep the flow of the lesson ( t49 -51).

In an earlier extract (Extract 1 of English lesson 2: page 54) above, I have shown how the teacher-input in the lesson deprives the learner from hearing the language being spoken, and how he / she is prevented from attempting to construct simple sentences by being asked for one-word answers.

In extract 3 below this pattern continues: a series of questions are asked which requires only one-word answers, in some cases only the letter –*s* (t32). The following extract will show how difficult learners find the presentation of isolated words where –*s* needs to be provided to complete the noun / verb agreement (t31-35).

#### 4.4.3 Extract 3 of English lesson 2

30:L: (inaudible)

31:T: No, she's not... Sit. (Teacher gives the answer. Teacher writes the word *sit* on the board.) What must I add?

32:Ls: s

33:T: because it is one. Give me two others. Quickly, we must go on...Two more... What do we do with a pen and a book? What are you doing with a pen and a book?

34:L: (inaudible)

35:T: not is...

49:T: Why do we say doing words? Because...? Because of what...?

50:L: (inaudible)

51:T: No! No! Why do we say cooks, runs, sits, writes...Those are doing words...Why do we say that? OK, guys, look at me. All those words are called doing words, because ...those words...What does Mommy do? What does Mommy do? What does Mommy do...? What does Mommy do...? (*Learners don't respond.*)

...54:T: (*Looking around class for a volunteer to answer*) What does father do? *Runs*. What does Somila do? *Sits*. What does she do? *Sleeps*. What does Babalwa do? *Writes*. Can you see? I ask you what they are doing? Those words tells us what they are doing. *Cooks* tells us what mommy is doing. Are you looking here? (points to the words on the board) *Runs* tells us what father is doing, ne? *Sleeps* tells us what she is doing...*sits* tells us what Somila is doing...*writes* tells us what Babalwa is doing? That's why we call it...?

55:Ls: (in chorus) doing words.

56: T: What?

57: Ls: (in chorus) doing words.

58: T: OK, so, doing words tells us what people or animals doing, ne...OK, so what do we call cooks, runs, sits, sleeps, writes...? What do we call these words...what do we call these words...?

59: L: verbs.

60: T: Other word for verbs?

61: Ls: (chorus) Doing words.

At this point Francis has written a number of simple sentences on the board: *Somila sits / Babalwa writes / Mommy cooks / Father runs /* which she reads out to the class. Learners remain uncertain about the term *doing words / verbs* which was the focus of the lesson (t50; 51). Francis, unable to proceed with the lesson, is eventually forced to read the sentences from the

board to the class, to assist learners with their responses, and possibly to save them, and herself, from further embarrassment. A great concern with this lesson, and others conducted by teacher Francis, is the decontextualized nature of teaching English as additional language, which I would like to analyze further.

Learners may not know the technical structure of the English language, like the verb or noun, but they would know the words like *runs*, *smiles*, *sleeps*, etc. It is part of their everyday experience. The actions of *run*, *smile*, *sleep*, etc. are known to them in their home language; the same actions in English. They will learn the *action* / the *doing* that accompanies these words better / quicker, if these words appear in texts where their meanings can be easily derived. By decontextualizing learning material learners are deprived of a reading opportunity, to see how the „doing word“, the „describing word“, the „words denoting place, time and manner“, and others, function in relation to other words to bring meaning to the reader. It seems from Lesson 1 that the teaching strategy of teacher Francis involves, firstly, the teaching of isolated words (e.g. *bake*, *ice*, *cap*), then identification of verbs and nouns and other parts of speech (as in Lesson 2, extract above), and in this case, also the subject / verb agreement (t30 – 35), which is a rather tall order for this Grade 4 class, considering their lack of opportunities in class to read, speak and write in English.

The inability of learners to respond to questions in these lessons points to a failure of the teaching strategy employed by teacher Francis. Learners may / will eventually grasp the function of the „doing word“, and others, but it will take them from January to May, and beyond, as in this case, before they move on to the Grade 4 curriculum proper, which, at this pace, will take them into the next year and the next grade to complete.

Figure 2 below illustrates the point of teaching words in isolation: there is no contextual explanation of these words in their present tense form; they are just sounds to the learners, with a match in the past-tense column that is different in sound and form.

Figure 2

Present tense	Past tense
1. Go	Grew
2. Have	dug
3. Grow	went
4. Dig	had
5. Say	ate
6. Eat	said
7. T-	

This appears to be the pattern that I have detected in the Grade 4 classes: slow progress with the curriculum, partly as result of the preferred teaching practice of decontextualizing learning material, with those parts not taught in the previous year simply being rolled over to the next year. Why does this occur in schools that can least afford slipping back to an inferior type of education in post-apartheid South Africa? Teacher Francis is acutely aware of the impoverished background educationally, economically and socially of learners in her class. In the case under discussion, teacher Francis is also acutely aware of her own shortcomings as English language teacher: she indicated in conversation with me that she is not comfortable teaching English as second language, and that she would rather teach any other subject. This is the ideal circumstances under which teacher and learners co-construct safe-time (Hornberger and Chick 2001:32) in the classroom discourse – teacher and learners „socialize one another into systematic departures from the normative model of classroom interaction...which provide less opportunities for practice“ (in reading, speaking and writing in English), which result in learners falling further and further behind in the acquisition of the literacies required to progress through the grades. The results of the Annual National Assessments 2012 tests, where all grades in this focus school, from Grade 4 to Grade 7, have scored extremely poorly, can be used in this instance, as independent monitor to support the point being made here (see copy of Annual National Assessment results 2012 in Annexure B).

#### **4.4.4 Extract 4 of English lesson 2: Chorusing as safe talk / classroom discourse**

A prominent feature of lessons by the English language teachers is the practice of chorusing / choral response by learners.

The extract above also shows how Francis resorts to whole-class chorus answering which gives the impression there is broad understanding of the content of the lesson – after all, there is whole-class participation in giving the answer. The answer, however, as can be seen in t54, is preceded by the raised intonation technique of safe-talk in: *That's why we call it?* followed by the answer in whole-class chorus: (t55): *doing words*. The chorusing is evident throughout the lesson, and increases towards the end, when there is an urgency to conclude in a seemingly satisfactory manner for learners and teacher. The chorusing is in response to different kinds of prompting by teacher Francis: the rising tone towards the end of a sentence, the prompt for a single word or phrase, or eliciting learners to complete the rest of the sentence. Hornberger & Chick (2001: 31) contend that this kind of classroom interaction has arisen over time „in an attempt to create a learning atmosphere against great odds produced by...the gap between the

language of instruction...and the language the children speak and understand." In this way, they contend, the illusion is created that repetition or chorusing is a way of reading, or that it signals understanding, and that copying from the board is writing. The seemingly open-ended questions being asked, and the response in chorus, according to Hornberger & Chick, serve to encourage learners to participate in a social, rather than an academic way in the lesson – no real learning takes place as learners don't really understand what they are reciting. Learners and teacher participate in the prompt-and-chorus response practice, so designed by teacher Francis, to save both from being exposed as „not knowing“ (Chick 1996: p 32).

It should be kept in mind that this lesson topic is basic to the Grade 2 and 3, which is required to be revised in the first weeks of term 1 in grade 4, yet we find by term 3, July 2012, the grade was still grappling with parts of speech (as in extract 4). The classwork books with notes on parts of speech and written exercises would give the impression this section of the curriculum work has been completed, when in reality writing words from the board was not more than a handwriting exercise. In Extract 4 discussed above, Francis concluded the lesson knowing it was not their best performance: she remarked in an aside (t67) to the observer: *This was a revision lesson, sir...seems like they never heard it, these things...*

A further observation that needs to be mentioned is the attitude of learners to speaking in English. Reading in English appears to be a different kettle of fish to speaking in English. To be able to read fluently in English would draw admiration and envy from classmates, but actually being able to speak a line or two would be an astonishing achievement. The following extract is taken from Extract 2, towards the end of the lesson, and just before the start of the activity in the classwork books:

At this point, the conclusion of the lesson / start of the activity/ learners start talking animatedly to each other. They seem relieved the lesson is over. Some are taking books out, while others take the opportunity to talk to each other. Suddenly, a learner reports:

69:L: **She's not have a pencil.** (There is laughter at the table)

70:T: (Teacher: inaudible)...You must remember your pattern, ne! Your pattern<sup>2</sup>. **I don't want to hear nothing about nobody having a pencil...**Hey! Hey! Shut up!

