THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ON GRADE 4

LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL

By

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DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I, Makobo Charmaine Makgoale, declare that this thesis entitled **"THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ON GRADE 4 LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL"** is my own work. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been duly acknowledged in the references. This thesis has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Signature: ………………………….   Date: ………………………

ETHICS STATEMENT

I, **Makobo Charmaine Makgoale** obtained Ethical Clearance Certificate to conduct the study. I further declare that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Limpopo's Code of ethics for researchers and the policy guidelines for responsible research.

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I want to express my sincere gratitude to all participants who were willing to participate in this study and who so graciously shared their time, knowledge and resources. I also want to thank my colleagues who supported me during the period of study. Without you, this study could not have been conducted to say the least.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Benedict, daughter, Bogolo, son, Sekgoari, my sisters, Lorraine and Maureen, and my brothers, Ngwako and Moraka, who have always been there, supporting and loving me unconditionally throughout my research journey. This work is also dedicated to my mother, Modjadji Mampeule, my late father, Elijah Mampeule for their unconditional love and support throughout my schooling years, my mother in-law, Raesibe Makgoale for her unconditional support throughout this study. To all of you who contributed to the completion of this thesis in one way or another, I say "Thank you".

May God bless all of you!

Makobo Charmaine Makgoale

ABSTRACT

The impact of the switch in LoLT between Grade 3 and 4 has been the subject of much research in South Africa which results in grade 4 low pass rate. What constitutes a problem is that during this transition from Sepedi to English as LOLT, most learners are linguistically not ready to make this leap (Heugh, 2006; Maswanganye, 2010). The change of the language of learning and teaching from Sepedi to English in Grade 4 is problematical because of the challenges in adjusting to the use of English as LOLT (Macdonald, 1990; Alexander, 2005; Heugh, 2006; Maswanganye, 2010). The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of English First Additional Language on learners' academic performance in Grade 4 at a primary school. A qualitative research approach was adopted in this study due to the fact that this study was explanatory and descriptive in nature. This study used a qualitative case study research design and qualitative interpretive paradigm which allowed the researcher to gather information through observations and interviews. This study was guided by sociocultural theory developed by Vygotsky (1978) because it emphasizes that teachers can use strategies to create classroom conditions that foster learning by modeling, scaffolding and the development of the learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD). The study used inductive thematic data analysis method to analyse data collected from observation schedule and interviews. The findings showed that learners' hindrance concerning reading and writing in the English language is home based factors because of socio-economic factors. This study shows that less teacher training also poses challenges to English reading development as they do not have sufficient knowledge on reading strategies to deal with the transition of grade 4 learners from Sepedi to English First Additional Language as a language of learning and teaching. The study recommends training of teachers on how to teach reading and implementation of additive or bilingualism for the subsequent language policy development in South African education system should be considered.

Keywords: English First Additional Language, Socio-economic factors, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), scaffolding, low articulation, code-switching, academic performance, additive bilingualism

List of acronyms

Acronyms	Descriptions
ANA	Annual National Assessments
CALLA	Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DoE	Department of Education
EFAL	English First Additional Language
ESL	English Second Language
ESOL	Speakers of Other Languages
FAL	First Additional Language
HL	Home Language
L 2	English Language
L1	Mother's Tongue
LoLT	Language of Learning and teaching
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum
SASA	South African Schools Act 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)
SGB	School Governing Body
TV	Televisions
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1. Introduction

The literature on English as a Second Language (ESL) is replete with challenges emanating from learning through a second language. ESL students who are using English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) face a wide range of challenges which include learning a new language in a meaningful way, often with predictable consequences. This point is articulated by Dreyer (2017) who notes that learning in a language that is not mother-tongue is an international phenomenon brought by increased mobility and migration across the world, which include the global spread of the English language.

Lenyai's (2011) study showed that many teachers in South African schools, particularly in the Foundation Phase lack basic skills to teach literacy. A large body of classroom-centred studies in South African township schools further showed that much of learning and teaching in classroom contexts is characterized by routinized practices such as repetition, chorusing and memorization, which make minimal cognitive growth on learners nor extend their understanding of literacy as a social practice. The work of Spaull (2011) also shows that there is little or no reflective writing taking place when students engage in writing practices, such practices may involve one-word answer, dictation, and answering narrative comprehension texts which are cognitively undemanding. Consequently, there is little prospect for helping children that come from an impoverished background to transition from learning to read towards reading to learn.

CAPS, which is an improvement of and replaces the Revised National Curriculum Statement states that by the end of Grade 3, children must have reached a high level of communicative competence and be able to read well (DBE, 2010:7-9). This has been proven to be too difficult to attain, as illustrated by data coming from international studies and systemic evaluations, including the Annual National Assessments (ANA, 2013). In South Africa, this is further complicated by the reality that a large section of the school-going population starts their education using their home language until grade

3. Starting from grade 4, the language of learning and teaching is English First Additional Language, which has an impact on learners' academic performance in grade 4. Fleisch (2008:105-112) states that shifting from mother-tongue instruction in reading, writing and numeracy in the first three years of schooling to a second language (L2) in grade 4, where the learner is expected to be proficient in reading across the curriculum is problematic. In public schools, learners enter into grade 4 not having mastered comprehension skills in English. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of English First Additional Language on learners' academic performance in Grade 4 at a primary school.

According to Pretorius (2002:191), other factors contributing to poor second language acquisition and academic achievement in townships and rural areas are lack of access to newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio, lack of opportunity to hear or to speak English; lack of English reading material at home and school; and poor language teaching by teachers whose own English proficiency is limited. It is against this background that this study explored strategies and practices for supporting children's transition from mother tongue to English First Additional Language in grade 4.

2. Problem Statement

The impact of the switch in LoLT between Grade 3 and 4 has been the subject of much research in South Africa which results in grade 4 low pass rate. What constitutes a problem is that during this transition from Sepedi to English as LOLT, most learners are linguistically not ready to make this leap (Heugh, 2006; Maswanganye, 2010). The change of the language of learning and teaching from Sepedi to English in Grade 4 is problematical because of the challenges in adjusting to the use of English as LOLT (Macdonald, 1990; Alexander, 2005; Heugh, 2006; Maswanganye, 2010). Therefore, this study investigated teachers' pedagogical practices and strategies used to offset challenges emanating from the switch in LoLT in grade 4 classrooms. This could be achieved through the investigation of learners' abilities to function in the classroom using English as First Additional Language (FAL) by observing their interactions and writing in the classroom.

3. Research aim and objectives

3.1. Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of English First Additional Language on learners' academic performance in Grade 4 at a primary school.

3.2. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify language Policy and Legislative Framework that guides South African Education System.
- To determine challenges experienced by grade 4 learners in learning content subjects through English First Additional Language.
- To determine challenges experienced by grade 4 teachers in teaching the content subject to English First Language speakers.
- To determine teaching and learning strategies that could be used to improve grade 4 learners' academic performance.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research design

This study adopted a qualitative case study research design. Zainal (2007) defines a case study as detailed analyses, usually focusing on a particular problem of an individual, group, or organization. Case study is appropriate to research questions and elicits implicit and explicit data from subjects in relation to a complex social reality, such as learning and teaching (Zainal, 2007). A case study is appropriate for this study because it involves observing uninfluenced everyday classroom practices, and data being collected will be sourced from naturalistic settings, enabling the researcher to investigate some of the embedded practices, routines, and repertoires. Qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants through asking broad questions, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words from participants; describe and analyses these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell, 2012).

4.2. Population and Sampling

4.2.1. Population

Population refers to the set or group of all the units which the findings of the research are to be applied (Shukla, 2020). The primary school is situated in Moletji. The school attracts learners from the nearby surrounding villages such as Ga- Makibelo Ga-Hlahla, Ga-Semenya, and Ga-Ramongoana. The home languages for learners at this school are Sepedi, Shona, and Tshivenda, whereas English is a First Additional Language to them. The participants in this study included 110 grade 4 learners and 12 teachers at the school.

4.2.2. Sampling

The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Etikan et al., 2016). This study employed two types of sampling, purposive sampling which is significant in qualitative research, whereby the researcher selects individuals and sites that can provide the necessary information (Creswell, 2005) and convenient sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling method where the sample is taken from a group of people easy to contact or to reach (Creswell, 2005). The researcher conveniently chose the primary school because it is where she works and participants were easily accessible. Random sampling has been used to select. Miles and Huberman (1994) noted that qualitative research involves small samples of people researched through in-depth methods such as face-to-face interviews and rigorous observation that focus on the experiences of the participants. In this study, I limited my sample to three teachers who were purposely chosen for the interviews and pre-observation. The reason for using purposive sampling was to ensure that only experienced teachers with at least five years of teaching experience in Grade 4 classrooms. The researcher limited the study also to 10 learners by using a hat and write 1 to 10 to give all learners an equal opportunity to participate in the research through interviews. Learners who choose 1 to 10 took part in the study 5 from each class were selected to form part of the study.

4.3. Data Collection

This study is going to use semi-structured interview and observation schedule to collect data.

4.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

Lisa (2008) posits that semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the interviewer asks only a few predetermined questions while the rest of the questions are not planned in advance. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), researchers can use semi-structured interviews to collect new, exploratory data related to research topic, triangulate other data sources or validate findings through member checking. This tool enabled the researcher to collect open-ended data and explore interviewees' thoughts about the English impact on academic learner performance. The researcher seeks permission from the participants to record the interviews through consent forms. For qualitative data, interview protocol was observed that lists questions, date and time of the interviews with 3 teachers and 10 learners in grade 4. The researcher audiotaped the interviews and later transcribes the information. This allowed the researcher time to provide accurate information obtained from the research participants.

4.3.2. Observation Schedule

The researcher explained to the learners and teachers the purpose of the research, which is not to judge their behaviour but to collect data, and that they should feel free and comfortable to teach and participate during the lessons as they would normally do in the absence of the researcher. An observational protocol put in place to record descriptions of events in the classroom and concerns that arise during lessons. The consent forms were sent using Sepedi and English bilingualism as Sepedi is the predominant language of the Ga-Makibelo community where the school is situated. This method was used during the periods of the subjects selected respectively, viz, Mathematics, Life skills and Natural Sciences. This method was used to see how learners respond to questions, and how they are able to carry out instructions in the classroom.

4.4. Data Analysis

According to Guest et al. (2006), data analysis is a process of analysing and interpreting data to make meaning to it. The researcher used thematic analysis method to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within data (Guest et al., 2006). The researcher used inductive thematic analysis to analyse data collected from observation schedule and interviews in this study because it is concerned with trying to understand the first-hand experiences of respondents on how they make sense of their lived experiences of addressing their challenges of learning and teaching Mathematics, Natural Science, and Life Skills in English First Additional Language. This is consistent with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) description of inductive thematic analysis (Seidel & Urquhart, 2016). In other words, the researcher began with an area of study and allowed the theory to emerge from the data wherein themes were derived from transcribed semi-structured interview and observation schedule. Researchers usually define data saturation as the point when "no new information or themes are observed in data (Guest et al., 2006). Therefore, the researcher re-read the data collected through interviews as contained in an audio- recorder as well as the analysis of the observation several times until she reached saturation point.

5. Quality Criteria

5.1. Credibility

Credibility is the equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research and is concerned with the aspects of truth value (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This study provided sufficient contextual information to allow readers and other researchers to make transfers. The data will be a true reflection of the participants' insights. The researcher in this study ensured credibility by recording interviews and keeping audiotapes safe.

5.2. Dependability

Dependability involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from all participants of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), to address the dependability issue more directly, the process within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results. This was ensured by consistently verifying the data collected to make sure that nothing is left out.

5.3. Confirmation

The researcher re-checked all sources, recordings, and transcripts to ensure that data is not misinterpreted. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that, a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her predisposition. The researcher used different techniques to collect data such as semi-structured interviews and observation schedule to ensure that there is no biasness in the study.

6. Significance of the study

The study is important in that it will reveal the strength and weaknesses of 4th grade learners' exposure to English as a language of learning and teaching and the impact thereof. This will assist policymakers in developing innovative ways of improving the way grade 4 teachers can scaffold learners from mother-tongue teaching to English as a Language of Learning and Teaching. It is only important that the study is conducted in a public school considering the language background that the learners have. This study will contribute towards the understanding of English as a Language of Learning and Teaching to learners who are not its mother-tongue speakers; and it will in a long-term benefit public school learners and teachers in grade 4 wherein English is introduced for the first time as the language of learning and teaching.

7. Ethical Considerations

As the study's research participants are learners and teachers at the primary school, ethics are a key consideration in the design of social research. Two fundamental ethical guidelines are that participation in social research should be voluntary and no harm should come to research subjects (Babble, 2007:64). Ethical considerations in this study focused on permission, participants' consent, confidentiality, anonymity, protection from harm, and respect as indicated below.

7.1 Permission

Before the study began, the research proposal was submitted by the researcher to the University's Research and Ethics Committee (TREC) for approval. This was done to obtain ethical approval from the university's research and ethics committee. The researcher proceeded to request permission from the Circuit office, school governing body, and teachers of grades to be investigated. Copies of permission requests have been attached as appendices.

7.2 Participations' Consent

The researcher assured participants that participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from participation at any time. Since grade 4 learners are below the age of 18, therefore their parents were required to sign their consent on their behalf as a way of giving them permission to participants in the study. English First Additional Language teachers who were willing to participate in the study were also given consent forms to sign. Therefore, they were requested to sign the consent forms to show that they agree to participate in the study.

