

**A Case Study of the Implementation of the
Communicative Approach to English Second Language
Progress Testing in one Secondary School in the
Alexandria Circuit of the Eastern Cape
Department of Education**

Dissertation

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of the communicative approach (CA) to English second language progress testing in an African secondary school which falls under the Eastern Cape Department of Education.

The goal of the research is to establish how teachers access, conceptualise, and apply the CA to language testing in their specific working conditions.

The report of the findings of the research reveals that teachers' understanding of the CA to testing differs from that of the linguists, curriculum designers, innovators, and syllabus writers. This is caused by a combination of factors including teachers' poor working conditions, the lack of focused pre-service training and effective in-service structures for their empowerment as the agents of innovation, coupled with the poor circulation and a lack of clarity in official documents on the CA to language testing.

These constraints made it impossible for teachers to implement the CA to language testing. In order to carry on with their work, however, teachers developed coping strategies by drawing, probably unconsciously, on a mixture of structuralist, sociolinguistic-psycholinguistic, communicative and any other testing practices they may have acquired during their years of service.

Although based only on one school, the findings of this study indicate that for fundamental innovations such as the CA to take root, there is a need for the adoption of more dedicated, reflective implementation strategies involving proper planning and monitoring, as well as evaluation and re-evaluation of the entire process. This necessarily slow process must go hand-in-hand with a dedicated pre-service and in-service empowerment program based on consultative communication between innovator and agent; and a persuasive education/re-education approach which will encourage teachers to change their entrenched practices.

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GLOSSARY

I	- Interviewer
T	- Teacher (any of the four)
CA	- Communicative Approach
CE	- Continuous Evaluation
CLT	- Communicative Language Teaching
OBE	- Outcomes Based Education
EDO	- Education Development Officer
MEC	- Member of Executive Council
GET	- General Education and Training
FET	- Further Education and Training
HET	- Higher Education and Training
GCE	- General Education Certificate
HOD	- Head of Department
ESL	- English Second Language
SLT	- Second Language Teaching

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

This research project examines teachers' practices in English Second Language (ESL) progress testing, in an African secondary school in the Eastern Cape Department of Education. The general aim of the study is to assess teachers' awareness, understanding and application of the communicative approach (CA) to language testing by, firstly, looking at the sources of information about the communicative approach to language testing available to the classroom teacher. These include the available body of theoretical information about the approach, the ESL syllabus, the guideline document to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, and the in-service facilitator programmes available. Secondly, teachers' second language progress tests are analysed in terms of the tenets of the CA to language testing. The steps taken in order to achieve the aim of the study therefore include the following:

- (a) examination of the sources of information about the CA to language testing; assessment of how these facilitate teachers' access to and understanding of the approach and its application to their working conditions;
- (b) observation of the actual process of administering tests in the five streams of the class studied - grade ten - in a single school;
- (c) collection of samples of different tests written in the different streams of the class studied, and analysis of the tests for syllabus requirements and tenets of the CA to language testing;
- (d) analysis, with teachers' permission, of a sample of marked scripts,

marking schemes, and mark lists to ascertain the scoring system used in these tests;

- (e) interviews with teachers to elicit responses about the types of questions asked, and how and why they are asked;
- (f) making comparisons between information obtained from observation, question paper analysis, and recorded interviews, and finally,
- (g) writing a critical, descriptive and interpretive account of the whole phenomenon based on the procedures specified above.

1.2 The study in context

1.2.1 Recent theoretical developments in applied linguistics

The last twenty-five years have witnessed radical changes in the field of language testing (Bachman 1990). These were triggered by changes taking place in related fields a few years earlier. In the linguistics field, for example, there has been a shift of emphasis from the Chomskyan view of language as structure and form (Chomsky 1973) to the view of language as functional and communicative (Widdowson 1978, Brumfit 1980). In the language teaching field there has been a movement from approaches that focused on language as formal structure and on "learning as facilitated by explicit formal instruction" (Bachman 1990:296) -- the Grammar Translation, and the Audio-Lingual methods, for example (Richards & Schmidt 1983 and Larsen-Freeman 1986) -- to approaches that emphasise language as communication and recognise the potential for learning and acquisition through "communicative language use" (Bachman 1990:296).

These broader views about the nature of language, language use, language teaching, learning and acquisition have widened the scope of language testing (Bachman 1990). There has been a need for communicative language testing to address new content areas

such as sociolinguistic appropriateness rules, for new testing formats to permit and encourage creative, open-ended and critical language use and interpersonal interaction in authentic situations, and for new scoring procedures which allow for more subjective judgement (Oller 1979:7-8; Canale 1983:79; Bachman 1990:296).