71:L: **...steal my pen.** (learners laugh among themselves).

72:T: (Teacher to observer): **And they're laughing at one another when we speak English. That's why they are laughing... because of English.** .. (Bell rings) This period is over now. We're going next door now...

<sup>2</sup> The pattern at top of the page prior to writing the heading and date as practice in cursive writing-the learners have just started writing in cursive.

The speakers in t69 and t71, in my view, are not really reporting their friends (note the laughter); they may laugh, but they may be indicating a willingness to speak in English. They may be showing off that they know some English words which can be used to report a matter. Note that these are the only times in the lesson where learners raise points without being asked for it. In other words, these learners may know more English than what appears to be the case in a language lesson restricted to the teacher's topic. In this lesson the learner silence could have been interpreted as „not knowing many English words“, or „unable to respond with a sentence in English using a given word“; or „unable to formulate thoughts in English“. (It further appears as if learners respond differently under different circumstances.) The atmosphere of the formal lesson, the presentation / delivery, where they are listeners and the teacher is in charge, seems to restrict them; they seem afraid to venture an answer. It is in the activity part, where the teacher has relaxed her stranglehold on them, and the lesson, that they would dare to make comments such as t69 and t71. In the presentation / delivery part of the lesson they are not given the opportunity to say what they know, because the lesson is tightly structured in a particular way with particular outcomes. Their points were also unrelated to the lesson, and although made in English, would not be tolerated in the presentation / delivery part of the lesson (t70). Nevertheless, to the observer they are indicators that some learning had taken place somewhere. Such moments where the learners spontaneously use English could be exploited as opportunities to be embroidered on, to teach more of the kind, and expand more on what learners already know.

Table 2 below shows a summary of the language used in this language lesson. As in Lesson 1, discussed earlier, this lesson again shows a low total word count of 692. Teacher-input in terms of lesson-related words is counted at 526. If we discount the number of repetitions, words repeated, (example: *Give me another word...*(t25), then the number of new words used by the teacher, and heard by the learner in this lesson would be around 135, certainly not lessons rich in exposure to English, or opportunities to practice language skills. Learners responded 32 times, in which they used a total of 46 words, mostly one-word answers.

**TABLE 2:** Summary of language used in a language lesson: Nouns, verbs, agreement (audio recording: 0514-102300)

	Speaking turns	English words used / heard	Xhosa words used / heard	INPUT: Text-related Q's/A's, explanations, clarifications, instructions, feedback in English	OutPUT: Q's/A's, explanations, clarifications, instructions, feedback	Number of questions / answers	Closed / open – ended q's
TF (teacher)		692	0	526 text related words used; 135 new words used; 391 words repeated		32	All closed q's
Learners		46	0	0	46 words used to answer questions	32 answers given	All closed questions
Announcements by principal		-	-			-	
Total:		738	0				

#### 4.5 Teacher Margie's English classes

The third language lesson I will be analyzing is a lesson from Teacher Margie's English classes. Margie, who like Francis, was not trained as specialist English language teacher, was then allocated the Grade 4 classes of Francis.

In the discussion that follows I will show through extracts: that Margie's approach to teaching English as second language, follows the same pattern as Francis' – a lack of substantial teacher-input, and very little learner-output, other than reading from the text; the decontextualized nature of teaching English as a language; the lack of learning opportunities as a result of teacher practices that serve to save both teacher and learners from being exposed as „not knowing“. I will further focus on the use of isiXhosa in the English lesson, not as mediating instrument between new knowledge and learning barrier that the new language presents, but as friendly mediator between teacher, the learner and the new language. I will discuss the dominance of isiXhosa in the lesson, and then analyze through Table 3, how much English was used and heard by teacher

and learners per lesson; and how much language could possibly be learnt in lessons conducted in this way. It should also be pointed out that the reading text the teacher used is taken from the ANA (Annual National Assessment) language paper ( see below: t3: *we are going to read that test we wrote here before...*; and t6: *I want to hear how you did on that day when you answered this.*) The purpose of selecting this lesson is to show that learners have sat for a test that required them to read first, and make sense of the reading before answering questions set on the text.

#### 4.5.1 Extract 1of English lesson 1 of Teacher Margie:

1:T: **Faka iincwadi**<sup>3</sup>...(inaudible) (Put your books away.)

- T: (inaudible)...(*there*)...(inaudible) **pha...**

[Learners take almost a minute to get ready for the lesson.]

2: [Announcement over intercom]

3:T: **Mamelani ke sizofundani, sizofundani sonkeni la test naniyibhalile apha ngaphambili.** (Listen up, we are going to read; we are going to read that test we wrote here before.)

4:T: **Sonke iklasi kuqala ndiphinde kengoku ndinikeze i-chance one-by-one umntu afunde.** (Everyone in class first, then I will give certain individuals a chance to read one by one.)

5:T: *I will read the following text, ...and answer ...the questions...for ...*

6:T: **Nini kengoku abazakufunda, masi readeni bethunana ndifuna umamela uba nenza njani ngala mini nani phendula.** (You are going to read now. Read, guys. I want to hear how you did on that day when you answered this.)

7: [ Ls read the two paragraphs in chorus:]

(Par. 1) Blessu was a very small elephant when he sneezed for the first time. The other elephants were moving very slowly through the tall grass that hid the legs of his mother and his aunties. It also reached halfway up the bodies of his bigger brothers and sisters and you could not see Blessu at all.

(Par. 2) Down below, where he was walking, the air was thick with pollen from the flowering long grasses. From the deep Blessu felt a strange, tickly feeling between his eyes at the base of the very small trunk. Closing his eyes, and closing his mouth, he stuck his very small trunk straight out before him and sneezed, Achoo! It was not the greatest sneeze in the world, but it was very big for a very small elephant. Bless You! cried his mother and his aunties and his bigger brothers and sisters.

8: T: *Can you read...Ungubani kanene igama lakho?* (What's your name again?) *Can you read the paragraph 1...or two sentences here...?*

9: L: [unable to read a single word; struggles to read]

[<sup>3</sup> The words printed in bold are the actual Xhosa words spoken. The translations in English are given in brackets, while teacher-input in English is shown in italics]

10: T: **Funda kaloku.** (Read now)

11: T: (inaudible)...**ngubane lo?** (Who / What is this?)

12: T: **Lithini...awulazi?** (What does it say? Don't you know?)

13: [Announcement over intercom]

[T asks L to read; L reads fluently.]

14: T asks another L, Bulelwa, to read.

15: Bulelwa stares at the paper

16: T asks another ...*Down below*...[T. helps learners with introductory words]

17: L. reads with difficulty

18: T: *suddenly*... [helps L with reading]

19: TM: **Niyama bethuna?** (Can everyone hear him?)

20: T: **Ok, yima, khawu qhubekeke...ewe, qala pha ha ku paragraph two apho ithi...** (Ok, stop, you continue... yes, start in paragraph two where it says...)

21: T: **Jonga apha ephepheni lakho** (Look at your paper / handout).

22: T: **Funda kaloku.** (Read now) [Learner does not read.]

23: T: **Khawu reade mfondini apha...reada apha.** (Read here, boy... read here)

24: T: **Akayi boni okanye...awuyiboni okanye kwenzeka ntoni?** (Can't he see...can't you see, or, what's happening? [Learner just stares at the text.]

25: T: **Apha kulendawo.** (Here) *Close his eyes*...[Teacher assisting learner.]