7.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

In maintaining the confidentiality of information collected from research participants, the researcher ensured that data is aggregated and that no information can be linked to any individual. The researcher made every effort to prevent anyone outside of the research from connecting individual participants with the data collected. This included the following:

(i)   Encrypting identifiable data;

(ii)   Removing identity markers (e.g., names and addresses) from reflection journals containing data about study participants;

(iii)   Limiting access to identifiable information;

(iv)   Securely storing data documents within locked locations; and

(v)   Assign security codes to computerized records.

7.4 Protection from harm

There is little to the possibility of harm for any person participating in this study. The researcher was sensitive to participants, fit research activities within convenient times of student/learners' scheduling, and provide information about planned sessions with students/learners. In addition to the above, informed consent was negotiated with key participants. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequence on their part. Participants were requested to sign a consent letter to ensure that the highest ethical standards are maintained throughout this study.

8. Structure of the research report

There are five (5) chapters in the research report:

Chapter one:

This chapter describes the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the research questions. It also provides a brief discussion of the research design and methodology, data analysis as well the organization of chapters.

Chapter two: Review of Literature

This chapter provides the theoretical framework and literature substantiating the research.

Chapter three: The research design, methods and procedures that are used in the data collection process and data analysis are outlined in this chapter as well as the issue of validity, reliability and ethical considerations employed are discussed.

Chapter four: This chapter presents findings and analysis of data collected through semi-structured interviews and observation.

Chapter five: This chapter reports on the summary of the main findings in the study, significance of the findings and the contribution of the study, recommendations from the study, the limitations of the study, further research and conclusion.

9. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the context of the present study, the background of problems to be addressed in this study, the aim of the study, the rationale, the research questions, the definition of key terms and the organization of chapters. This chapter outlined the background on the impact of English First Additional on grade 4 learners' academic performance at the Primary School in Limpopo Province. The subsequent chapter outlines the theoretical framework and in-depth recent literature underpinning this study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The previous chapter provided the background, focus and purpose of the study. As previously stated, this study aims to investigate the impact of English First Additional Language on learners' academic performance in Grade 4 at the primary school. The purpose of this chapter is to present empirical literature on the impact of English First Additional Language on learners' academic performance in Grade 4 at the primary school. I will firstly discuss policy and legislative background of South African Education System. The challenges facing grade 4 learners and challenges faced by teachers will be reflected upon. Language teaching models in South Africa and language as a barrier to learning and development will also be reviewed. Current debates and critical issues on transition from mother tongue instruction to English in South Africa will be discussed. Learner academic performance and effect of language on academic performance will be examined. Secondly, this chapter reviews existing study on the transfer of language skills from first to second language, characteristics of a successful second language learner, characteristics of a successful second language teacher, teaching strategies/approaches, learning English First Additional Language.

2. Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework shows the beliefs and the researcher's worldview and defines the position a/the researcher takes in accounting for knowledge interpretation and knowledge making (Imenda, 2014). This study guided by Sociocultural theory developed by Vygotsky (1978) because it emphasizes that teachers can use strategies to create classroom conditions that foster learning by modeling, scaffolding and the development of the learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD). Social learning comes first in a learner's life and it's a driving force behind successful second language learning. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) argues that interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1978), children develop on two fundamental levels, which is first the social level and later on the individual level. On the social level, learners acquire the unknown and learn to function in it by forming and understanding. On the second individual level, learners go an extra

mile to discover that they did not know by developing their own interpretation. This study was mainly focused on the connections between people and the socio-cultural context in which they act and interact in shared experiences.

Vygotsky referred to the process of moving from the known to the unknown the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In the context ZPD, First, language is the main way that adults teach children language by communicating with them, Secondly, it is an important tool of intellectual stimulation of the child who is at the ZPD. Vygotsky maintained that learners learn through imitation and mimicking answers and behaviors of adults around them. The concept (ZPD) in this study directs our search towards observing specific language challenges that emerge as Sepedi-speaking learners and their teachers negotiate transition to English as LoLT. Another concept in Vygotsky's theory is scaffolding (Okoye, 2012). Scaffolding involves support that is responsive to the particular demands made on learners' learning through the medium of a second language, thus, a language support by the teacher which is critical for learning success (Vygotsky, 1978; Gibbons, 2002). The scaffolds provided by the teacher do not change the nature or difficulty of the task; instead, the scaffolds provided allow the learner to successfully complete the task. In this study scaffolding guides the inquiry on how teachers creatively use language in communicating with learners in their specific context. In this study, modelling requires a teacher within the cognitive domain or subject area to demonstrate a task that the learner can experience and construct conceptual model of the task that will help him/her to eventually take responsibility of doing the task (McLeod, 2007). Through modelling, the teacher provides the learner with a step-by-step demonstration of what is required of him or her. The teacher can also use the grouping of the learners to enhance classroom communication (McLeod, 2007). Though neither classroom practice nor reading was the primary focus of this study, modelling enabled me to examine how often teachers deploy or 38 abandon the use of above-mentioned teaching aids and how this affects classroom interaction, communication and learner development (Okoye, 2012). Ültanir (2012:202) also emphasizes that Piaget's (1952) theory of cognitive constructivism proposes that humans cannot be given information which they immediately understand and use; instead humans must construct their own knowledge.

This study adopted a Vygotskian conception of learning. Vygotsky identified two levels of development: the actual and the potential levels of development (Schunk, 2012). The actual development refers to those accomplishments a child can demonstrate alone or perform independently. According to Vygotsky (1978), in this space of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), problems are solved under the guidance of an adult or in collaboration with more capable peers (scaffolding); meaning that learners can have the confidence and ability to perform a specific task when guided by the teacher. This Vygotskian perspective is relevant to this study because it is central to the discussion and understanding of literacy and other educational issues affecting multilingual students in the mainstream educational contexts. Drawing from Vygotsky's central concept of mediation, the researcher is interested in how the teachers use classroom discourse to facilitate meaningful learning and advance learners' cognitive thinking skills using English Second Language. This is essential because, within the socio-constructivism, teaching is an act of extending learners' natural abilities.

3. Literature review

This section starts with policy and legislative background of South African Education System, the challenges facing grade 4 learners in learning content subjects through English First Additional Language, challenges experienced by grade 4 teachers in teaching the content subject to English First Language speakers, Language Teaching Models in South Africa, language as a Barrier to Learning and Development, current debates and critical issues on transition from mother tongue instruction to English in South Africa, learner academic performance, effect of language on academic performance, the transfer of language skills from first to second language, characteristics of a successful second language learner, characteristics of a successful second language teacher, teaching strategies/approaches and learning English First Additional Language.

3.1. Policy and Legislative Background of South African Education System

3.1.1. The Constitution of Republic of South Africa (1996a)

Mkhize and Balfour (2017) point out that Sections 6, 9, 29, 30, 31 and 35 of the Constitution describe language rights in the public domain. Section 6(1) affords official status to 11 languages, 9 of which are indigenous African languages, namely Afrikaans, English, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, siSwati, Tshivenda

and Xitsonga. In Section 6(2), the state is ordered to 'take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, 4). Section 29 (2) adopts this flexible approach to language use, stating that 'everyone has a right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable' (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, 15). The South African language policy specifies that from Grade 4 level upwards English should be used as the LOLT. But when it comes into practice, there is a huge gap and/or disjuncture between the policy prescription and the actual classroom practices of teachers and learners. This means that there may be people of different languages within the area and their children attending the same school, the SGB holds the responsibility to draft the school language policy taking note of such factors. There can be multiple home languages when it is practicable by the ratio of the learners speaking those languages.

Arguably, the practicality consideration that is also articulated in these two policies encourages school governing bodies and universities' language structures to adopt an ambivalent attitude, and in extreme cases, a hostile attitude towards African languages, claiming to be protecting the language rights of the institutions on 'academic' grounds (a factor noted in higher education, see Parmegiani and Rudwick (2014) and schools, see Smit (2007) in Mkhize and Balfour (2017). The SGB may end up with just English because of its social-economic reasons and 1 home language mostly spoken in the community due to historical and political processes.

3.1.2. The South African Schools Act and the Language Policy in Education

Chapter 2 of the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) declares the learners' compulsory attendance which states in 3. (1) that subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, every parent must cause every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend a school from the first school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. This suggests that regular attendance of learners to school can yield positive results in academic performance and development in learning abilities.

Moreover, language policy of public schools states that 6. (1) Subject to the Constitution and this Act, the Minister may, by notice in the Government Gazette, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools. (2) The governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution, this Act and any applicable provincial law (SASA Act 84 of 1996). This implies that the school governing body (SGB) will be responsible for drafting and adopting the language policy of the school.

A wide spectrum of opinions exists to the locally viable approaches towards multilingual education, ranging from arguments in favour of the cognitive benefits and cost-effectiveness of teaching through one medium (home language) and learning additional language(s) as subjects, to those drawing on comparative international experience demonstrating that, under appropriate conditions, most learners benefit cognitively and emotionally from the type of structured bilingual education found in dual-medium (also known as two way immersion) programmes. Whichever route is followed; the underlying principle is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). With regard to the delivery system, policy will progressively be guided by the results of comparative research, both locally and internationally (LiEP, 1997).

With regard to language as subjects, LiEP (1997) points out that from Grade 3 (Standard 1) onwards, all learners shall offer their language of learning and teaching and at least one additional approved language as subjects. The following promotion requirements apply to language subjects: In Grade 1 to Grade 4 (Standard 2), promotion is based on performance in one language and Mathematics. In public schools in South Africa, the following subjects are compulsory, viz; Sepedi, English, Mathematics, Life Skills, Natural Science and Technology, Social Science if a learner can obtain level 7 in all the subjects in grade 4. Therefore, if a learner obtains the highest level of in other subjects and fails to obtain the minimum requirement in Sepedi and Mathematics, the learner will not be promoted but be retained. All languages must be passed for a learner to progress to the next grade. If a learner passes 2 languages and Mathematics and fail in 2 subjects, the learner will be promoted. Teachers' views

on language in education should be considered in the educational policymaking process from the grassroots, for more effective implementation to emerge in grade 4. In conclusion, learners need to pass English and efficiently perform well using it as LoLT to pass other subjects in order to progress.

3.1.3. National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)-Intermediate Phase4-6 (English First Additional Language)

In the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2011:8), language is defined as a tool for thought and communication. It explains that learning to use the language effectively enables learners to acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and ideas, to interact with others and to manage their world. It also provides learners with a rich, powerful and deeply rooted set of images that can be used to make their world other than it is; better than it is, clearer than it is. It is through language that cultural diversity and social relations are expressed and constructed.

The First Additional Language level assumes that learners do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school. The focus in the first few years of school is on developing learners' ability to understand and speak the language – basic interpersonal communication skills. In Grades 2 and 3, learners start to build literacy on this oral foundation. They also apply the literacy skills they have already learned in their Home Language. In the Intermediate and Senior Phases, learners continue to strengthen their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. At this stage, the majority of children is learning through the medium of their English First Additional Language, and should be getting more exposure to it (CAPS, 2011). Greater emphasis is therefore placed on using the English First Additional Language for the purposes of thinking and reasoning. This enables learners to develop their cognitive academic skills, which they need to study subjects like Science in English. They also engage more with literary texts and begin to develop aesthetic and imaginative ability in their English First Additional Language.

According to the instructional time in CAPS (2011:6), English is allocated 5 hours in a week, Mathematics 6 hours and Life Skills 4 hours. Basically, Mathematics and EFAL are on the school time-table Monday to Friday to allow sufficient contact time and

development in the subjects. CAPS (2011) assumes that by the time they enter senior phase (grade 7-9), they should be reasonably proficient in their English First Additional Language with regard to both interpersonal and cognitive academic skills. However, the reality is that many learners still cannot communicate well in their English First Additional Language at this stage. The challenge in the Intermediate Phase, therefore, is to provide support for these learners at the same time as providing a curriculum that enables learners to meet the standards required in further grades. These standards must be such that learners can use their English First Additional Language at a high level of proficiency to prepare them for further or higher education or the world of work. The English First Additional Language curriculum is packaged according to the following skills: 1 Listening and Speaking, 2 Reading and Viewing, 3 writing and Presenting, 4 Language Structures and Conventions. CAPS basically assess learners' English proficiency according to the above-mentioned skills.

3.2. The challenges facing grade 4 learners in learning content subjects through English First Additional Language

3.2.1. Inadequate exposure of English First Additional Language outside the classroom

Research has been done about the use of English outside the classroom. Nicholas and Lightbown (2008) posit that the pace of learning an additional language depends on an effective tuition and whether the children have developed well in their home language. Zoubi (2018) defines language as a means of communication used to transfer ideas, information, and feelings from one person to another. Nowadays, English language is considered as an essential that is attended and used all over the world as a means of communication. A good command of English is the stepping stone to better educational, and job opportunities, and higher social status (Charise, 2007).

Exposure to language can be defined as the contact that the learners have with the target language that they are attempting to learn. Inside the classroom, one of the most central roles of the teacher is to provide learners with sufficient exposure to practice the target language in a variety of contexts, and from different speakers. As a qualified speaker of the language, the teachers can give practical examples of language,

moreover they can apply natural input from television, cassettes, video, web sites, books, and magazines. Mainly, language exposure in general, refers to contact outside the classroom. Benson (2001) defined outside-of-class language exposure as any kind of learning that takes place outside the classroom and involves self-instruction, naturalistic learning or self-directed naturalistic learning. The forms of outside classroom language exposure include listening to English programme on the radio, watching English programme and movies on the television, traveling to English speaking countries, talking face to face with English native speakers (L2 interaction), using English language in real life situations, surfing the internet using English language as well as, reading English books, magazines, and newspapers.

Exposure to English language is something learners run into in their everyday life. Interest and motivation are essential factors when it comes to language learning, but one should distinguish between reward and work when bringing different types of media in the classroom. Learners recognize when they are being taught when they are at school, and they may concentrate on what the teacher is presenting.

3.2.2. Limited knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in the LoLT

Viera (2016) affirms that vocabulary is essential in second and foreign language acquisition because without its appropriate and sufficient knowledge learners cannot understand others or express their own feelings. Recent developments in second and foreign language acquisition highlight that non-native speakers apart from grammar and pronunciation require a solid foundation of vocabulary knowledge to become successful users of English in any academic environment. Thus, regardless the degree of learners' competence in grammar and pronunciation, without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, they cannot have effective communication (1). This is, in large part, because lexicon carries more of the meaning of a text than the grammar does (2). In fact, grammatical errors result in ungrammatical utterances whereas the inappropriate use of vocabulary affects the communicative act. That is, vocabulary is one of the linguistic components influencing the development of communicative competence and learners' language

skills as well (Brown et al., 2008; Meara & Jones, 1990; Moir & Nation, 2002; Schmitt, 1998; Schmitt, Wun-Ching & Garras, 2011).

According to Yule (2016), language acquisition refers to the natural process of attaining language through regular communication. Therefore, learners may need to attain a functional level in order to be efficient in comprehending the LoLT. Teachers who do not communicate in English with the learners in class will not be able to expose the grammar and vocabulary of English to the learners. Consequently, learners may not be able to understand the LoLT and perform well academically.

3.2.3. Limited understanding ability

Maddah (2019) establishes that it is widely acknowledged that English has become the international language of communication and that it becomes a medium of instruction at universities across the world; hence, it is mandatory to have proper communication in.

The collected data of various non-English participants selected from Hashemite University (in Jordan) showed that participants have encountered numerous communication difficulties in reading, writing, speaking and listening when using English; and that these difficulties impact negatively on their academic and professional development (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2016). Generally, speaking, students' weakness in learning English language has its roots in the method of teaching, lack of motivation, the teacher, practice and interest and in the curriculum design (Zoubi, 2018). CAPS document (2011) states the language skills as reading, writing, speaking and listening, which are inter-dependent. If the learner's ability to read is limited, the writing skill will also be affected. The same applies for listening and speaking.

3.2.4. Low articulation

Articulation is defined as the formation of clear and distinct sounds in speech (Altvater-Mackensen & Fikkert, 2015). Lerner (2000, p.389) reports that children who get off to a poor start in reading rarely catch up; poor first grade readers are likely to continue to be poor readers. People can read a text aloud without actually understanding what it means, as Leech (2010) observed in Namibian schools. Dickinson and Neuman (2006) attribute ineffective decoding to weak visual processing, faulty recognition and naming,

poor phonological awareness, memory dysfunction as well as limited access to word meaning. If learners are struggling to understand what they read because of difficult words, concepts, or sentence structure, they will not be able to read quickly. Many learners and students studying through the medium of a second language spend much of their time struggling to read books which are above their level of language proficiency (Lerner, 2000, p.399).

According to Lyon (2000), good readers are phonemically aware, understand the alphabetic principle, apply these skills in a rapid and fluent manner, possess strong vocabularies and syntactical and grammatical skills, and relate reading to their own experiences. Meanwhile, Murray and Johnson (1996) argue that a good reader is one who concentrates not on individual letters, sounds or words but on meaning. They also assert that a good reader is constantly trying to extract meaning from words on a page. In substantiating their claims, they qualify a good reader as one whom: is able to decode the symbol; is able to understand the language in which it is written; is familiar with the form of certain types of writing; is familiar with certain conventions of writing; and has certain kinds of knowledge about the world. According to Lerner (2000), children who have a good start in reading read more and become better readers, in contrast to those who have a poor start in reading and so do not engage in wide reading but fall further behind.

3.2.5. Motivation

Motivation plays an important factor in L2 achievement (Addisu, 2020). Petty (1998) in Gudula (2017) argued that if students do not want to learn, their learning efficiency will be slow such that they may learn virtually nothing. However, if you know how to motivate students, you can increase their learning capabilities and capacity. Wilkins (1978) cited in Addisu (2020) suggests that when learners have little intrinsic interest in language learning, the teacher must stimulate and sustain motivation.

3.2.6. Lack of parental involvement

Parental involvement makes a big difference, especially in early childhood. It has been proven to enhance children's academic performance and contribute to their overall

success in school (Wolf, 2021). Students demonstrate higher academic and behaviour levels, have higher aspirations, and display other positive school behaviours when parents are knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved (El- Omari, 2016; Hussain, 2017). Here are many ways for parents to be involved in their children's education. They can help with homework assignments or with issues their children are encountering in the classroom, for example, and they can exert a positive influence on a child's behavior and attitude towards school. They can also foster relationships with teachers that promote better learning. Parents' interest and encouragement inevitably affect their children's conduct in the classroom, their self-esteem, and their motivation to learn (Wolf, 2021). Blok et al. (2007) also pointed out that closer parental involvement will result in positive increment in children's development.

3.3. Challenges experienced by grade 4 teachers in teaching the content subject to English First Language speakers

3.3.1. Teachers frequently switched to the mother tongue to ensure sufficient meaningful communication in their classroom

According to Ayeomoni (2006, p. 78), code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event. Whereas, Code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand. Grade 4 is a language transitional phase in terms of the medium of instruction; learners will be beginning with English as LoLT from four years of mother tongue instruction in foundation phase. Steyn (2017) states that having to change the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) seems to be the most challenging aspect of this transition.

 The academic performance is entirely dependent of the LoLT because learners need to utilise some cognitive aspects of a language in order to be able to function effectively. Grade 4 teachers are faced with the learners not being able to read and write in English when they enter into grade 4. As a result, teachers often have to code-switch or code-

mix to mother tongue to ensure sufficient meaningful communication, clarification and participation in their classroom. I am inclined to agree that this represents one of the cardinal 19 reasons why South African LiEP of 1997 support the use of code-switching in schools especially in transition classes to the best interest of learners. However, this practice poses challenges as learners have to read and write in English during assessments without an interpreter of the English instructions in their mother tongue.

3.3.2. Lack of adequate training for teachers

Maddah (2019) asserts that teachers must have the minimum English language proficiency to be able to teach students effectively and act as language enhancers for the students. The following are stated as the fundamental training that teachers need in order to serve learners as English enhancers: (1) develop their language self-awareness; (2) teach in simple vocabulary; (3) understand their student's language level, needs and strengths; (4) create opportunities for students for language practice and to be involved in the practice [oral, written]; and (5) accept useful feedback about errors and necessary language improvements from other instructors and even from professional students (Maddah, 2019). The Department of Education is responsible for hosting workshops that will develop teachers into the current trends of teaching learners in transitional grades.

3.4. Language Teaching Models in South Africa

Transitional model aims to move learners from L1 to L2 LoLT in a transition (Heugh, 2006, p. 60). In South African public primary schools, instruction is provided in the mother tongue for all learning areas with a small portion of instruction provided in the EFAL for all learners to benefit in the foundation phase (Okoye, 2012). Heugh (2006) argues that all early exits are expensive as they require teachers who have developed native-like proficiency in the learners' mother tongue in order to teach the learners well in the second language when they arrive in grade 4. Research conducted throughout Africa, such as that by Halaoui (2003) in Molten (2020) in Zambia, has examined the effect of early-exit LoLT models, where learners move from L1 to L2 LoLT in Grade 4, on learner performance, This research found that learner performance declined within

one or two years after learners had begun learning in a L2, and further continued to decline in subsequent grades (Heugh, 2006, p. 71). Heugh (2006) identifies the following as the predominant models commonly used in South Africa:

3.4.1. Subtractive Model

The subtractive model is called a sink-or-swim system whereby learners are compelled to receive instruction through the medium of EFAL, disregarding their mother tongue at a very early stage of learning (Heugh, 2006). Okoye (2012) alleges that most urban and private schools adopt this way of educating their learners in Africa. In this model, the EFAL dominates the learners 'mother tongue hence subtract because it is believed that it has more opportunities that will enable learners to succeed in life. (Makoe, 2007; Cummins, 1991). I concur with Okoye (2012) to argue that to be successful in life takes more than knowing a particular language (say English); appropriate education and the right qualification are also required in order to stand a better chance of employment. In the conclusion made by the study of Cummins (1991) and Heugh (2006), the subtractive model leads to academic and linguistic failure among bilingual learners.

3.4.2. The Bilingual Education Model

The bilingual education model is a system where a large number of learners of same language are congregated together in the same area to learn an additional language (Coelho, 2004, p. 168). The bilingual model is classified under two categories, the additive bilingual education (or strong bilingualism) and weak bilingualism.

3.4.2.1. Additive Bilingualism is known as strong bilingual education model. It is practiced in public primary schools in the foundation phase where the mother tongue remains the LoLT with second language (L2) taught as a subject. It is however important to mention that learners in this model gain a high level of proficiency in both their mother tongue and the second language (Heugh, 2006). Teachers equally well-versed in both content and language teaching are probably quite rare especially in grade 4 where the transitioning from mother tongue to EFAL as LoLT begins.

3.4.2.2. Weak Bilingual Model is when subtractive and early-exit transitional models are applied together (Heugh, 2006). In the South African context, the policy requires learners in public schools to be taught in English in grade 4. The policy seems to assume that the was a gradual transfer from grade R to grade 3 from mother tongue to EFAL that the learners will easily cope with EFAL when they get to grade 4. According to Okoye (2012), studies have shown that early transition has impacts on the academic achievement of the learner both in terms of language acquisition and intellectual development of the learner. The grade 4 learners are learning EFAL and also learning to function in it at the same time. A good way in Krashen's (2009) view of achieving both these elements is by having EFAL as the main language of teaching and learning. The desire to learn, to participate in classroom interactions, is what motivates students to pay attention and to genuinely engage with their teacher/s in negotiating meaning to help make the input ever more comprehensible.

3.5.   Language as a Barrier to Learning and Development

Grade 4 learners in South African public schools are faced with language as a barrier in the classroom. Children begin to use a language that they are not familiar with full time in grade 4 for academic purposes, and that is a disadvantage and are unlikely to perform to the best of his/her ability. Limited exposure to the English Language is detrimental to learners' academic performance particularly in grade 4. They have language barriers, as they do not pronounce English words clearly and they avoid the construction of difficult sentences (Knapp, 2006; Nkandi, 2015). As a result of language barriers, EFAL learners suffer from limited understanding of sophisticated levels conversations in the English classroom. Learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds suffer the most in language barrier as they do not have parents to afford them afternoon classes where they can get enough exposure to EFAL. Parents' educational level and the culture and language of the community are also barriers to learning.

Teachers' lack adequate training and resources, consequently, they have difficulties in developing appropriate support mechanisms to assist second language learners (Okoye, 2012). Lack of exposure to LoLT at home and foundation phase worsen

language barriers in a manner that learners continue with the struggle until higher learning institutions. Cummins (2001) notices that early school dropout, increase in unemployment, poverty, and low personal development results predominantly from children from underprivileged families as compare to children from rich families.

3.6. Current Debates and Critical Issues on Transition from Mother Tongue Instruction to English in South Africa

CAPS policy prefers children to have the first three years of schooling in their mother-tongue (HL), but an increasing number of schools and parents are ignoring this and opting for English as the LoLT from grade 1. Where the three-year policy is in fact being implemented, the quality of teaching is in most cases badly compromised by weak pedagogy and a lack of learning materials in the HL. But, in grade 4, learners are confronted with a switch to English as the only LoLT, while their English and Afrikaans-speaking counterparts simply continue using their own language from grade 1 to grade 12. This shows no equity in many schools.

Learners are taught in their mother tongue in foundation face and are expected to have sufficient functional knowledge in grade 4 of learning in EFAL, yet most of them had not even developed proficiency in their mother tongue also. Without a firm linguistic foundation in the HL, the majority of African-language learners learning through English will only score between 20% and 40% in English by the time they reach Grade 12. Heugh (2005). This lack of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in the LoLT makes it difficult for learning to take place, particularly in subjects like mathematics and science. From a cognitive perspective, the mother tongue should be used to construct and sustain a social cultural link between formal teaching and daily language spoken at home to maximally support the educational processes (Chumbow cited in Steyn, 2017).

Heugh (2005). DBE recommends English to be introduced earlier (in grade 1), alongside the HL, to facilitate the transition. Heugh's observation in relation to the African research shows that 'a child's mother tongue or local language is indispensable as the main medium of instruction (emphasis added) during these six to eight years' (2017).