26: T: **Funda nawe apha ecaleni kwakhe.** (Also read... here, next to him)

27: L: [reads with great difficulty]

28: T: *He starts...*[Teacher assisting learner.]

29: T: **Qhubekeka kaloku.** (Continue) [Boy reads on]

T: ...*stuck out...*(teacher assisting)

30: T: **Khawusi** readele... **ngubane... Thando?...Thabo?...Sinethemba?...reada apha, qala kule ndawo...** (Read for us...who is he?...Thando?...Thabo?...Sinethemba?...read here, start from here...) *Achoo! It was not the biggest sneeze...*

31: T: **Qala kule ndawo.** (Start here)...*It was not the...*

32: T: **Funda mani funda!** (Read, read!)

33: T: **Thulani ke, thulani ngoku simamele u Sinethemba.** (Keep quiet, keep quiet now and let's listen to Sinethemba.)

34: T: **Kwaza, funeke sikuve sonke apha eklasini.** (Read aloud, we must all hear you here in class.)

35: T: ...*It was...*

36: [Learner reads with great difficulty.]

#### 4.5.2 Analysis of Extract 1 of Lesson 1 of Teacher Margie.

In the lesson above there was no prior or pre-reading session where the text was introduced, or the title, Blessu, (or Bless you! as in sneezing) was explained, although Margie did indicate she would read first: t5) What Margie does, as compensation for contextualization, is to use isiXhosa as much as possible as inter-personal link to facilitate learning. She does not, however, use this powerful link to draw on the learners' shared knowledge of every-day home experiences to assist her in teaching English, or to convey meaning: she uses it to instruct, to encourage learners who struggle to read, and to admonish (t30-31). It does not become a tool for teaching English and seems to be to protect in this case, the teacher, (see Hornberger and Chick, 2001), and not to assist the learners.

The extract shows a disturbingly large number of learners in this grade 4 class could not read a single sentence from the text used in a test which they have completed less than a month before. Some struggled to read simple everyday words, while others required extensive help from Margie.

	Speaking turns	isiXhosa words used / heard in lesson	English words used / heard / read in lesson	INPUT: Q's/A's, explanations, assists, instructions, feedback in English: English generated by teacher:	INPUT: Q's/A's, explanations, assists, instructions, feedback in Xhosa
Teacher Margie	40	159	63 wds: (does not include reading text)	10 turns: 1 x instruction; 1 x closed question; 7x assists; 1 x unrelated to text qn.	32 turns: 19 x instructions; 1 x closed qn; 3 x clarifications; 9 x qns unrelated to text.
Learners	9 reading turns 1 x speaking	2	Whole class (t7) 145xLs reading: Xola: 55; Sam: 90; 1 <sup>st</sup> volunteer: 55 2 <sup>nd</sup> volunteer: 90 4 x others: 0	-	-
Announcements by principal	3	59	0	-	-
<b>Total:</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32</b>

**Table 3 shows a summary of language used in the reading lesson: Blessu, the elephant.**

The summary of Margie's English reading lesson shows that this kind of lesson has little benefit for learners wishing to make sense of a text, practice their reading skills, or wishing to extend their English vocabulary: the total number of isiXhosa words used as instructions, explanations, clarifications and feedback (159), exceeds the number of English words used by her in the same lesson (63). Yet the number of English words provided by the text were 145, showing the potential richness of using texts to expose learners to English to practice their English skills.

The following features of the English language lesson were noted:

- teacher - input in isiXhosa (32 turns) exceeds, by far, that of teacher-input in English (9 turns);
- more isiXhosa was spoken (220 words) in the English lesson than English (208 words);
- the input-in-English box contains only one instruction, against the 19 instructions given in Xhosa;
- the 6 x assists were merely words read by teacher Margie to help learners who struggled with words in the text, or to indicate where learners must read from.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In Margie's reading lesson discussed above, group / chorus reading might create the impression that learners have sufficiently high levels of reading ability, yet only a handful of learners in each of the Grade 4 classes could read without any difficulty from the comprehension text.

It did not appear from the knowledge base of learners in May to July of their year in Grade 4, that any substantial language had been learnt in previous grades as foundation for switching to English as medium of instruction. The same revision lessons had been repeated from May of the year 2012, to July of that year, with no evidence that learners had improved their understanding of vowel letters and vowel sounds, nor of verbs and nouns, or of noun / verb agreement, in any way. Learners continue to appear uncertain and cautious in responding to questions. Learners are unable to construct their own simple sentences with words drawn from the lesson, or words given by teacher (t13 -14; 16; 47; 55; 71-72).

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss English language use in General Science lessons taught to the same learners in two Grade 4 classes. Below I present an extract from a General science lesson taught by teacher Cynthia, which I will analyze in relation to the following: the amount of English the learners are exposed to, and the amount of English produced by learners in the science lessons. Following Setati et al's (2002) distinction between exploratory talk and subject specific academic discourse, I will look at evidence of exploratory talk leading to mastery of subject specific academic discourse, how the language of science is taught, and, generally, whether there is greater exposure to English in the science lessons than in the English lessons analysed in Chapter 4.

### 5.2 Language Use in a natural Science Lesson

Teacher Cynthia's Science lesson was about „matter“. Extract 1 comes from the beginning of the lesson.

#### 5.2.1 Extract 1 of Natural Science Lesson 1

- |   |
|---|
| <p>1:T: All right! Who can tell me...what is matter? Hey? [Initiation (I)]</p> <p>(Tumo?) What is matter? [I]</p> <p>2:L: Matter is anything that occupies space. [Response] (R)</p> <p>3: T: (repeats) Matter is anything that occupies space [Evaluation] (E)[Feedback] (F). All of you...[I]</p> <p>4: Ls: (chorus) Matter is anything that occupies space. [R]</p> <p>5: T: (writes the sentence on the board while learners repeat the sentence.) [R]</p> <p>6: T: Are you a matter? [I]</p> <p>7: L: Yes. [R]</p> <p>8: T: OK. Are you a matter? Why? [I]</p> <p>9: L: Yes.</p> <p>10: T: Why do you say you are a matter? Stand up.</p> <p>11: Ls (silent; thinking)</p> |
|---|

12: T: Come...who can tell me...You all know that matter is anything that occupies space. Why do you say that?

13: L: because I occupy space

14: T: Because he occupies space...

15: T: He says he is matter because he occupies space...If I take all these chairs and I take you outside... will there be space here?

16: L: Yes.

17: T: Huh?

18: L: Yes.

19: T: But now, we took all the desks...(that) are here, we have occupied ...what...?

20: L: space

21: T: We have occupied the space...Very good!

22: T: Uh, do you know that air is also matter?

23: Ls: Yes, Miss.

24: T: Do you know that?

25: Ls: Yes, Miss

26: T: Why do you say that air is also matter? We say matter is anything that occupies space? Why do we say that air is also matter?

27: L: Because it occupies space.

28: T: Where? Here... Ja, it also occupies...what? ...occupies space. Air occupies space. Is there any air inside this room now?

29: Ls: Yes!

30: T: ...meaning that the air is inside this room...(Intercom announcement interrupts lesson...) OK, we say: Matter occupies space. Matter is also around us. *Andithi?*...OK?...(T. writes the two sentences on the board: Matter occupies space. Air occupies space.)

### 5.2.2 Analysis of Extract 1 of Natural Science lesson 1:

Teacher Cynthia begins the lesson with what initially seems to be an open question „what is matter?“ (t1). The formal definition that learners give in turn 2 alerts us to the fact that t1 is rather a recall question, and the lesson actually a revision lesson. The repetition of the response by teacher Cynthia (t3), and her call for a chorus response from the class is typical of the „safe-talk“

strategy (Chick, 1996). Together with her tight control over the IRE/F sequence of the first few turns (t1-t7), the safe-talk strategy could be indicative of how teacher Cynthia has adapted her teaching strategies to suit the learners and their lack of English proficiency. Learners get used to certain teaching patterns; they learn to „read“ their teachers and then respond in a manner that gives the impression that learning had taken place. The following close analysis of the extract will show that very little learning, or no learning, takes place under such circumstances.