The early entry into an English medium of instruction is problematic, due to the teaching approach taken towards decoding and comprehension skills. During the Foundation Phase (FP; Grades 1–3), much attention is paid to teaching decoding skills. However, the manner of instruction is "often done in a superficial, haphazard and decontextualized way" (Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Zimmerman & Smit, cited in Prinsloo (2018)). Therefore, the learner may struggle with simple decoding even after entry into Intermediate Phase (IP; Grades Four to Seven). Teachers also assume that once decoding is mastered, comprehension automatically follows. Teachers thus do not focus on teaching reading comprehension, which requires specialized skills. This results in failure of the learner to smoothly transition between decoding to reading meaningfully, if at all (Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014). Together, this indicates that the basics of decoding or comprehension in the HL may not be in place at the time, from Grade Four onwards, where the learner is expected to transfer these skills to English and read and learn in their additional language. This further reduces the ability of the learner to master CALP skills, subject content knowledge, and various other cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

3.7. Learner Academic Performance

South Africa participates in international evaluations and systemic assessments of language and literacy which provide evidence for policy, curriculum and teacher education inputs (Wildsmith-Cromarty and Balfour, 2019). The test results show that the majority of pupils in South Africa are seriously underperforming relative to the curriculum and to other developing countries. As a result, a number of large-scale evaluation studies were carried out at provincial and national levels in order to pinpoint the causes for poor learner language and literacy achievement.

The PIRLS assesses reading literacy with a focus on comprehension including information retrieval, inferencing, interpretation and evaluation. It also assesses the learner's ability to acquire and use information and assess literary events using expository and narrative text genres (Van Staden & Zimmerman, 2017). In 2006, the first cohort of Grade 4 and (for South Africa) Grade 5 learners participated in the PIRLS. All official languages were used in the test. The average achievement of both grades

was well below the international benchmark of 500, with Grade 4 learners averaging 253 and Grade 5 learners (Howie et al., 2008). In 2016, the PIRLS international assessment of literacy achievement was again conducted and South African learners came last out of 50 nations. It was also reported that 78% of South African learners cannot read for meaning (Howie et al., 2017).

3.8.   Effect of language on academic performance

3.8.1. Home-based factors

While more privileged learners are supported in their learning at home by parents who are literate in the LoLT of their children and can provide learning conducive to the optimal development of literacy, for most L2 LoLT learners, this is not the case. Their progress is hampered by factors that make achieving literacy more difficult. Such factors include lack of learning resources, inadequate parental support of learning, and the lack of parental involvement in learners' learning, as parents have often missed out on education themselves and/or cannot speak, read, write or understand their child's LoLT (UNESCO, 2008). Compared to L2 LoLT use, which is shown to impact negatively on the degree to which parents support, and are involved in, their children's learning, the use of learners' mother's tongue (L1) as LoLT in schooling is shown to lead to greater involvement of parents in their children's education as well as having the effect of promoting more favourable parent and learner attitudes towards school and education (Brock-Utne & Alidou, 2006, p. 112).

3.8.2. Teacher – related factors

The ability of LoLT policies to facilitate learner performance is considered to be hampered by two sets of factors (Wolff, 2006, p. 50). The first set comprises those related to negative attitudes held by all stakeholders toward the use of African languages as LoLT. The second set of factors contributing to the failure of LoLT policy to produce good educational outcomes is those to do with the improper planning and implementation of LoLT policy.

Teacher training is also viewed as impairing LoLT implementation. Quality levels of pre-service and in-service teacher training in SA are low, and support to teachers in

classrooms is inadequate (Modisaotsile, 2012, p. 2). The quantity of available in-service teacher development is minimal. Teacher training institutions in SA do not fully equip African home language-speaking teachers to teach English, or to teach in English – leaving newly qualified teachers unconfident in doing so, as well as likely to transfer their language errors to learners once in the classroom (Nel & Muller, 2010, p. 646).

The nature of teacher training available in SA is noted as largely inappropriate for the linguistic context of the country in that teacher training curriculum gaps around language education in multilingual classrooms (teaching methodologies, didactic tools and theoretical knowledge) exist (Alidou & Brock-Utne, 2006, p. 87; Calteaux, 1996, p. 158; Probyn, 2008, p. 220). Learners' educational progress is also further hampered within disadvantaged SA schools by a lack of basic material resources for use in teaching and learning, such as classrooms and furniture, reading books, textbooks, dictionaries, and computers, as well as stationery supplies (Prinsloo & Janks, 2002, p. 37; Probyn, 2006, p. 406). A lack of printed material resources in African languages is particularly apparent within such schools, and when such resources are available, they are often of poor quality (Banda et al., 2012, p. 33).

3.8.3. Learner-related factors

Learner-related factors include amongst others, learners' attitude, and lack of exposure to English Language, family background, study habits, peer influence, attendance of school and co-curricular activities (Fakude, 2012; Smith, 2011). Limited exposure to the English language is detrimental to learners' academic performance. Because of that, learners cannot produce simple sentences (Nkandi, 2015). They have language barriers, as they do not pronounce English words clearly and they avoid the construction of difficult sentences (Knapp, 2006; Nkandi, 2015). As a result of language barriers, English Language (L 2) learners suffer from limited understanding of complex conversations in the English Language (L 2) classroom. Cummins (2004) notices that the group of English Language (L 2) learners who have a language barrier mainly emanate from low socio-economic backgrounds and from illiterate and poor families. The importance of the parents' ability to intervene in the English Language (L 2) education of their children cannot be over-emphasized.

Griffin (2004) observes that a learner's ability and determination to achieve his or her academic targets influences his or her academic performance. Fakude (2012) concurs with Smith (2011) that lack of commitment, learners' independence in schools and peer influence has a strong negative influence on learners' academic performance in schools. Similarly, Wanyama (2013) shares the same sentiment that the major factor which affects learners' performance is the learner's attitude. This study is of the view that the identified learner-related factors impact the academic performance of Grade 12 learners in English Language (L 2) in the Oshikoto Region, Namibia. The present study delved more into the area in order to understand more about possible factors that lead to learners' poor academic performance in English Language (L 2) and to suggest strategies to improve the performance of Grade 12 learners in English Language (L 2) in particular (Limene, 2018).

3.9. The transfer of language skills from first to second language

According to the department of basic education, one of the strategies that can be used to enhance learner's academic performance is teaching through EFAL across the curriculum so that learners may have sufficient functional language when they arrive in grade 4. Language across Curriculum (LAC) focuses on the conventional four skills of language, such as Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking; and all non-verbal means of representation and expression that we use when communicating. DBE (3). These will enhance knowledge acquisition, interrogation of knowledge, expression and presentation of knowledge – in writing or spoken form, as well as critical thinking, reading and writing.

Children acquire language from birth until formal schooling in pre-school where they begin to learn language. Writing is more difficult than speech as it requires knowledge of grammatical structures. According to Vygotsky (1978:28), a child's intellectual development is enhanced through writing. A child's level of literacy influences his/her language development. The low proficiency levels in English for learners in grade 4 create barriers for academic achievement.

It is safe to conclude that the initial mother tongue education would enhance learners' performance in L2, as learners could develop new concepts more readily by drawing on their existing knowledge acquired in their mother tongue. The skills transferred could vary according to the age and/or level of the L1 literacy development of a child. Skills acquired in the mother tongue could successfully be transferred to a second or additional language (Cummins, 2000). Teachers should teach writing in order to enhance learners' general writing ability, and also increase both the understanding of content while learning the specific vocabulary of the subject.

3.10. Characteristics of a successful second language learner

Motivation has been established as an important aspect in L2 learning (Csizer & Dornyei, 2005). Learners can be successful when they are motivated. Teachers therefore need to motivate and support learners to persevere and to keep going to achieve the levels stipulated by the Department of Basic Education (DoE). Csizer and Dornyei (2005), cited in Steyn (2017) found that interaction with L2 speakers usually contributed to more positive attitudes to the L2 and its ethos; it also contributed to higher learner self-assurance in the use of the second language. Self-motivation contributes a lot to any learning and learning a language gives a learner a means of communication. Learning a second language can take place at different levels of motivation, namely those of global, situational, and task-orientated motivation.

Self-confidence- Brown (1994) cited in Addisu (2020) defines self-confidence as the "I can do it" principle, which is about the learner's belief in his or her ability to accomplish the task. Successful learners often display the highest level of confidence when using EFAL despite the mistakes they make as they learn. Krashen (1998) posits that self-confidence encourages the learner' intake, and will also result in having a low filter. Learners are not afraid of making mistakes and to be corrected. The use of simpler techniques at the start of classroom activities will boost learners' self-confidence, since a sense of accomplishment assists learners in the next, more difficult activity (Krashen, 1994).

3.11. Characteristics of a successful second language teacher

A teacher that has expertise knowledge in the second language will be able to scaffold the learners from mother tongue into the second language as noted by Lenyai (2011). It is important to know the theories, methods and approaches of pedagogy (Hall Haley & Austin, 2004). The following characteristics in a teacher will benefit learners' successful L2 learning:

- **Second language proficiency** – a second language teacher requires a maximum proficiency in the target language (Sešek, 2007). Studies show that second language teachers did not have adequate proficiency in the target required to effectively teach the second language (Sešek, 2007). Records show that the unsuccessfulness of academic learner performance in the second language was primarily as a result of insufficient teacher proficiency as teachers themselves lacked the competency.

- **Desire to teach well** – links between the characteristics of successful second language teachers and learner academic performance were established by Akbari and Allvar (2010). In a province in Iran, multiple regression analysis of data from public schools revealed that "teaching style, teacher reflectivity, and teacher sense of efficacy can significantly predict learner achievement outcomes" (p.10). Akbari and Allvar (2010) found that the correlation between the achievement and teacher's desire to teach well by results which showed that teachers who desired to teach went an extra mile and the learners received teaching much better.

- **Classroom organization** –most classroom sizes in South Africa does not follow the teacher-learner-ration because of overcrowding situations in the rural areas and lack of infrastructure. Good teachers know how to organize their classroom and group the learners according to the abilities. The classrooms are print-rich environments that stimulate learning at all times (Akbari & Allvar, 2010). However, a well-organized and thoroughly prepared teacher can manage such a situation and improve the learning environment.

3.12. Teaching strategies/approaches

There are three different teaching approaches adopted by this study in order to enhance successful second language teaching and development in order to improve academic learner performance in grade 4 in EFAL. Firstly, A teacher-centred method is focused on the teacher than the learner, for example, in the classroom, teacher-centred lessons are generally associated with traditional approaches to language learning. Teacher-centred activity can be useful in a variety of ways in teaching. According to Halperin (1994 cited in Makhubele (2015), most activities today in the vast majority of classrooms continue to reflect the older teacher-centred model of education wherein "students sit quietly, passively receiving words of wisdom being professed by the lone instructor in front of the class".

Secondly, learner-centred learning is focused on the student's needs, abilities, interest, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This classroom teaching method acknowledges the student voice as central to the learning experience for every learner (Kember, 2009 cited in Makhubele, 2015). Learner-centred learning allows students to actively participate in discovery learning processes from an autonomous viewpoint. Learners consume the entire class constructing a new understanding of learning without being passive, but rather proactive (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). Lastly, Communicative language teaching aims to develop the learner's communicative competence. Richards (2001) cited in Nguyen (2014) points out that in communicative language teaching classes, tasks and activities are designed to enable learners to achieve communicative objectives by participating in communicative processes such as exchanging information, negotiation of meaning. The communication is unrehearsed but goals are focused on the components of communicative competence.

3.13. Learning English First Additional Language

3.13.1. Affective factors

Affective factors relate to a learner's personality (such as his/her attitude and level of confidence) and emotional state (how he/she feels). These are key predictors of whether one learner in the same class might be more successful in learning EFAL than another learner. This is in line with Krashen's (1987) affective filter hypothesis which

claims that negative attitudes and emotions may be barriers preventing learners from attaining the target language. For example, if a learner is fearful of expressing themselves in English, it is unlikely that he/she will perform well. On the other hand, learners who are highly confident are likely to do well.

3.13.2. Cognitive factors

Cognition refers to the ability to process and apply knowledge in an effective and meaningful way (Kembo, 2000).a learners understanding level plays a vital role in succeeding in the second language learning. Learners acquire language easily than when they learn in in the classroom. There are learners who's cognitive levels in as far as language is concerned were already high because of exposure to cartoons at home and other print Medias. It unlikely that a learner can perform well in other subject whilst they do not have an understanding of the language of instruction. This is because a confident or motivated learner will more readily engage in social interaction and take up opportunities to speak the target language than a shy, reserved learner, irrespective of the shy learner's possibly superior intellectual ability (Okoye, 2012).

3.13.3. Contextual factors

Contextual factors play a major role in the acquisitioning of a second language. The conditions that affect EFAL learning differ significantly from that affecting mother tongue acquisition. Home4 related factors how that learner easily acquires mother tongue because there is no alternative or pressure, it comes natural by hearing and listening and imitation. Whereas, EFAL is learned at school in a formal setting where the teacher instruct them in the mother tongue and expect the learners to respond in EFAL in assessments. Families that expose the children to English newspapers, TV, radio and speak English, the children become better learners at school.

a) Lack of exposure to spoken English

Studies show that when a second language is used in an informal situation such as during playtime or home in case of the children, it enhances learner's oral proficiency and accent (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2008).. For example, learners in the model C school develop a good English accent as they interact with the first language speakers of their second language during break times at school. The learners are only

exposed to their HL (Sepedi) or another African language, such as Xitsonga, that is spoken in the area.

b) English proficiency of teachers

Teachers English proficiency is one of the leading influences of learners learning proficiency of English as they will also be motivating the learners, however, most teachers English proficiency in public schools leave much to be desired(Cantoni, 2007). I find that they usually switch to their HL once they realise I can understand and speak Sepedi fairly well. They struggle to express themselves comfortably and well in English. This could perhaps be the reason why educators resort to bilingual language practices in class this to be known as 'additive approach' (Orwenjo, 2012 cited in Perez, 2018).