In t8 teacher Cynthia asks what seems to be another open question, which seems to be misunderstood by learners (t9). She repeats the question but only after modeling the response for learners (t12). That learners respond correctly (t13) could indicate that this kind of modeling is a teaching strategy they are used to; they have just waited for a cue (her modeling) before responding. The value of the open question (t9), where learners could show their conceptual understanding, or lack of understanding, of „*matter is anything that occupies space*“, and teacher could gauge how to direct the discourse is lost in the exchange, and so is a learning opportunity. The question in t15 starts a series of uncertain exchanges between teacher and learners. The learners may not have been taught that there are (air) particles in space – note learner response in turns 16 to 25. Their „yes“ answers (t16; 18) do not satisfy teacher Cynthia – she continues to draw them (t19), leading with rising intonation indicating her question (we have occupied...what?) which learners know how to respond to (t20).

In turn 26 the interpretation made of turn 13 above, is confirmed – the teacher again models: „...*matter is anything that occupies space*“, before repeating her apparently open „Why“ question (t26) which is a controlled closed question.

The tight control over the discourse, where teacher Cynthia drives the discussion towards a certain end (answer), does not leave much room for learner input, besides the one-word answers, and textbook definition answers. As such, learners do not have much opportunity to use English; their input consists of one-word answers, and where they are required to re-work existing knowledge to show conceptual understanding (t1; t9; 13; 27; 29), teacher Cynthia“s strategy of modeling her questions to avoid the problem of their limited vocabulary, makes it impossible to gauge whether there is any real understanding.

### 5.3 Extract 2 of Natural Science Lesson 1

In the following extract I show how the teacher engages learners in subject-specific discourse; how learners respond to the tight pattern of safe-talk, and how the illusion of learning is created through „safe-reading“ from the textbook.

- 
- 82: T: What else? There. It is written there ... [T. *points to word in textbook*]
- 83: L: Soap.
- 84: T: Soap? What is that?
- 85: L: Soap. [*in chorus*]
- 86: T: The soap is smooth. *You see the smooth soap?* When you touch it, it is ...?
- 87: Ls [*in chorus*] smooth.
- 88: T: It is smooth. Another sentence...? Huh? Makhulu...?
- 89: L: Some things can bend easily. They are flexible. [L. *reading from textbook.*]
- 90: T: All of you
- 91: Ls: [*chorus*] Some things can bend easily. They are flexible.
- 92: T: Huh? [T. *calls to repeat chorus*]
- 93: Ls: [*repeat sentence in chorus*] Some things can bend easily. They are flexible.
- 94: T: Another sentence...there.
- 95: L: [reads] Some cannot bend. They are rigid. [L. *reads without any difficulty*]
- 96: T: All of you...?
- 97: Ls: [*In chorus*] Some cannot bend. They are rigid.

#### 5.3.1 Analysis of Extract 2 of Natural Science lesson 1

In content-based teaching there are potentially many opportunities for learners to produce language. Teacher Cynthia expects learners to read or refer to examples that are also given in the textbook, instead of challenging learners to think and give examples of their own (t82; t86; t98), limiting learner-output to one-word answers, phrases or short sentences read from the textbook.

The lesson therefore becomes more of an instructional event, with the teacher engaging the whole class in reading about the properties of matter, and not creating opportunities to engage in class room activities, individually or in groups, or by exchanging ideas about properties of matter from their own experience. I am convinced that learners know many more objects that are smooth (t82 -86) than the one shown in the textbook. There were no concrete teaching aids in class to assist learners with concepts such as roughness, smoothness, and flexibility, which could provide opportunities for learners to acquire language.

Teacher Cynthia seems to have drilled her classes very well in responding to seemingly open questions with, definitions learnt from the textbook, in responding in chorus (t84-85), and training learners to respond correctly to modeled questions, and voice intonation. (Some things can bend easily. They are flexible (t93). Some cannot bend. They are rigid (t97).

Extract 2 shows how the teacher relies on the textbook to help out with language: learners read sentences, individually or in chorus, where-after teacher Cynthia bases her questions on those sentences, or asks learners to identify and match illustrations that appear in the textbook with scientific concepts. In evidence again is the reliance on safe-talk (repetition t84/t85); chorusing (85; t87), rising intonation (t86) and modeling the forms of answering the questions, to guide learners towards subject specific concepts.

Reading from the textbook took much of the teacher-learner talk-space, preventing learners from hearing the teacher producing language, and preventing them from producing their own in answering questions, or processing their own language in the written activity. Learners were initially given opportunities to speak, though answers came in one-word or short sentences, repeated from the textbook. In the Science or English lessons these one-word answers or short sentences could be important starting points for two-way interactions where the second language learner is acknowledged and drawn in as an important participant in the learning situation. Reading from the textbook cannot replace teacher-learner talk. Where reading from text becomes necessary to instill concepts, clarify and consolidate content, a space for teacher-learner interaction, or exploratory talk (Setati et al, 2002), where the learner speaks, formulates thoughts and answers in English, must still be planned for in content subjects where English is the medium of instruction, or in the English language lesson. Teacher Cynthia seems to try with a number of „why“- and „how do you know“ questions to draw learners into dialogue about the

lesson content (t11; t13; t27; t35). However, the „why“ and „how“ questions become controlled closed questions by teacher Cynthia’s modeling of her questions to draw the correct response from learners. Opportunity for learner -output is thereby greatly limited. This practice, more than providing a learning opportunity, serves to further limit opportunities for learner output. In content subjects the focus generally may be more on teaching concepts, such as „matter“, and „the properties of matter“ as in this case, with not much attention being paid to how English as a second language, and language of learning and teaching, is learnt in the process. By frequently repeating and rephrasing and modifying her questions (t16; t29-31; t35; t46;), teacher Cynthia gives the impression that she is aware of the importance of using a language model which relates best to the context in which she teaches. This on-going repetition, framing and re-framing of questions and clarifications, however, had little effect in the lesson other than drawing one-word / short phrase answers from learners. Listening to learners struggling to read from the science textbook (t66; t68), one gets the impression that learners lack the ability to read this text with understanding, and to speaking about or constructing coherent sentences in English about this text, as one would expect at their grade level. In view of this, one can begin to understand why Cynthia’s approach is so teacher-centred: learners simply don’t have the language at this stage to engage with the material on their own, or even in groups.

## **5.4 Lesson 2: Natural Science – Phases of Matter**

### **5.4.1 Extract 1 of Natural Science lesson 2**

The „Properties of Matter“-lesson is followed up by a lesson on „Phases of Matter: Solids, Liquids, Gas“. In this lesson teacher Cynthia spends considerable time (t1 –t21) revising the properties of matter lesson before moving on to the lesson proper: Phases of Matter, where this extract begins.

22: T: Yes, I am matter, OK! Right! Now let’s come to particles that make matter...we have got particles that make matter. There are small particles that make matter. All of you!

23: Ls: (in chorus) There are small particles that make matter.

24: T: Very good! Now, these small particles are called atoms. What do we call these small particles?

25: Ls: (in chorus) Atoms.

26: T:...Small particles are called atoms.

27: Ls: (chorus) ...small particles are called atoms.

28: T: Yes, these small particles are called atoms...and now they are differ...They are ...?

29: Ls: (in chorus) differ...

30: T: Each and every material has got its own particles, you know...?

31: Ls: (in chorus) Yes.

32: T: Do you understand?

33:Ls:(in chorus) Yes.

34: T: Right. Some of the particles are very small ...small particles, and they are close together, ...they are close together...they are...?

35: Ls: (in chorus) They are close together.

36: T: And those particles that are close together are called solids. They are called, what?

37: Ls: (in chorus) Solids.

38: T: They are called solids. And these are particles again that are further apart, and those particles that are further apart are called liquids. They are called, what?

39: Ls: (in chorus) Liquids

40: T: They are called liquids. And there are particles again that are far apart, and those particles that are far apart are called gas...are called what?

41: Ls: (in chorus) Gas

42: T: They are called gas. They are called gas...meaning that we have got three forms of matter. We have got...?

43: Ls: [in chorus] Three forms of matter.

44: T: And now, these are the phases of matter...these are the phases of matter...the...?

45: Ls: [in chorus] Phases of matter.

46: T: Now, the phases of matter are: solids, liquids and gas. Let's read them: Phases of matter...

47: Ls :[in chorus, reading from the board] Phases of matter: Solids, Liquids, Gas.

48: T: Again. Phases of Matter...

49:Ls:[in chorus] Phases of Matter: Solids, Liquids, Gas.

50: T: Yes, those are the three phases of matter. We have solids, liquids and gas. Right? Remember, yesterday I've talked about the three properties of matter, ne? I said some of the properties are hard, and some of the properties are soft, *andithi?* (*didn't I say*) Right, now those small particles that are hard have particles that are close together...that means those materials be hard and strong. So those that are further apart are particles that allow, uh, energy to go round. Those particles are further apart and those particles are liquid particles and there are those that are too far are those of the gas. Now here is what I've been talking about. We have got three...?

T51: Ls: [in chorus]...three phases of matter.

#### 5.4.2 Analysis of Extract 1 of Natural Science lesson 2

There is no evidence, besides the time spent on linking the previous day's lesson with the new lesson at the start of the lesson, of any exploratory talk in respect of solids, liquids and gas preceding the lesson proper. Under the circumstances prevailing with learning in English in these Grade 4 classes, the expectation is that considerable time be spent on exploratory talk: clarifying words, concepts, linking existing knowledge to new knowledge, and generally making sure that the teaching strategy takes into account the language needs of the learners.

In this extract alone there are at least 10 scientific concepts that need clarification to learners struggling with English as language of learning: particles, atoms, material, the phrase: „each and every material has got its own particles“; solids; liquids, gas; forms of matter and phases of matter; „particles that are close together are hard“; „those particles that are hard have particles that are close together“; „particles that allow energy to go around“; „liquid particles“; gas particles (all found in t50).

Teacher Cynthia uses more scientific language, not transcribed here, in further parts of this lesson, namely, *flexible; some things can bend easily; some things cannot bend; rigid; metal; stretchable; compressible; squashed; sponge.*

Chorused responses, on which teacher Cynthia relies so much, as part of the safe-talk strategy of teacher and learner, cannot replace carefully-worded definitions of scientific concepts such as the ones found in this lesson. The correct responses of learners (t23; t30; t33; t35) are not necessarily indications that learning has taken place, but rather indications that teacher Cynthia has

successfully coached her learners to read and respond to her rising intonation, her cue-giving, even to those statements which may be confusing or incorrect to others (t28 - t29; t42 - t44).

## 5.5 Conclusion

A positive feature of the science lessons I observed was the greater exposure to English through the large number of English words used there in relation to the number of words used in the English language lessons by teachers Francis and Margie. With the table below I focus only on the exposure to English in the class through quantifying the number of English words spoken by the teacher and learners. I also want to draw attention to how little English was spoken during the English lesson periods, in comparison to that spoken during the Natural Science lessons.

**Table 4: The number of English words used per lesson**

Lesson	Teacher:	English words used in lesson by teacher and learners:	Xhosa words used in lesson by teacher and learners:
Table 1: English lesson	TF	747	0
Table 2: English lesson	TF	738	0
Table 3: English lesson	TM	208	220
N/Science lesson	TSC	1106	1
N/Science lesson	TSC	1297	1

While exploratory talk is severely limited, exposure to English in the science class is far greater than in English lessons observed. Teacher Cynthia, in this lesson, has used five times more English words (1106) in her science lesson of 25:02 minutes than English teacher Margie, who has used more isiXhosa words (220) than English words (208) in her English lesson.

In this lesson, the learners also responded with one-word / short phrases or short sentences to questions. The seemingly open-ended questions have been shown not to be open-ended, but rather concealed closed questions. In the Natural Science Lesson 1, the initial question is (t1): „*What is matter?*“ a seemingly open question. However, the textbook-response (t2): „*Matter is anything that occupies space*‘, shows that the answer is „learned“, or rehearsed from a previous lesson, making the open-ended question a closed question. In my analysis of Extract 1, I point out how this is a feature of teacher Cynthia’s teaching strategy. Similar examples from the extract include turns 12; 26 and 28. The English produced by learners in this way was the

„learned“ answers from the textbook – echoed responses following a teacher cue. It remains questionable whether they have made meaning of the subject matter, and whether they have necessarily developed their speaking skills in English in order to demonstrate their understanding.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This case study was designed to answer the question:

*How is English as an additional language taught and used in a primary school in Grade 4, the transition year, where learners officially change from isiXhosa to English as the language of instruction?*

Stemming from this main question are the following two sub-questions:

*(a) How much, and what kind of English, is being used in classroom discourse in English first additional language curriculum time and in Science curriculum time?*

*(b) What kinds of activities / tasks are children engaged in and what opportunities do they have to develop their proficiency in English?*

My study was based on how two Grade 4 teachers at a typical township primary school teach English as additional language to learners who would be taught all subjects in English from that grade onwards. In Chapter 4 I focused on how, how much, and what kind of English was taught at Grade 4 level at the focus school in language and reading lessons.

In addition, my interest was in how English was being used as language of instruction in a content-subject, in this case Natural Science, in the Grade 4 class. In Chapter 5 I examine the language use in two Natural Science lessons taught to two Grade 4 classes.

### **6.1 The English language lessons**

It should be noted that the Grade 4 learners had three teachers for English over the course of the year and that neither of the two teachers observed for this study, Teachers Francis and Margie, felt that they were formally qualified as English teachers. The first two extracts analysed from the language lessons of teacher Francis show a teaching approach that limits the teacher-input to closed question and one-word answers. This approach uses no written text; instead short questions are used to draw one –word answers from learners. This approach by teacher Francis could be deliberate, as it does not require extended learner- output; it limits the learner contribution to one-word answers. Learner participation is acquired easier. However, in the case

of learners with limited English language capacity, as in this study, the majority in class would be deprived of learning opportunities, either through listening to, and reading / repeating sentences in context, or writing new phrases and sentences. The IRE/F, as used here, is not developed beyond the first level of question and first response; the learner's knowledge base is hardly drawn from; the teacher-input is not rich enough to provide opportunities to practice the language; there are no texts or visuals to stimulate learning. And yet I had the impression, based on occasional informal or aside comments that learners made to each other at their desks, that learners may know and be able to use more English than what appeared in the lessons presented.

The months spent on teaching English to Grade 4 classes were spent on revision and teaching aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. It seemed to me that learners were at the beginning stages, and not three years into learning the new language. In spite of the teacher drawing deeply on her teaching skills, she was unable to draw learners into sharing their ideas and thoughts with her. Learners seemed only to have a very limited English vocabulary; and they did not have a strong enough foundation on which to build Grade 4 work. There is consequently very little classroom interaction; and very little English can be learnt until such time that a stronger foundation is laid.

In teacher Margie's reading lesson analyzed at the end of Chapter 4, learner inability to read simple English words and sentences, and make sense of a story set in the ANA (Annual National Assessment) for Grade 4 for that year, is confirmed.

The pattern of teaching isolated words, as followed by Francis and Margie in their language lessons above, without contextual support, makes it extremely difficult for the English second language learners to erase the English language deficit they arrive with from previous grades. Learners have difficulty in seeing / reading words in text if the classroom practices don't expose them to texts often enough. Where texts actually exist as support for a lesson, as in Margie's „reading“ lesson, such texts are not used to support learning. In general, as the summary tables 1-5 of the amount of English used in lessons showed, learners have very little exposure to English language input in their language lessons. It is ironic that while the CAPS document has allocated increased time for first additional languages, so little time is actually spent on teaching English during the English lessons.