3.14. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the literature relating to how English as LoLT can affect learners' academic performance in grade 4 at primary level. The chapter also reviewed literature on policy and legislative background of South African education system, learning English First Additional Language. The challenges facing grade 4 learners, challenges faced by teachers, language teaching models in South Africa, language as a barrier to learning and development, current debates and critical issues on transition from mother tongue instruction to English in South Africa, learner academic performance, effect of language on academic performance, the transfer of language skills from first to second language, teaching strategies/approaches, characteristics of a successful second language learners, characteristics of a successful second language teacher, code - switching language models in Africa. The review further suggests that policy reforms must concentrate on language challenges, shortages of qualified teachers and insufficient study materials in schools. The chapter also presented the theoretical framework adopted by this study. The following chapter will outline the research design and describes the population and sampling process, data collection methods and the data analysis procedures adopted in this study as well as ethical consideration.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents and explains the research methodology, methods and techniques chosen and utilized to generate, interpret and analyse data for the study. It also describes the context, sampling, ethical issues, access to the school, limitations, triangulation, validity and reliability of the study. The research objectives guiding this study are as follows:

- To determine challenges experienced by grade 4 learners in learning content subjects through English First Additional Language.
- To determine challenges experienced by grade 4 teachers in teaching the content subject to English Second Language speakers.
- To determine teaching and learning strategies that could be used to improve grade 4 learners' academic performance.

3.2. Research approach

This study chose qualitative research and builds its premises on inductive, rather than deductive reasoning. Qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery. Qualitative research is also described as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Creswell, 1994).

3.3 Research paradigm

This study adopted qualitative interpretivist paradigm which allowed the researcher to gather information through observations and conversations (Kalof, Dan & Dietz, 2008). The researcher interpreted the world by using naturalistic methods during interviews with both teachers and learners. The interpretivist researchers achieve this purpose by looking at a detailed observation of people's behaviour in natural settings in order to arrive at an understanding and interpretation of how people create and maintain their social worlds. In this study, the interpretivist research paradigm remained the flexible tool that allowed the researcher to understand the classroom experiences during the

pre-observation of the lessons and challenges arising from the use of English language as teachers interact with their learners in the classroom.

3.4. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study design. Case study refers to detailed analyses, usually focusing on a particular problem of an individual, group, or organization (Yin, 2018). The advantages of the case study are: it is appropriate to research questions and elicit implicit and explicit data from subjects in relation to a complex social reality, such as learning and teaching (Zainal, 2007). A case study is appropriate for this study because it involves observing uninfluenced everyday classroom practices, and data being collected will be sourced from naturalistic settings during observation of the lessons in the classroom, enabling the researcher to investigate some of the embedded practices, routines and repertoires. Qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants through asking broad questions, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words from participants; describe and analyses these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell, 2012).

3.5. Population and Sampling

3.5.1. Population

Population refers to the set or group of all the units which the findings of the research are to be applied (Shukla, 2020). The primary school is situated in Moletji. The school attracts learners from the nearby surrounding villages such as Ga-Hlahla, Ga-Makibelo, Ga-Semenya, and Ga-Ramongoana. The home languages for learners at this school are Sepedi, Shona, and Tshivenda, whereas English is a First Additional Language to them. The participants in this study included 110 grade 4 learners and 12 teachers at the school.

3.5.2. Sampling

The study used purposive sampling to sample participants. The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Campell *et al.*, 2020). It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. In other words, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find

people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Etikan et al., 2016). This study employed two types of sampling, purposive sampling which is significant in qualitative research, whereby the researcher selects individuals and sites that can provide the necessary information (Creswell, 2005) and convenient sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling method where the sample is taken from a group of people easy to contact or to reach (Creswell, 2005). The researcher conveniently chose the primary school because it is where she works and participants were easily accessible. Random sampling has been used to select. Miles and Huberman (1994) noted that qualitative research involves small samples of people researched through in-depth methods such as face-to-face interviews and rigorous observation that focus on the experiences of the participants. In this study, I limited my sample to three teachers who were purposely chosen for the interviews and pre-observation. The reason for using purposive sampling was to ensure that only experienced teachers with at least five years of teaching experience in Grade 4 classrooms. This study used simple random sampling which is a type of probability sampling in which the researcher randomly selected 10 learners by using number cards in a box to give all learners an equal opportunity to participate in the research through interviews. Learners who choose 1 to 10 took part in the study 5 from each class were selected to form part of the study.

3.6. Data Collection

This study used semi-structured interview and observation schedule to collect data.

3.6.1. Semi-structured interviews

Lisa (2008) posits that semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the interviewer asks only a few predetermined questions while the rest of the questions are not planned in advance. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), researchers can use semi-structured interviews to collect new, exploratory data related to research topic, triangulate other data sources or validate findings through member checking. This tool enabled the researcher to collect open-ended data and explore interviewees' thoughts about the English impact on academic learner performance. The researcher sought permission from the participants to record the interviews through consent forms. For qualitative data, interview protocol was observed that lists questions, date and time of the interviews with 3 teachers and 10 learners in grade 4. The researcher audiotaped

the interviews and later transcribed the information. This allowed the researcher time to provide accurate information obtained from the research participants.

3.6.2. Observation Schedule

The researcher explained to the learners and teachers the purpose of the research, which is not to judge their behaviour but to collect data, and that they should feel free and comfortable to teach and participate during the lessons as they would normally do in the absence of the researcher. An observational protocol put in place to record descriptions of events in the classroom and concerns that arise during lessons. The consent forms were sent using Sepedi and English bilingualism as Sepedi is the predominant language of the Ga-Makibelo community where the school is situated. This method was used during the periods of the subjects selected respectively, viz, Mathematics, Life skills and Natural Sciences. This method was used to see how learners respond to questions, and how they are able to carry out instructions in the classroom. When the life skills teacher delivered content in English, the learners kept quiet even when she asked questions, but when she code-switched to Sepedi the learners were quick to raise their hands, only 1 learner could attempt answering in English in all the lessons the researcher observed.

3.7. Data Analysis

According to Guest et al. (2006), data analysis is a process of analysing and interpreting data to make meaning to it. The researcher used thematic analysis method to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within data (Guest et al., 2006). The researcher used inductive thematic analysis to analyse data collected from observation schedule and interviews in this study because it is concerned with trying to understand the first-hand experiences of respondents on how they make sense of their lived experiences of addressing their challenges of learning and teaching Mathematics, Natural Science, and Life Skills in English First Additional Language. This is consistent with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) description of inductive thematic analysis (Seidel & Urquhart, 2016). In other words, the researcher began with an area of study and allowed the theory to emerge from the data wherein themes were derived from transcribed semi-structured interview and observation schedule. Researchers usually define data saturation as the point when "no new information or themes are observed in data" (Guest et al; 2006).

Therefore, the researcher re-read the data collected through interviews as contained in an audio- recorder as well as the analysis of the observation several times until she reached saturation point.

3.8. Quality Criteria

3.8.1. Credibility

Credibility is the equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research and is concerned with the aspects of truth value (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This study provided sufficient contextual information to allow readers and other researchers to make transfers. The data was true reflection of the participants' insights. The researcher in this study ensured credibility by recording interviews and keeping audiotapes safe.

3.8.2. Dependability

Dependability involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from all participants of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), to address the dependability issue more directly, the process within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results. This was ensured by consistently verifying the data collected to make sure that nothing is left out.

3.8.3. Confirmation

The researcher re-checked all sources, recordings, and transcripts to ensure that data is not misinterpreted. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that, a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her predisposition. The researcher used different techniques to collect data such as semi-structured interviews and observation schedule to ensure that there is no biasness in the study.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

As the study's research participants are learners and teachers at the Primary School, ethics are a key consideration in the design of social research. Two fundamental ethical guidelines are that participation in social research should be voluntary and no harm should come to research subjects (Babble, 2007:64). Ethical considerations in this study focused on permission, participants' consent, confidentiality, anonymity, protection from harm, and respect as indicated below.

3.9.1. Permission

Before the study began, the research proposal was submitted by the researcher to the University's Research and Ethics Committee (TREC) for approval. This was done to obtain ethical approval from the university's research and ethics committee. The researcher proceeded to request permission from the Circuit office, school governing body, and teachers of grades to be investigated. Copies of permission requests have been attached as appendices.

3.9.2. Participations' Consent

The researcher assured participants that participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from participation at any time. Since grade 4 learners are below the age of 18, therefore their parents were required to sign their consent on their behalf as a way of giving them permission to participants in the study. English First Additional Language teachers who were willing to participate in the study were also given consent forms to sign. Therefore, they were requested to sign the consent forms to show that they agree to participate in the study.

3.9.3. Confidentiality and Anonymity

In maintaining the confidentiality of information collected from research participants, the researcher ensured that data is aggregated and that no information can be linked to any individual. The researcher made every effort to prevent anyone outside of the research from connecting individual participants with the data collected. This included the following:

- Encrypting identifiable data;
- Removing identity markers (e.g., names and addresses) from reflection journals containing data about study participants;
- Limiting access to identifiable information;
- Securely storing data documents within locked locations; and
- Assign security codes to computerized records.

3.9.4. Protection from harm

There is little to the possibility of harm for any person participating in this study. The researcher was sensitive to participants, fit research activities within convenient times of student/learners' scheduling, and provide information about planned sessions with students/learners. In addition to the above, informed consent was negotiated with key

participants. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequence on their part. Participants were requested to sign a consent letter to ensure that the highest ethical standards are maintained throughout this study.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the methods used to address the research objectives of the study. It also outlined the research approach, research design, and demarcation of the population, sampling techniques used to select the research site and of actual respondents. The next chapter focuses on the presentation and interpretation of findings

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the outcomes of the data-gathering processes, presents the results and discusses the findings obtained from the two data collection instruments namely, observations and interviews. The data was collected and analyzed using observation of teachers teaching content subjects such as Life Skills, Mathematics and Natural Sciences using English First Additional language as a medium of instruction, and English in the classroom in order to highlight the impact it has on learners' academic performance across curriculum in grade 4 at the Primary school.

4.2. Biographical information

4.2.1 Biographical information of Teachers

The biographical information of teachers sought to establish the gender because it shows the exact number respondents per gender and demonstrates how a dominant gender would affect the overall outcome of the study. Age, experience and educational level of English First Additional Language teachers in the Intermediate Phase between the ages of 25 to 55 were considered for this study. The gender analysis in the research content is important as it increases the quality of research and improves the acceptance of innovation in the market. According to the Research council of Norway (2017), research generates knowledge that serves as the basis for social development, policy formulation and the development of services and products. It is crucial that this knowledge benefits all individuals in society, regardless of gender.

Table 4. 1: Biographical information of content subject teachers

Teacher	Age	Qualification	Subject	Gender	Teaching experience
T1	53	BESP	Geography & English	F	5
T2	54	BESP	Accounting and Business economics	F	30
T3	52	BASP	English and Mathematics	F	29

Table 4.1 indicates that there were three (3) respondents who participated in the study. The frequency distribution in table 1 above indicates that all the three respondents are females, representing 100%. The respondents are a small portion of the population representing the whole population of English First Additional Language teachers in the

Intermediate Phase between the ages of 25 to 55. In accordance with table 1, the study statistically shows that there was no gender balance between the male and female respondents due to the frequency of all three female respondents. Gender as a perspective may be manifested in the research questions raised and the theoretical approaches and methods used. This means that both genders must be represented in the groups being studied, and consideration must be given to whether the significance of the research results will be different for women and men (National Research Council of Norway, 2017).

Secondly, the teacher age range from 50 t0 55 and they were all females. The frequency distribution in table 1 above revealed that the respondents were having the educational qualifications with 1 category in Bed Senior Phase and FET representing. Moreover, Table 1 above revealed teaching experience of English First Additional Language teachers in teaching reading in the Intermediate Phase with category 1 with 1-5 years teaching experience 25% and category 2 with 20-30 years teaching experience 1 (75%).

4.2.2. Biographical information of grade 4 learners

The gender difference was an important variable in the analysis of the study because it shows the exact number respondents per gender and demonstrates how a dominant gender would affect the overall outcome of the study. The age difference was an important variable in the analysis of the study because it shows the most age range of respondents and to demonstrate how an age range would affect the overall outcome of the study.

Table 4.2: Biographical information of learners

In accordance with table 4.2 the study statistically shows that there was no gender balance between the male and female respondents due to the frequency of four male and six female respondents. This means that both genders must be represented in the groups being studied, and consideration must be given to whether the significance of the research results will be different for female and male learners on the impact of English on their academic performance.

	MALE	FEMALE
PARTICIPANTS	4	6
TOTAL	**4**	**6**

Table 4.2 indicates that there were ten (10) respondents who participated in the study. The frequency distribution in table 4.2 above indicates that four of the respondents were male and six (6) respondents were female. The respondents are a small portion of the population representing the whole population of English First Additional Language learners in the Intermediate Phase between the ages of 9 to 11.