## 6.2 The Natural Science lessons

The learners had more exposure to English in their Science lessons (see Table 4). However, the extensive use of safe-talk practices in the General Science lessons is shown in the analysis of the extracts from two lessons by teacher Cynthia. Chick and Hornberger (2002) may believe that such interactional practices „have nothing to do with learning“ and everything to do with „serving a social function“ instead (p 42), but closer analysis of teacher Cynthia’s teaching strategy and use of language under the circumstances, might just persuade us to sympathize with her instead, and agree that her teaching strategy has succeeded in getting learners, at least, to speak English during lessons, even if it is repeating after her, or reading from the board. Her teaching practice may be closer to the traditional practice of rote-learning than it is to calculated safe-talking. It is difficult to imagine how else learners with such limited English proficiency as the Grade 4 classes, could be induced to (hear themselves) use scientific language in the science class, as often as we see them responding in chorus in these extracts.

One can hardly speak of Cummins’ conversational/academic language distinction, or Setati’s „exploratory talk“/subject specific talk“ theory in relation to the proficiency levels of the grade 4 learners in this study. Both researchers may have assumed ideal circumstances in which a second language is learnt; circumstances under which the kind of progress they project after two or three or four years is possible. Current conditions in this focus school, which include poor socio-economic conditions, poor parent support, and a lack of physical and human resources, present us with a worst-case scenario for learning (in) the second language. Under these conditions I found that the majority of learners in the English classes have not mastered sufficient conversational language at the start of their Intermediate Phase (Grade 4), to have ordinary every-day conversations, nor to respond in coherent English sentences to show their understanding of lesson material; let alone sufficient discourse-specific language to begin learning all their subjects in the new language.

The English language and science lessons that I observed presented to me a possible microcosm of the Grade 4 English language classrooms elsewhere, where the following ingredients are present:

(1) a teacher not confident enough to teach in English, the medium of instruction; the lack of use of texts, lack of visual aids, video – and / or audio recorded teaching aids; (2) lack of exploratory talk before new lessons; (3) extensive use of *safetalk / safetime* that deprives learners of teaching and learning opportunities in class time; (4) learners from a poor socio-economic background, deprived of an educationally stimulating environment; (5) learners not sufficiently prepared in previous grades to meet the requirements of the current grade level; (6) teaching practices that don't take into account learner capacity and learner needs.

Lorna Dreyer (Cape Argus, 29 December 2014) in an article „*Teachers feel ill-equipped to cope in the classroom*“, makes the point that „teachers are increasingly challenged by a diverse pupil population“. She observes that „a self-perceived lack of confidence, knowledge and skills often prevent them from addressing the diverse and particularly high-level needs of pupils and leads to feelings of incompetence. As a result many pupils' needs are not met“ (Cape Argus: 29 /12/2014). The point is understood, not only against the increasing demand of parents from townships for their children to be taught in English, and who then send their children to English-medium schools in neighbouring suburbs, but also the township schools, where a diversity of indigenous languages may nowadays be spoken at home, with isiXhosa, in the case of the Western Cape, as the common language. The challenge falls to the Foundation Phase teachers to draw together this diversity in culture and language, and with minimal resources, and no or little training, find a way to prepare these learners to learn through English, which for many may be a foreign language.

It is under these circumstances that I believe the teachers revert to those teaching practices that seek to hide teacher and learner incapacity through safe-talk strategies such as chorusing, cue-giving and code-switching. It is under these circumstances, I suspect, that a Grade 4 English language teacher is forced to teach foundation phase work at a very slow pace for the rest of the year. The learner progresses to the next grade with much of the language deficiencies still in place. This backlog is never fully made up in the primary school, and it is this learner, I think, who arrives in Grade 8 three years later, not able to read, comprehend, or write in English, at the appropriate grade level. It is this learner who has prompted me to undertake this research.

I would like to venture the following tentative recommendations for consideration:

- (1) that more research in the field of teaching English to speakers of other (indigenous) languages in the Foundation Phase of township primary schools be encouraged;
- (2) that urgent consideration be given to training large numbers of teachers specifically to teach English in the Foundation Phase in township primary schools, and that generous incentives be offered to candidates who qualify;
- (3) that a national plan be implemented to support the language-in-education policy where it speaks of providing quality education and support to all learners, especially, those who learn through a language other than their mother-tongue.
- (4) that links be established between universities / teacher training colleges, and teacher-researchers at Foundation Phase / Intermediate Phase of (township) primary schools to develop, implement, monitor, and feed into new perspectives /strategies to teach English to language learners in these phases and beyond.

It is my contention at the conclusion of this study that our education system would not do justice to learners in township primary schools, if learners who, after three years of being taught in their mother-tongue, with English as a subject, are forced to switch to English as the language of learning and teaching. It is not surprising that these learners would then fail to perform at the grade level, like the learners in this case study.

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**APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1: Consent Forms

Appendix 2: The School Time-table

Appendix 3: International Phonetic Alphabet

Appendix 4: Annual National Assessment: Results 2012

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
School of Education

**RESEARCH ETHICS: STUDENT/SUPERVISOR JOINT STATEMENT**

This form should be completed by the research student and then co-signed by student and supervisor. Tick the YES or NO box, and write in details where appropriate. Please read the UCT Code for Research Involving Human Subjects before completing the form. Ask your supervisor for clarification and help if needed.

Student researcher: Name: **Alex Marshall**

Student number: **MRSALE001**

Title of research project:

**English First Additional Language teaching in Grade 4 in a typical township primary school: a case study**

Course detail:

**Minor Dissertation: Master of Education**

**Faculty of Humanities**

Supervisor: Name: **Dr Carolyn McKinney**

1. Have you read the Humanities Guide for Research Ethics? (available from supervisor or at the Humanities website )	YES	NO
--	-----	----

2. Is your research making use of human subjects as sources of data?	YES	NO
---	-----	----

**Research focus**

3. In the space below state what your research question/focus is, and give a brief outline of your plans for data collection.
---

### Research focus

2. In the space below state what your research question/focus is, and give a brief outline of your plans for data collection.

The research question will focus on how English First Additional Language (EFAL) is taught in the transition year, Grade 4, in a primary school, where learners change from isiXhosa to English as the medium of instruction.

Sub-questions that arise from this over-arching question, and support the investigation:

- (a) How much English is being used in this transition year, in EFAL curriculum time in 2 weeks of EFAL lessons?
- (b) What kinds of activities / tasks are children engaged in to develop the traditional language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as tools for learning in EFAL curriculum time?

Research will be carried out in two sessions of one week each: week 7 of term 1 for 4 hours a day, and week 2 of term 2 for 4 hours per day. Data will be collected through classroom observation, audio and video recordings, as well as an interview with the teacher.

**Information**

	YES	NO
<p>4. Will participants (research subjects) in the research have reasonable and sufficient knowledge about you, your background and location, and your research intentions? Describe briefly below how such information will be given to them. If there is any reason for withholding any information from participants about your identity and your research purpose, explain this in detail below</p>	✓	
<p>I intend meeting the English teacher through the Principal before commencement of the research to introduce myself, discuss the research proposal, and answer any questions about the research the teacher may have. I will also outline the aim of the research and method of data collection in a letter to the teacher and principal.</p> <p>I will ask that I be introduced, or be given an opportunity to introduce myself, to the classes on my first visit.</p> <p>There is no reason for withholding any information from participants about my identity and research purpose.</p>		

**Consent**

5. Will you secure the informed consent of all participants in the research? Describe how you will do this in the space below. If your answer is NO, give reasons below.	YES ✓	NO
--	----------	----

The participant will be requested to complete the following forms.

**1. Consent Form: Classroom Observation**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent to being observed by Alex Marshall for his study on how English as First Additional Language is being taught in a Grade 4 class where learners change from isiXhosa to English as medium of instruction. I understand that he will be conducting his research in my classrooms over a period of two weeks. In these two weeks he will be sitting in on my classes for the full day, each day of the week. He will request to audio - record certain lessons and video - record other lessons. I will also be interviewed as teacher of English as First Additional Language in the Grade 4 classes.

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study.

At no stage of the research will the identity or location of the school, the identity of the participating teacher and the identities of the learners be revealed. All information gathered from the study will remain confidential. Only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to the research materials.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Consent Form: Interview**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent to being interviewed by Alex Marshall for his study on how learners are taught EFAL in the transition year, Grade 4, where learners change from isiXhosa to English as medium of instruction.

I understand that participation in this interview is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer to. I may also withdraw from the study at any time. No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

6. In the case of research involving children, will you have the consent of their guardians, parents or caretakers? If your answer is NO, give reasons below. If your answer is YES, describe briefly how this consent will be got from the participants.	YES	NO
<p data-bbox="1052 394 1073 422">✓</p> <p data-bbox="329 499 1284 573">The parents, guardians or caretakers of learners in the Grade 4 classes will receive a letter from school informing them of the intended visits, as well as the purpose of the visits. Should they have any objection, parents, guardians or caretakers should inform the school.</p> <p data-bbox="329 583 1284 636">At the first meeting between class and teacher / researcher, learners will be introduced to the researcher, and the purpose of the visit will be explained to learners.</p>		

7. In the case of research involving children, will you have the consent of the children as much as that is possible? If your answer is YES, describe briefly how this consent will be got from the children. If your answer is NO, give reasons below.	YES ✓	NO
<p>In the first meeting between learners, teacher and researcher the purpose of the class visits will be explained. As much information as learners can understand concerning the aims and processes of the research will be given in this first meeting.</p>		

### Confidentiality

<p>8. Are you able to offer privacy and confidentiality to participants if they wish to remain anonymous? If you answer YES then give details below as to what steps you will take to ensure participants' confidentiality. If there are any aspects of your research where there might be difficulties or problems with regard to protecting the confidentiality and rights of participants and honouring their trust, explain this in detail below.</p>	YES ✓	NO
<p>Information obtained in the course of the research, including the identity of the participants, the school and its location, remains confidential. The school and all its participants will be assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities.</p> <p>Confidentiality clauses have been included in the following consent forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Consent Form: Classroom Observation</li><li>- Consent Form: Interview</li><li>- Consent Form: Audio-Recording of Interview (Appendix A)</li><li>- Consent Form: Audio / Video Recording of Lessons (Appendix B)</li><li>- Question for the Interview (Appendix C)</li></ul>		

**Potential for harm to participants**

9. Are there any foreseeable risks of physical, psychological or social harm to participants that might result from or occur in the course of the research? If your answer is YES, outline below what these risks might be and what preventative steps you plan to take to prevent such harm from being suffered.	YES	NO ✓

**Potential for harm to UCT or other institutions**

10. Are there any foreseeable risks of harm to UCT or to other institutions that might result from or occur in the course of the research? e.g., legal action resulting from the research, the image of the university being affected by association with the research project, or a school being compromised in the eyes of the Education Ministry. If your answer is YES, give details and state below why you think the research is nonetheless worthwhile.	YES	NO ✓

11. Are there any other ethical issues that you think might arise during the course of the research? (e.g., with regard to conflicts of interests amongst participants and/or institutions) If your answer is YES, give details and say what you plan to do about it.	YES	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Signed:**

Student: Alexander C. Marshall  
Date: 22 January 2012

**Co-signed:**

Supervisor:  
Date:

## Appendix 2

PERIOD	TIME	CLASS	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI		
1	8H00 - 08H30	MORNING DEVOTION							
		4A	MATHS	N. SC	N. SC	MS			
		4B	N. SC	MATHS	XHOSA	XHOSA	MATHS		
		4C	ENGLISH	XHOSA	MATHS	N. SC	N. SC		
		4D	XHOSA	EMS	MATHS	ENGLISH			
		5A	MATHS	N. SC	XHOSA	XHOSA	TECH		
		5B	N. SC	MATHS	L.O.	L.O.	MATHS		
		5C	ENGLISH		MATHS	EMS	ENGLISH		
		5D				MATHS	EMS		
		6A	MATHS	XHOSA	XHOSA	ENGLISH			
		6B	N. SC	MATHS	L.O.	EMS	MATHS		
		6C	ENGLISH	N. SC	MATHS	N. SC	SOC. SC.		
		6D	XHOSA	SOC. SC.		MATHS	MS		
		7A	MATHS	TECH	XHOSA	N. SC	TECH		
		7B	N. SC	MATHS	ENGLISH	XHOSA	MATHS		
		7C	ENGLISH	XHOSA	MATHS		XHOSA		
		7D	XHOSA	N. SC	EMS	MATHS	N. SC		
		2	08H30 - 09H00	4A	MATHS	XHOSA	SOC. SC.	XHOSA	N. SC
				4B	N. SC	MATHS		SOC. SC.	MATHS
				4C	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	MATHS	EMS	EMS
4D	XHOSA			A&C		MATHS	SOC. SC.		
5A	MATHS			A&C	N. SC	XHOSA			
5B	N. SC			MATHS	ENGLISH	A&C	MATHS		
5C	ENGLISH				MATHS	L.O.	A&C		
5D	XHOSA			XHOSA	XHOSA	MATHS	XHOSA		
6A	MATHS			L.O.	XHOSA		L.O.		
6B	N. SC			MATHS		SOC. SC.	MATHS		
6C	ENGLISH			ENGLISH	MATHS	N. SC	N. SC		
6D	XHOSA			N. SC	SOC. SC.	MATHS	XHOSA		
7A	MATHS			ENGLISH	XHOSA	XHOSA			
7B	N. SC			MATHS	EMS	TECH	MATHS		
7C	ENGLISH				MATHS	EMS	A&C		
7D	XHOSA			TECH	N. SC	MATHS	ENGLISH		
3	09H00 - 09H30			4A	N. SC	MATHS	A&C	XHOSA	A&C
				4B	MATHS	SOC. SC.	EMS	L.O.	ENGLISH
				4C	XHOSA		ENGLISH	ENGLISH	MATHS
				4D	ENGLISH	XHOSA	MATHS	L.O.	TECH
		5A	N. SC	MATHS	A&C	N. SC	ENGLISH		
		5B	MATHS		XHOSA	XHOSA	N. SC		
		5C	XHOSA	N. SC	EMS	A&C	MATHS		
		5D	ENGLISH	L.O.	MATHS				
		6A	N. SC	MATHS		XHOSA	ENGLISH		
		6B	MATHS	N. SC		ENGLISH	XHOSA		
		6C	XHOSA	ENGLISH	N. SC		MATHS		
		6D	ENGLISH	XHOSA	MATHS	N. SC	N. SC		
		7A	N. SC	MATHS	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	ENGLISH		
		7B	MATHS	N. SC		A&C	XHOSA		
		7C	XHOSA	ENGLISH	N. SC	TECH	MATHS		
		7D	ENGLISH	XHOSA	MATHS	N. SC			
		4	09H30 - 10H00	4A	N. SC	MATHS		ENGLISH	SOC. SC.
				4B	MATHS	N. SC	N. SC	SOC. SC.	
				4C	XHOSA	SOC. SC.	XHOSA	L.O.	MATHS
				4D	ENGLISH	XHOSA	MATHS	N. SC	N. SC
5A	N. SC			MATHS	A&C		XHOSA		
5B	MATHS					EMS	L.O.		
5C	XHOSA			N. SC	N. SC	XHOSA	MATHS		
5D	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	MATHS	N. SC	N. SC				
6A	N. SC	MATHS		SOC. SC.	XHOSA				