Teacher Interviews

The researcher interviewed three content subject teachers teaching Mathematics, Life Skills and Natural Sciences from the school under study. Their names were randomly chosen. All the content subject teachers were asked all the eight open-ended interview questions by the researcher.

4.3.1 Teachers' response to interviews

The researcher has conducted semi-structured interviews with three content subject teachers in grade 4 at the primary School. The questions were aimed to find out about the impact of English First Additional Language on learners' academic performance across content subjects. Data was analysed based on the teachers' responses to interview questions. All the content subject teachers were asked 8 open - ended questions. The following are the findings of interviews with the teachers in the research presented according research questions:

1.   The introduction of English First Additional Language as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in grade 4 has an impact on the academic performance of learners. Do you agree/disagree? Please elaborate.

This question seeks to determine the performance level of learners in the English First Additional Language reading classroom by comparing the previous grade with the

current grade. English First Additional Language teachers in the Intermediate Phase indicated the following to explain the performance level of learners in the English First Additional Language reading classroom by comparing the previous grade with the current grade:

Teacher 1- Yes I agree, because they don't perform well in class especially when I teach them in English. First term is worse; second term is better and the rest of the term may be improved.

Teacher 2- I agree because learners are unable to speak and write in English. They find it difficult too much, I am teaching mathematics as a subject but I'm having challenges because the learners are unable to read instructions and questions, anything that is written in English.

Teacher 3-yes I agree, because learners in foundation phase are used to be taught in their mother tongue and by 1 (one) teacher every day. And when they come to grade 4 it is a challenge to us subject teachers.

The above responses show that the academic performance of grade 4 is poor because learners are unable to speak and write in English and understand the instructions and questions written in English in Mathematics Life skills and Natural Sciences hence, they are used to be taught in their mother tongue by one teacher every day. The findings of this study suggest that learners who enter the grade 4 at Phuti Makibelo primary school are unable to communicate in English and without being able to read for a correct understanding run the risk of failing grade 4 at first. This finding is supported by Qrqez and Rashid (2017: 421) who found that learners face different problems in the reading process, such as ambiguous words, unknown vocabulary and limited time available to elaborate cognitively the text.

2.   What would you consider are some of the reasons for learners' poor academic performance in grade 4?

This question seeks to determine what teachers know about learners who perform well in English First Additional Language and learners that do not perform well in English First Additional Language.

Teacher 1- insufficient exposure to the English language at home, child headed families, and laziness.

Teacher 2- as I have already indicated, they are unable to read and write.

Teacher 3- it could be home, but I put a spotlight to foundation phase teachers because they are delaying introducing English until they get to grade 4 and learners appear not to have heard English ever in formal education. They take time to understand English because they are used to mother tongue teaching.

The above responses identify insufficient exposure to the English language at home, child headed families, and laziness as some of the dominant contributing factors inhibiting learners' ability to perform well in English as home factors due to socio economic reasons and other related factors. Their progress is hampered by factors that make achieving literacy more difficult. UNESCO (2008) concurs with the findings of this study by indicating that lack of learning resources, inadequate parental support of learning in learners' learning, as parents have often missed out on education themselves and/or cannot speak, read, write or understand their child's LoLT contribute to learners' poor performance.

The findings also indicate that that foundation phase is insufficiently exposing learners to English First Additional Language and that is the reason they struggle when they enter into grade 4 academically. Compared to L2 LoLT use, which is shown to impact

negatively on the degree to which parents' support, and are involved in, their children's learning, the use of learners' L1 as LoLT in schooling is shown to lead to greater involvement of parents in their children's education as well as having the effect of promoting more favourable parent and learner attitudes towards school and education (Brock-Utne & Alidou, 2006, p. 112).

3.   Do you think mother-tongue language of learning and teaching in foundation phase has an impact of learner's response to English First Additional Language in grade 4?

This question seeks to determine teachers' understanding on the relationship between mother-tongue teaching and English First Additional Language in grade 4.

Teacher 1- yes, because they got used to mother tongue in class and heish..... When you start to teach them in English it becomes a problem.

Teacher 2- the mother tongue has a negative impact on their English language development because the more they spend much time speaking in mother tongue they will not be able to speak English at school.

Teacher 3- During the first term it's very difficult because they are transitioning from foundation phase to intermediate but it gets better with other grades for me than the whole 4 terms of grade 4.

The above responses express teachers' understanding on the relationship between mother tongue teaching and English first additional language. The findings of this study indicate that the mother tongue has a negative impact on learners' English language development because the more they spend much time speaking in mother tongue they will not be able to speak English at school which has a negative impact on learners' academic performance when they enter into grade 4. Robertson (2020) supports the findings of this study when stating that not speaking the language of the classroom 'frequently holds back a child's learning, especially for those living in poverty'. The

findings of this study also indicate that the transitioning from foundation phase to intermediate phase is lacking as learners perform far worse in the first term like they've never heard English. However, the findings shows that there is an improvement in other continuing grades above grade 4 as they learn in English and are getting used to learning in English.

4. How often do you code-switch to mother-tongue when teaching? Please explain why?

This question seeks to establish the strategies that teachers use to scaffold the learners from mother tongue to English language of learning and teaching.

Teacher 1- most of the time because I can see that they cannot understand me when I speak English.

Teacher 2- more often, because they are unable to understand me when I speak in English. It's like they have never heard English when they come to grade 4.

Teacher 3- not at all (giggles), because for me it's even worse because I don't understand Sepedi well as I am Zulu native speaker. So, it's a 1 way English lesson.

The findings of this study indicate that teachers are Sepedi vernacular speakers and find it easy to switch back and forth to English as the learners do not understand when they taught in English in the first term or read and write for themselves. The findings of this study are supported by King and Chetty (2014) cited in Wildsmith-Cromarty (2019) who found that the use of code-switching by South African teachers is grounded in the social circumstances constitutes a purposeful and productive teaching strategy. Sešek's (2007) concurs with the findings of this study that teachers who are native speakers of the students' L1 need to improve translation skills and a more thorough understanding of when and how to code switch between L1 and L2 in order to support effective learning. On the other hand, the findings of this study indicate that one teacher does not code switch in class because she does not understand and speak learners' home

languages; so learners always have to find their way in English as she continues to speak in the language of learning and teaching.

5. Please list some of the challenges that you consider hinders learners improving their skills in English (Reading, Writing and speaking)?

This question seeks to determine some of the challenges that hinder children's improvement in English in academic performance according to teachers' perspectives.

Teacher 1- the problem is that they speak mother tongue all the time at home even when they play outside. They only feel forced to communicate in English in class.
Teacher 2- they speak mother tongue always at school.

Teacher 3- The Covid-rotation school plan is really affecting their learning and improving speed because they have more time with mother tongue at home and they only come to school twice a month and it is a long time.

The findings show that learners have insufficient exposure to English at home which limits their use of English during play times at school because they are free and not monitored unlike in class where they feel forced to learn and speak in English. Wagikondi cited in Mwakira (2021) concurs with the findings of this study when stating that when language of communication at home and school is mother tongue, then acquisition of English skills is inhibited and thus the performance of English is affected. On the other hand, found that Covid-rotation school plan contributed to the impact of English of academic learner performance as there is limited number of days in a week to attend school whereas more time spent at home results in more use of mother tongue and retrogressive learning when they attend school. Misbah (2017) claims that limited range of English vocabulary can cause the learners to face difficulties in acquiring the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as all non-verbal means of representation and expression that we use when communicating.

6. **How do you think Language (EFAL) has/ will impact on your life in the past, present, and future?**

This question seeks to determine teacher's attitude towards teaching English and efforts they make in order to improve learners English for academic performance.

Teacher 1: **(***laughs)… I really don't know, that 1 is a very difficult question to answer because our learners cannot read and write.*

Teacher 2: *we can introduce programs such as 'I can speak English' at school where learners will have reading clubs and there must be specialists hired for that even afterschool programs.*

Teacher 3: *They are improving in other grades and I think learners already know that I cannot speak Sepedi fluently so they are forced to speak English in my class. I think that will encourage them to learn English knowing I cannot code-switch.*

The findings of this study show that there is a future in English where learners can improve their reading and writing skills by introducing after school programs with reading and writing specialists that will assist learners in improving performance through English in the classroom. According to Wolff (2006, p. 50), this could be achieved through the ability of LoLT policies to facilitate learner performance is considered to be hampered by two sets of factors. The first set comprises those related to negative attitudes held by all stakeholders toward the use of African languages as LoLT. The second set of factors contributing to the failure of LoLT policy to produce good educational outcomes is those to do with the improper planning and implementation of LoLT policy.

7. **Does the learner's academic performance get any better in other grades as they progress in English as the language of learning and teaching than grade 4?**

This question examines the improvement rate of English in other continuing grades according to the teachers.

Teacher 1- it gets better but not satisfactory at all.

Teacher 2- they are only worse in grade four but they gradually improve with other grades for me.

Teacher 3- In grade 6 they are much better than grade 4 and 5. They can simply attempt to answer question without explanation.

The findings of this study show that there is a gradual improvement in other grades, but grade four is where learner performance is affected negatively due to the use of English First Additional Language. The findings also show that only those learners who have received strong cognitive and academic development through their first language for many years (at least through Grade 5 or 6), as well as through the second language (English), are doing well in school as they reach the last of the high school years (Thomas & Collier 1997, pp.1-2).

8. **What are the strategies that can be used to harness/improve learners' academic performance across the school curriculum using English First Additional Language?**

This question seeks to determine the strategies that are already in place to tackle the challenges that learners face in reading and writing in English; and the help they need from the department to implement the aiding strategies.

Teacher 1- the teacher and learner ratio by the department can be adhered to and it will allow even foundation phase teachers to scaffold the learners into learning both languages simultaneously making grade 4 teaching easy.

Teacher 2- even teachers must speak English in class consistently and avoid code switching, we can have sufficient workshops (laughs), and I mean at least quarterly.

Teacher 3- Teachers need workshops at least every term and the school needs a library where learners can read more often.

The findings indicate that they have overcrowded classrooms in the foundation phase and the learner-teacher ratio stated by the Department of Education is not adhered to, but if that can change, learners may have an easy contact and learning environment that is not stressful by overcrowding. The findings also show that teachers in grade 4 must maintain consistency when communicating in English so that learners can get used to the language easily and they need sufficient workshops at least once every term to improve their teaching of English in grade 4 and the school needs a library where learners can get exposed to print rich environments and access to library resources as well as encouraging learners to read more books, magazines or newspapers at home.

4.4. Classroom observations

The researcher's intention is to observe learners' behaviour in the classroom during lessons in order to see how these learners participate during class discussions, how they respond to questions, and apply what they were taught by putting their ideas on paper in order to determine the impact of English First Additional Language on their academic performance. The researcher observed some of the lessons taught by the content subject teachers selected for the interview.

In one of the classes observed, the teacher presented lessons that accommodated the learners during whole period and gave them a chance to ask or answer questions while code-switching. The researcher was impressed in one class in which learners were given a diagnostic activity to do after the teacher has presented the lesson in order to check their understanding on the content. Firstly, the teacher wrote the activity on the board and gave learners instructions on what to do. They were constantly participating and the teacher kept monitoring them closely. Participative learning was employed by the teacher which is defined as involvement of learners or active participation of learners (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011). Steyn (2017) also refers participative learning where learners are at forefront and learner-talk and learner-activity predominate.

In one of the class observed, teacher centred approach to learning was evident more than learner – centred approach to learning. The researcher observed the influence of language barrier as there was no code-switching between English and mother-tongue. Research has shown that teacher-centred activity can be useful in a variety of ways in teaching. Bowers and Flinders (1990) describe a teacher-centred model, teacher as "classroom manager" in which the learning process is likened to industrial production, within which students become "products", and behaviours are expressions of "exit skills", "competences", and "outcomes". Halperin (1994) cited in Makhubele (2015) elaborates that "students sit quietly, passively receiving words of wisdom being professed by the lone instructor in front of the class.

Furthermore, the researcher observed that teachers used English throughout the lessons. The researcher has also observed during the lessons that most of the learners responded to the questions asked using their home language. They were unable to respond using English, some grammatical errors were detected from the learners. They were allowed to used their mother tongue as they felt comfortable expressing themselves using it. Akram (2020) concurs that students mostly use their mother tongue in the classroom and cannot understand the instructions of teachers delivered in English.

All the classes exhibited discipline as no learner would disrespect the teachers in any form or neither would the learners have group pocket chats during the lessons. Nampala (2013) cited in Limene (2018) explains that if learners experience the English Language (L 2) classroom as a caring and supportive place, where there is a sense of belonging, ownership and where everybody is valued and respected, learners tend to participate more fully in the learning process. Teachers should maintain classroom discipline at all times for teaching and learning to take place effectively.

Some learners were shy to express their views, and those who could express their views dominated the discussion alone with the teachers as other learners were shy to speak in English. Misbah (2017) points out that learners are not familiar with general words of English and feel shy to use the English words, since their exposure to the

English language is inadequate in the school and limited to textbook. Those who are unable to express themselves were left out. Classroom observation was used to triangulate responses and claims made by participants' interviews. The observations were aimed towards gaining deeper insight on how teachers and learners negotiate the transition from Sepedi to English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in certain lessons in Grade 4 classrooms. In conclusion, English in pedagogy was not as effective in terms of interaction between the teacher and the learners as compared to mother tongue because they could easy respond to mother tongue content questions than English. Moreover it failed to transmit the academic content during class activities to the learners. Therefore, learners were slow in writing and depended on the teacher to explain the question in mother tongue before they could attempt to write in English.