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8	11H40 - 12H10	4B	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	MATHS	TECH	XHOSA
		4C	SOC. SC	N. SC	N. SC	A&C	A&C
		4D	MATHS	MATHS	TECH	XHOSA	SOC. SC
		5A			TECH	MATHS	EMS
		5B	ENGLISH	N. SC	MATHS	A&C	
		5C	N. SC		EMS		N. SC
		5D	MATHS	MATHS	ENGLISH	TECH	ENGLISH
		6A	XHOSA	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	MATHS	SOC. SC
		6B	ENGLISH	XHOSA	MATHS	FMS	N. SC
		6C	N. SC	SOC. SC		SOC. SC	
		6D	MATHS	MATHS	FMS	XHOSA	ENGLISH
		7A	XHOSA	XHOSA	N. SC	MATHS	N. SC
		7B	ENGLISH	L.O.	MATHS	EMS	A&C
		7C	N. SC	TECH	L.O.	N. SC	ENGLISH
7D	MATHS	MATHS	ENGLISH	A&C	XHOSA		
9	12H10 - 12H40	4A	READING	XHOSA	READING	READING	MATHS
		4B	READING	ENGLISH	READING	READING	FMS
		4C	READING	N. SC	READING	READING	SOC. SC
		4D	READING	MATHS	READING	READING	XHOSA
		5A	READING	XHOSA	READING	READING	MATHS
		5B	READING	N. SC	READING	READING	EMS
		5C	READING	ENGLISH	READING	READING	TECH
		5D	READING	MATHS	READING	READING	A&C
		6A	READING	FMS	READING	READING	MATHS
		6B	READING	XHOSA	READING	READING	
		6C	READING		READING	READING	
		6D	READING	MATHS	READING	READING	SOC. SC
		7A	READING		READING	READING	MATHS
		7B	READING	XHOSA	READING	READING	TECH
7C	READING	N. SC	READING	READING			
7D	READING	MATHS	READING	READING	EMS		
0	12H40 - 13H00	LONG BREAK					
10	13H00 - 13H30	4A	SOC. SC	L.O.	XHOSA	ENGLISH	MATHS
		4B	L.O.	SOC. SC	FMS	A&C	TECH
		4C	EMS	A&C	TECH	MATHS	FMS
		4D	L.O.	ENGLISH	N. SC	L.O.	
		5A				ENGLISH	MATHS
		5B	TECH	ENGLISH	EMS	EMS	TECH
		5C	A&C	XHOSA	ENGLISH	MATHS	
		5D	XHOSA	TECH	L.O.	TECH	A&C
		6A	SOC. SC	SOC. SC	SOC. SC	EMS	MATHS
		6B		L.O.	FMS	ENGLISH	
		6C	XHOSA		SOC. SC	MATHS	FMS
		6D			N. SC		L.O.
		7A	TECH	EMS		ENGLISH	MATHS
		7B	EMS	XHOSA	XHOSA		EMS
7C	A&C	N. SC	EMS	MATHS	TECH		
7D	L.O.	ENGLISH	A&C	N. SC	A&C		
11	13H30 - 14H00	4A	SOC. SC	SOC. SC	L.O.	FMS	L.O.
		4B	TECH	N. SC	ENGLISH	SOC. SC	EMS
		4C	A&C	L.O.	L.O.	MATHS	L.O.
		4D	EMS	ENGLISH	N. SC	A&C	A&C
		5A	TECH	TECH	EMS	L.O.	ENGLISH
		5B	L.O.	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	A&C
		5C		XHOSA	XHOSA	MATHS	TECH
		5D	EMS		A&C	EMS	L.O.
		6A	SOC. SC		FMS	ENGLISH	FMS
		6B	SOC. SC	XHOSA		L.O.	
		6C	L.O.		L.O.	MATHS	
		6D		ENGLISH	N. SC		MATHS
		7A	EMS		EMS	L.O.	L.O.

		7B	TECH		L.O.	N. SC		
		7C					EMS	
		7D	XHOSA	L.O.	ENGLISH			
12	14H00 14H30	4A			A&C	EMS	EMS	
		4B	SOC. SC.	A&C			A&C	
		4C	N. SC					ENGLISH
		4D	EMS	L.O.		ENGLISH	ENGLISH	L.O.
		5A	L.O.	N. SC			EMS	
		5B	A&C	TECH		N. SC		
		5C		L.O.		TECH	TECH	EMS
		5D		A&C		EMS		TECH
		6A				L.O.	L.O.	
		6B	L.O.	TECH		SOC. SC.		
		6C	SOC. SC.	L.O.		EMS	EMS	EMS
		6D						
		7A				L.O.	TECH	TECH
		7B	L.O.			TECH	L.O.	
		7C	EMS	L.O.				ENGLISH
		7D	TECH	TECH		EMS	ENGLISH	L.O.

## Appendix 3

## Phonetic alphabets reference

- The IPA column contains the symbols in the International Phonetic Alphabet, as used in phonetic transcriptions in modern English dictionaries.
- The ASCII column shows the corresponding symbols in the Antimon ASCII Phonetic Alphabet, which can be used to type the pronunciation of words on a computer without the use of special fonts.
- For a full description of the alphabets + audio recordings of the sounds, visit [www.antimon.com/ipa](http://www.antimon.com/ipa)

vowels			consonants		
IPA	ASCII	examples	IPA	ASCII	examples
æ	ae	cat, jack	b	b	bad, job
ɑ:	aa	arm, father	d	d	die, lady
ɛ	eh	cat, black	f	f	fan, off
ə	eh	away, comma	g	g	give, bag
e	e	met, head	h	h	hey, hollow
ɛ:	eh:	fern, fair	j	j	yes, follow
i	i	kit, spring	k	k	cat, back
ɪ	ih	kit, heart	l	l	leg, little
ɒ	oh	hot, rock	m	m	man, comma
ɔ:	oh:	cat, law	n	n	no, ten
u	u	put, could	ŋ	ng	sing, finger
u:	uh:	blue, food	p	p	pet, stop
ai	ai	fire, age	r	r	red, try
ai:	ai:	fire, age	s	s	sun, miss
au	au	go, now	ʃ	sh	ship, enough
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	t	t	tea, getting
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	tʃ	ts	check, church
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	θ	th	think, bath
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	ʊ	UH	it's, mother
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	v	v	vice, five
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	w	w	wet, window
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	z	z	zero, busy
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	ʒ	Z	please, vision
ɔ:	oh:	go, now	dʒ	dZ	just, judge

special symbols		
IPA	ASCII	meaning
ˌ	l	is placed before the stressed syllable in a word. For example, the noun <i>command</i> is pronounced /kəmˌmænd/, and the verb <i>to command</i> is pronounced /kəmˈmænd/.
ˈ	h	/kɑːl/ means /kɑːl/ in American English and /kɔːl/ in British English.
ː	hh	/t/ means /t/ or /t:/ - something in between. Examples: very /ˈveriː/, ability /əˈbɪlɪːti/, previous /ˈpriːviəs/.
˞	l	/t/ shows that the consonant /t/ is pronounced as a syllable. This means that there is a short vowel (shorter than /e/ or /i/ sound) before the consonant. Examples: <i>title</i> /ˈtɪ˞l/, <i>style</i> /ˈstɪ˞l/.
˞	n	/n/ shows that the consonant /n/ is pronounced as a syllable. Examples: <i>written</i> /ˈrɪ˞n/, <i>listen</i> /ˈlɪ˞sn/.

## Appendix 4

ANA- 2012

Grade 3				
Code	1	2	3	4
Maths	19	18	20	43
HL	28	10	24	38
Grade 4				
Code	1	2	3	4
Maths	17	26	43	14
English	23	25	32	20
Grade 5				
Code	1	2	3	4
Maths	36	34	29	1
English	24	21	41	14
Grade 6				
Code	1	2	3	4
Maths	81	11	8	0
English	82	11	7	0
Grade 7				
Code	1	2	3	4
Maths	89.57	7.58	2.85	0
English	74.14	16.44	10	1.42
Grade 8				
Code	1	2	3	4
Maths	99	1	0	0
English	57	19	21	3