4.5. Interviews of learners

The researcher has conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 learners in grade 4 at Phuti Makibelo School. The questions were aimed to find out about the impact of the use of English First Additional Language on learners' academic performance across content subjects. All the learners were asked the same open - ended questions as follows.

1. **Do you think is easy or difficult to communicate using English in the classroom? Why? This question seeks to get learners perspective of the difference of when they were still learning in mother tongue versus when learning in the English language.**

Learner 1: It easy, because I grew up around white people where my mother was working and at home I'm practising with my little sister.

Learner 2: it's easy, because when I speak English I feel like I'm in the air and that I am going to make it in life because English has many opportunities.

Learner 3: difficult, because I'm too nervous because I' m afraid of making mistakes and that other learners will laugh at me.

The above learner responses vary distinctly and 2 learners agree that speaking in English is easy because they enjoy speaking in English because they get to speak in English at home, others have a background of English for having grown up in white communities and they see a future in English. On the other hand, learner 3 finds it difficult as he gets nervous when they have to speak in English but have all the willingness to learn English. Hussain (2017) concurs with the findings of this study that learning environment plays a remarkable role in students' academic performance andthe more exposure to English the learners receive, the more their confidence increases.

2. **How do you feel about communicating in English in grade 4 during class discussions? Explain? This question seeks to establish their confidence in the language despite their eloquence and grammar challenges.**

Learner 1: I feel like a doctor, because I will help patience who speak different languages.
Learner 2: I feel like a star, because I want to be a star when I grow up and I need to practice as I am growing up.
Learner 3: I feel like I am a nervous minister, when I grow up I want to be just like Angy Motshekga and communicate with schools in English.

The above responses are supported by Abdallah et al. (2016) who found that learners who like to learn English report greater achievement at learning English language than those who do not like to learn English at all. However, the findings of this study also indicated that learners feel nervous and anxious when communicating using English during class discussions and do not know how to pronounce words correctly. This is supported by Cummins (2004) who is in agreement with Al Zoubi (2018) that anxiety, depression, peer culture and the quality of teaching affect a child's performance as well as self-efficacy, mainly in speaking and writing.

3. **Are you able to read comprehensively at first hand and answer assessment accordingly in EFAL? Yes/No. why? This question seeks to determine learner's ability to read and write in English.**

Learner 1: yes, because I can read English I pass my formal assessments by reading the instruction on my own during the assessment.

Learner 2: yes, because when I was growing up I was able to train myself and I still teach myself new words.

Learner 3: yes, I can read because teacher Hlongwa said I must never listen to anyone but focus on my studies. I always ask the teacher in class when I don't understand some things.

The above responses show that most learners are confident that they can read and write in English. The learners have responded by stating positive feelings such as feeling good, pleased, inspired, as they gain more vocabulary, confidence; learn how to pronounce words and they get used to communicate using the language. This response is supported by Abdallah et al. (2016), who found that learners who like to learn English report greater achievement at learning English language than those who do not like to learn English at all.

4. **Do you feel confident to stand in front of the class and present using EFAL? Yes/no. why? This question seeks to establish the learners communicating abilities in front of a class.**

Learner 1: I'm okay with learning in English because when I am a doctor, I must be confident to communicate with my patients in English. .

Learner 2: yes, because when I grow up I will be a huge star and I will be speaking in front of everyone.

Learner 3: I am not so confident because I make many language errors and they always laugh at me, however I enjoy it.

All the learners are confident to stand in front of the class as they believe it is a field for practicing for their future in public speaking. Ado Ama (2022) asserts that students only

make an effort to speak proper English in the classroom when they are under supervision. They don't study pronunciation, they don't study essay writing, and they don't make an effort to learn new words. This will have a negative impact in their academic performance.

5. **Do you think EFAL affect your academic performance in grade 4 as compared to learning in mother tongue? This question seeks to determine their academic challenges of learning in the English language.**

Learner 1: Yes, there are some words that I don't know in English and I would like to know them and there's a little that I can do with my mother tongue in the future.

Learner 2: Yes, because my teacher is able to communicate with me and give me a good comment, I believe I will pass grade 12 with flying colors like my brother.

Learner 3: I want to continue in English because I can learn lot things like speaking with my learners when I am a minister in the future.

Learners acknowledge the impact EFAL is having on their academic performance in grade 4 as compared to learning in mother tongue. The reasons ranged from having good teachers to their performance being outstanding as they have the base for EFAL. Krashen's (1987) affective filter hypothesis claims that negative attitudes and emotions may be barriers preventing learners from attaining the target language. For example, it is unlikely that an anxious or stressed learner who lacks self-confidence and motivation will attain competence in EFAL, since his/her affective filter is high.

6. **What are the factors that hinder your English proficiency? This question seeks to establish the challenges they have when it comes to their English proficiency.**

Learner 1: At home because my grandma talks to me in Afrikaans and that gives me little time to speak English with my elders at home. She says it's the language of her work.

Learner 2: At home, because all my family speak Sepedi and I want to learn English. I want my family speak English with me.

Learner 3: It is at home; my friends speak Sepedi with me and when I speak English they do not answer me so I end up speaking Sepedi.

The findings of this study show that learners are affected by home factors which include Afrikaans speaking grandmother to socio-economic factors that limit lack of exposure to the English language and lack of parent involvement in their education. Other learners take full responsibility of their own hindrance as they do not open English books when they are at home. Petty (1998) cited in Gudula (2017) explains that if students do not want to learn, their learning efficiency will be slow such that they may learn virtually nothing.

7. **How do you think Language (EFAL) has/ will have an impact on your life in the past, present, and future? This question seeks to determine the envisioned future that learners have in as much as EFAL is concerned.**

Learner 1: I see myself as a you-tuber; I will be dancing, singing and talking to people about their emotions.

Learner 2: I see myself as a journalist; I want to write a newspaper in English.

Learner 3: I just see a bright future, in terms of meetings and departments, I have a bright future.

The above responses show that learners understand that they need English for their bright future. They have identified careers including teaching, doctor, social media you-tuber, journalist, being a star. They believe that in English they will be able to communicate with their fans, patients, learners and participate in departmental meetings with confidence. However, the researcher has observed that English language presently has a negative impact on learners' academic performance. This observation is supported by Misbah (2017) who states that learners are not exposed to the atmosphere of the target language. He further states that most of them do not use the language in their daily life and often encounter the use of target language only in school and within the classroom of the target language.

8. **What are the strategies that can you can use to achieve academic performance across the school curriculum using English First Additional Language? This question seeks to establish the help they need from the school to enable them to improve their EFAL.**

Learner 1: The school can help me by giving me many books to read and helping me to write.

Learner 2: I think, yesterday, mam Hlongwa said we must never give up and the school can help me by listening to my teacher.

Learner 3: It teaches me a lot of things because I speak English fluently. The school can teach me everything and encourage me to read my books.

The above responses show that learners believe that if the school can provide them with more books for studying they can improve their reading and writing skills. Hassim (2016) states that learners who read books other than the textbooks perform better that learners who do not read additional books. Therefore, teachers should develop learners' reading and writing strategies so that they can become independent and lifelong readers and writers (CAPS, 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented qualitative data collected using interviews and observation method. In the subsequent chapter, the focus will be on the summary of the main findings in the study, recommendations from the study, the limitations of the study, further research and conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of English First Additional Language on learners' academic performance in Grade 4 at the primary school. This chapter reports on the summary of the main findings in the study, significance of the findings and the contribution of the study to the body of knowledge in this field of study, recommendations from the study, the limitations of the study, further research and conclusion. This study has focused on factors hindering students from achieving well in grade 4. The study was driven by the following main research objectives:

- To determine challenges experienced by grade 4 learners in learning content subjects through English First Additional Language.
- To determine challenges experienced by grade 4 teachers in teaching the content subject through English First Additional Language.
- To determine teaching and learning strategies that could be used to improve grade 4 learners' academic performance.

5.2. Summary of the main findings in the study

The main findings on each research objective are followings:

5.2.1. Objective 1: To determine challenges experienced by grade 4 learners in learning content subjects through English First Additional Language

The findings on determining the influence of English in learner academic performance in grade 4 are stated as follows. This research was explored at three levels, namely home-based factors, teacher-related factors, and Learner-related factors. The salient findings are summarized as follows:

Home-based factors

The findings on home-based factors were triggered by the research objective which seeks to determine the challenges faced by the learners in grade 4 academic performances. The findings showed that learners' hindrance concerning improving their

reading and writing in the English language are home based factors because of socio-economic factors, grandparents who speak to grand-children in Afrikaans and not having motivation from home to be engaged in school activities. The study has also shown that limited understanding ability, (s) low articulation, poor performance and participation, and psychological distress emanating from learners 'social problems are challenges facing ESL learners in mainstream schools. Learners' progress is hampered by factors that make achieving literacy more difficult include lack of learning resources, inadequate parental support of learning, and the lack of parental involvement in learners' learning, as parents have often missed out on education themselves and/or cannot speak, read, write or understand their child's LoLT (UNESCO, 2008). Compared to L2 LoLT use, which is shown to impact negatively on the degree to which parents' support, and are involved in, their children's learning, the use of learners' L1 as LoLT in schooling is shown to lead to greater involvement of parents in their children's education as well as having the effect of promoting more favorable parent and learner attitudes towards school and education (Brock-Utne & Alidou, 2006, p. 112).

Teacher-related factors

This study shows that less teacher training also pose challenges to English reading development as they do not have sufficient feasible strategies to deal with grade 4 being a transitional grade. Moreover, serious language challenges arise in teaching in English to Grade 4 FAL learners due to learners' limited knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in LOLT. The ability of LoLT policies to facilitate learner performance is considered to be hampered by two sets of factors (Wolff, 2006, p. 50). The first set comprises those related to negative attitudes held by all stakeholders toward the use of African languages as LoLT. The second set of factors contributing to the failure of LoLT policy to produce good educational outcomes to do with the improper planning and implementation of LoLT policy.

Teacher training is also viewed as impairing LoLT implementation. Quality levels of pre-service and in-service teacher training in SA are low, and support to teachers in classrooms is inadequate (Modisaotsile, 2012, p. 2). The quantity of available in-service

teacher development is minimal. Teacher training institutions in SA do not fully equip African home language-speaking teachers to teach English, or to teach in English – leaving newly qualified teachers unconfident in doing so, as well as likely to transfer their language errors to learners once in the classroom (Nel & Muller, 2010, p. 646).

The nature of teacher training available in SA is noted as largely inappropriate for the linguistic context of the country in that teacher training curriculum gaps around language education in multilingual classrooms (teaching methodologies, didactic tools and theoretical knowledge) exist (Alidou & Brock-Utne, 2006, p. 87; Calteaux, 1996, p. 158; Probyn, 2008, p. 220). Learners' educational progress is also further hampered within disadvantaged SA schools by a lack of basic material resources for use in teaching and learning, such as classrooms and furniture, reading books, textbooks, dictionaries, and computers, as well as stationery supplies (Prinsloo & Janks, 2002, p. 37; Probyn, 2006, p. 406). A lack of printed material resources in African languages is particularly apparent within such schools, and when such resources are available they are often of poor quality (Banda et al., 2012, p. 33).

Learner-related factors

Learner-related factors include amongst others, learners' attitude, and lack of exposure to English language, family background, study habits, peer influence, attendance of school and co-curricular activities (Fakude, 2012; Smith, 2011). Limited exposure to the English language is detrimental to learners' academic performance. Because of that, learners cannot produce sentences that are just simple (Nkandi, 2015). They have language barriers, as they do not pronounce English words clearly and they avoid the construction of difficult sentences (Knapp, 2006; Nkandi, 2015). As a result of language barriers, English Language (L 2) learners suffer from limited understanding of complex conversations in the English Language (L 2) classroom. Cummins (2004) notes that the group of English Language (L 2) learners who have a language barrier mainly emanate from low socio-economic backgrounds and from illiterate and poor families. The importance of the parents' ability to intervene in the English Language (L 2) education of their children cannot be over-emphasized.

Griffin (2004) observes that a learner's ability and determination to achieve his or her academic targets influence his or her academic performance. Fakude (2012) concurs with Smith (2011) that lack of commitment, learners' independence in schools and peer influence has a strong negative influence on learners' academic performance in schools. Similarly, Wanyama (2013) shares the same sentiment that the major factor which affects learners' performance is the learner's attitude. The present researcher is of the view that the identified learner-related factors impact the academic performance of Grade 12 learners in English Language (L 2) in the Oshikoto Region, Namibia. The present study delved more into the area in order to understand more about possible factors that lead to learners' poor academic performance in English Language (L 2) and to suggest strategies to improve the performance of Grade 12 learners in English Language (L 2) in particular (Limene, 2018).

5.2.2. Objective 2: To determine challenges experienced by grade 4 teachers in teaching the content subject through English First Additional Language

Teachers frequently switched to the mother tongue to ensure sufficient meaningful communication in their classroom.

Code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event… code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand (Ayeomoni, 2006, p. 78). Grade 4 is a language transitional phase in terms of the medium of instruction; learners will be beginning with English as LoLT from four years of mother tongue instruction in foundation phase. Steyn (2017) states that having to change the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) seems to be the most challenging aspect of this transition.

The academic performance is entirely dependent of the LoLT because learners need to utilise some cognitive aspects of a language in order to be able to function effectively.

Grade 4 teachers are faced with the learners not being able to read and write in English when they enter into grade 4. As a result, teachers often have to code-switch or code-mix to mother tongue to ensure sufficient meaningful communication, clarification and participation in their classroom. I am inclined to agree that this represents one of the cardinal 19 reasons why South African LiEP of 1997 support the use of code-switching in schools especially in transition classes to the best interest of learners. However, this practice pose challenges as learners have to read and write in English during assessments without an interpreter of the English instructions in their mother tongue.

Lack of adequate training for teachers etc.

Maddah (2019) asserts that teachers must have the minimum English language proficiency to be able to teach students effectively and act as language enhancers for the students. The following are stated as the fundamental training that teachers need in order to serve learners as English enhancers.(1) develop their language self-awareness; (2) teach in simple vocabulary; (3) understand their student's language level, needs and strengths; (4) create opportunities for students for language practice and to be involved in the practice [oral, written]; and (5) accept useful feedback about errors and necessary language improvements from other instructors and even from professional students (Maddah, 2019). The Department of Education is responsible for hosting workshops that will develop teachers into the current trends of teaching learners in transitional grades.

Objective 3: To determine teaching and learning strategies that could be used to improve grade 4 learners' academic performance.

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), learning a second or additional language follows the same path as attaining a HL, except that it occurs later in a child's life (Department of Basic Education, 2011c). Nevertheless, an additional language requires a more cognizant effort than the HL and therefore necessitates different and specific methodologies (Steyn, 2017). CAPS (DBE, 2011c) recommends the additive bilingual approach for teaching an additional language. This approach assumes that learners who start school are competent in their HL and that

they can use their HL to learn an additional language. Steyn (2017) points out that English is taught to facilitate assimilation into the English language and culture. This transition is no seamless process and believed to be the greatest challenge in the South African schooling system. The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is a content-based ESL model designed by Chamot and O'Malley as a "bridge to the mainstream" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). This instructional programme assists learners with limited English proficiency in the transition to mainstream instruction in English by making content comprehensible through the use of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) strategies and teaching learners how to handle content area material with success (Chamot & O'Malley, 1986).

6. Significance of the findings and the contribution of the study

It was worthwhile to undertake this study because it has shed light and provided insight on the impact of English on learner academic performance in grade 4. Therefore, this study has contributed in addressing the research problem by considering learner's interview responses. The study is important in that it has revealed the strength and weaknesses of 4th grade learners' exposure to English as a language of learning and teaching and the impact thereof. This will assist policymakers in developing innovative ways of improving the way grade 4 teachers can scaffold learners from mother-tongue teaching to English as a language of learning and teaching. It is only important that the study is conducted in a public school considering the language background that the learners have. This study will contribute towards the understanding of English as a language of learning and teaching to learners who are not its mother-tongue speakers; and it will in a long term benefit public school learners and teachers in grade 4 wherein English is introduced for the first time as the language of learning and teaching.

7. Recommendations from the study

The results of this study revealed that gradual transfer enables grade 4 learners to perform well in English in content subjects. Firstly, the researcher recommends teachers' training and support and professional. There must be professional development for primary school teachers especially those teachers who are English second language speakers, like these teachers who took part in this study. It must

include comprehensive in-service and pre-service training of educators and should be done to ensure that they are well-equipped to teach in bi/multilingual, multicultural and multiracial inclusive schools.

Training of educators is a key need to support the proper implementation of the Language in Education Policy in a bi/multilingual approach to education as found in South African society (Radhamoney, 2010). The training should include assistance in planning and designing lessons and activities that will foster teaching and learning in a transition class. Language teachers need to be well-groomed and properly trained in order for the culture and love for education and learning to emerge. Thus, teachers having a wider knowledge of the language(s) and teaching techniques with broader applicability is critically important for successful and meaningful instruction (Du Plessis & Louw, 2008).

A second recommendation calls for the Study of English in Foundation Phase. While mother tongue remains the LoLT in Foundation Phase, I recommend that the policymakers should design, as well as develop a policy that should mandate every learner especially EFAL learners to learn English language from Grade R. The teacher participants in this study are convinced that the study of English in Foundation Phase by EFAL learners will go a long way to alleviating the language and learning challenges encountered by these learners in Grade 4. Thus, it will improve the quality of communication and interaction that take place in the classroom between the learners and their teachers as they negotiate transition to English as LoLT.

Finally, language policy in grade 4 should be put in place and be implemented vigorously. The South African language policy specifies that from Grade 4 level upwards English should be used as the LoLT. But when it comes into practice, there is a huge gap or disjuncture between the policy prescription and the actual classroom practices of teachers and learners. As indicated in the literature review (see Chapter 2), the South African language policy was primarily informed by the need to bridge the language dominance of the apartheid regime. This language policy needs to be reviewed. According to Heugh (2006), transition from mother tongue to second language at early

stage (as required by South African language policy) does not produce successful results.

This is because of the fact that when the mother tongue is suddenly removed (at this early stage) there can be damage in social and cognitive areas which will take a long time to rectify (Heugh, 2006). I strongly recommend additive or strong bilingualism for the subsequent language policy development and reform in South Africa. By strong bilingualism, I am referring to the situation in which both mother tongue and second language are taught until the learner graduates from high school education. It is the language model mostly favoured by language experts as well as being the most advocated worldwide for EFAL speakers (Cummins, 2000; Heugh, 2006; Baker, 2006). The additive model aims to introduce English alongside with the mother tongue and sustain both for a longer time in a manner that gives the learners an opportunity of learning both languages (e.g., isiZulu and English) equally well.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the impact English language has on learner academic performance in Grade 4 at a public primary school. The findings also revealed that the professional development of the teachers for a transition class needs to be considered. While teachers present themselves as being excluded from policymaking process the study recommends an increase of an active participation of teachers in educational policymaking process.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Ethical Clearance Certificate

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING:	14 October 2021
PROJECT NUMBER:	TREC/224/2021: PG

PROJECT:

Title:	The Impact of English First Additional Language on Grade 4 Learners' Academic Performance: A Case of Phuti Makibelo Primary School
Researcher:	MC Makgoale
Supervisor:	Dr HA Motlhaka
Co-Supervisor/s:	N/A
School:	Education
Degree:	Master of Education in Language Education

PROF P MASOKO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:
i)   This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
ii)   Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
iii)   PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

Annexure B: Request for permission to conduct research at your institution

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MAKGOALE MC

P 0 BOX 2275

GA-KGAPANE

0838

</div>

0764674685/0649001280

mampeulemc@gmail.com

The Principal

Phuti Makibelo Primary School

P O BOX 980

Ladanna

0790

Dear Mr Mokgotlhoa T.S

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR INSTITUTION

I am, Makgoale MC, I am enrolled for a Master's Degree in Education at the University of Limpopo. I write this letter to request permission to conduct a research your institution. The topic of my research study is 'The impact of English first additional language on grade 4 learners' academic performance: a case of Phuti Makibelo primary school'. This study will be under the supervision of Dr. Motlhaka HA from the University of Limpopo.

I will be highly appreciative if you could kindly afford me the opportunity to conduct my research at your school. I will do my best to conduct my research as efficiently and discreetly possible

Please find attached a consent letter to parents and teachers.

Thank you in advance

Yours Faithfully

Makgoale MC

INQUIRIES: DR MOTLHAKA H.A

TEL NO: 0797210620/ 0764674685

Annexure C: Request for permission from the circuit manager

<div align="right">

MAKGOALE MC

P 0 BOX 2275

GA-KGAPANE

0838

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THE CIRCUIT MANAGER

Dr. Khosa

Private Bag x11

Ladanna

0790

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

My name is Makgoale Makobo Charmaine, a Master's student at the University of Limpopo, Faculty of Humanities. I am currently undertaking a research project for my Master's degree in English. The interest lies in developing teaching and learning in Public Primary Schools. To this end, I kindly request permission to collect data from the learners and teachers in grade 4 and Phuti Makibelo Primary School.

Should you have any queries or comments regarding this study, you are welcome to contact my supervisor Dr. Motlhaka H.A at 0152689737 / hlaviso.motlhaka@ul.ac.za

Yours sincerely

Makgoale MC

Annexure D: Consent forms for parents

Dear Parents

I am Makgoale MC. I am enrolled for a Master's degree in Education. The topic of my research is ''The impact of English first additional language on grade 4 learners' academic performance: a case of Phuti Makibelo primary school'. I write this letter to request that you grant your child permission to participate in this research study at the above mentioned school.

This research is not a task and will not be used for formal assessment. Your child's name will not be used and all the information obtained will be kept confidential.

For further inquiries please feel free to contact me on 0764674685.
Thank you in advance.

Yours Faithfully
Makgoale MC

Parents' consent form
My name is: _____
I agree that:
- I have read the project information regarding the purpose of the study.
- I may decide to withdraw my participation at any time without penalty.
- All information obtained will be kept confidential.
- My name will not be used in any written reports about the study.
- A report will be made available to me and my school if needed.

Reply Slip

I _____ ALLOW/DOES NOT allow my child to participate in the study titled 'The impact of English first additional language on grade 4 learners' academic performance: a case of Phuti Makibelo primary school'

Signed at _____day of _____and year of_____
Signature_____ date_____

Annexure E: Teacher Participants Consent Forms

I _____ agree to participate in a Masters study that focuses on 'The impact of English first additional language on grade 4 learners' academic performance: a case of Phuti Makibelo primary school'

The purpose of this study was fully explained to me and I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am not forced to participate. Furthermore, I understand that I can withdraw from participating in the study at any time. I also understand that my response will be kept strictly confidential.

I declare that this project is not necessarily going to benefit me personally.

Signature_____date_____
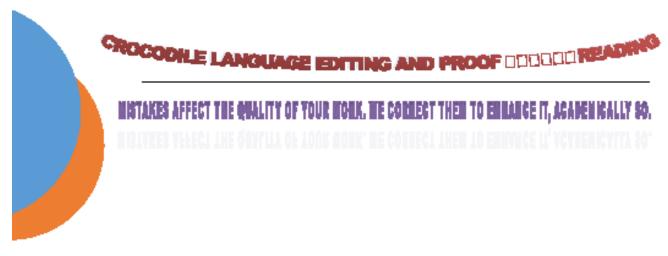
Annexure F: Interview Schedules for Grade 4 Teachers

1. The introduction of English First additional language as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in grade 4 has an impact on the academic performance of learners. Do you agree/disagree? Please elaborate. …………………
………………………………………………………………………………..

2. What would you consider are some of the reasons for learners' poor academic performance in grade 4? …………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

3. Do you think mother-tongue language of learning and teaching in foundation phase has an impact of learner's response to English first additional language in grade 4?..
………………………………………………………………………………

4. How often do you code-switch to mother-tongue when teaching? Please explain why?
……………………………………………………………………………….

5. Please list some of the challenges that you consider hampers learners improving their skills in English (Reading, Writing and speaking)?......................................
………………………………………………………………………………

6. How do you think Language (EFAL) has/ will impact on your life in the past, present, and future?...
…………………………………………………………………………………

7. Does the learner's academic performance get any better in other grades as they progress in English as the language of learning and teaching than grade 4?..
………………………………………………………………………………

8. What are the strategies that can be used to harness/improve learners' academic performance across the school curriculum using English First Additional Language?…………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………..

Annexure G: Interviews Guide for Learners

1. Do you think is easy or difficult to communicate using English in the classroom? Why?
………………………………………………………………………………..……………

2. How do you feel about communicating in English in grade 4 during class discussions? explain?
....
………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Are you able to read comprehensively at first hand and answer assessment accordingly in EFAL?
Yes/No.   why?   …………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Do you feel confident to stand in front of the class and present using EFAL? Yes/no. why?
....
………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Do you think EFAL affect your academic performance in grade 4 as compared to learning in mother   tongue?   …………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. What are the factors that hinder your English proficiency? …………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. How do you think Language (EFAL) has/ will have an impact on your life in the past, present, and future?..
………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. What are the strategies that can you can use to achieve academic performance across the school curriculum using English First Additional Language?

Annexure H: Editorial Letter

CROCODILE LANGUAGE EDITING AND PROOF □□□□□□READING

MISTAKES AFFECT THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK. WE CORRECT THEM TO ENHANCE IT, ACADEMICALLY SO.

29 August 2022

To whom it may concern,

This is to confirm that I proofread and re-edited Ms **MAKGOALE MC** (Masters dissertation entitled *"THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ON GRADE 4 LEARNER'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL"*

Her dissertation read fairly well. Errors attended to included but were not limited to concordance, repetitions, genitives, determiness, colloquialism, as well as discourse markers. After attending to these errors, Ms Makgoale's dissertation now reads perfectly well. **It however remains her sole responsibility to effect the changes outlined therein.**

Should you require any clarification, my contact details follow below:
Cell: 0784803023 or 0607589535

Email: 68ngwenya@gmail.com
Or: ngwenyachris@webmail.co.za

Sincerely,

Ngwenya Christopher (PhD).