1.2.2 The significance of the new language theories for teaching in South Africa

In South Africa, the new theoretical orientations have led to the adoption and introduction of two consecutive English second language syllabuses, implemented in 1986 and 1996 respectively, for grades 10-12. These two syllabuses have promoted the communicative approach to language teaching, learning, and evaluation. However, Gough (1992:8) has raised the concern that there is a striking gap between the syllabus design and its implementation and evaluation. By examining the ESL syllabus, this study attempts to understand the phenomenon of the gap between the syllabus design and language testing procedures.

1.2.3 New developments on the political scene

In South Africa, the last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed a host of radical political changes, notably the demise of the apartheid regime and the inception of a new process of democratisation in all aspects of South African life.

In the educational domain, the ANC-led government of National Unity has instituted a new Schools Act (1996) which entrenches the fundamental principles of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, unity, and historical redress. In the wider educational community in South Africa, these principles are expected to bring about "equity and justice" (Peirce 1992:64) in pedagogical and assessment practices. And it is partly in pursuit of this equity and justice that the ANC government has declared eleven official languages, and equal multilingual and multicultural education for all (Constitution Act 1996).

1.2.4 New Education Departments in South Africa

The recent political changes in the country have also affected educational organisation, management and practice in ways that need to be noted for the proper understanding of the context of this research. New education departments, with new boundaries and new functional and role descriptions have come into existence.

There are now only nine provincial education departments plus one state department of education. The latter, under the national Minister of Education, sets norms, standards and guidelines which must be adhered to nation-wide, while the provinces retain a degree of self-determination which gives them a greater say in their educational affairs than was previously the case.

The school remains the smallest unit of the provincial educational establishment. It is controlled by a council comprising the school governors and the principal. The latter is accountable to the Education Development Officer (EDO) who controls a number of schools within a larger unit known as a circuit. The EDO is accountable to the District Manager, who controls an educational district composed of several circuits. A certain number of districts constitutes a region under the Regional Director, who is accountable to the provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education through the permanent Secretary for Education. The chain of command eventually reaches the National Minister of Education, and ultimately the President of the Republic.

1.2.5 The Eastern Cape Department of Education

The Eastern Cape Department of Education, under which this study was conducted, is one of the nine provincial departments of education in the country. It is divided into seven regions, each of which has six districts. Each district is sub-divided into six circuits and the number of schools in a circuit varies according to the demographic and socio-economic profile of the area. Considerations of administrative access were paramount in determining the sizes of circuits.

The individual schools in the circuits have also undergone a number of changes. Of particular significance for this study are the phase and level designation systems (Circulars 36/97; 38/97; 39/97). The old five-phase designation system covering both formal and tertiary education -- junior primary, senior primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and tertiary education -- has been replaced by a new designation system consisting of three bands. These are General Education and Training (GET), covering the first nine years of schooling; Further Education and Training (FET), covering the last three years of formal education; and Higher Education and Training (HET), covering all post-formal education. The General Education and Training band is subdivided into three phases: a Foundation Phase (first three years of schooling), an Intermediate Phase (years 4-6), and a Senior Phase (years 7-9). According to Curriculum 2005, which is designed according to the principles of Outcomes Based Education (OBE), the state will provide free and compulsory education only up to the end of the General Education and Training band (the first nine years of schooling).

With regard to school level designation, all school levels falling under GET and FET are designated "Grades". Thus the first year of formal schooling is referred to as grade 1 (former sub A), and the last year of formal schooling is referred to as grade 12 (former standard 10). According to official departmental regulations, educational institutions are required to apply the level designations as of the date of the last circular mentioned above (39/97). For some time already, forward-looking textbook and study materials writers and academics have been using the new phase and level designations.

1.2.6 Delineation of the field of study

This study was carried out in the Alexandria circuit no. 6, in the Grahamstown district which falls under the Western Region of the Eastern Cape Department of Education. The Alexandria circuit has fifty schools in all, of which five are grade 12 secondary schools, two grade 9 secondary schools, thirty-five farm primary schools, one private missionary farm primary school, and seven public primary schools. Out of a total of 10 009 pupils attending these schools, 3 531 are at secondary school level.

The schools draw the majority of their pupils from the 208 commercial farms in Alexandria where Afrikaans is the main language used in the work place. Thus the pupils in this area grow up speaking Xhosa as their first language, and hearing and understanding Afrikaans. English assumes prominence as a necessary school subject in the first three years of schooling and eventually rises to a position of dominance as a medium of instruction and evaluation in schools and colleges; it is also the major language of access and mobility in the wider society (De Klerk and Bosch 1994). In this situation the parents, the teachers and the pupils find it useful to develop strategies for working towards some form of functional individual multilingualism.

This study covered only one senior secondary school out of five in the circuit, for two major reasons. First, the research is educational ethnographic case study; that is, it is a small-scale, in-depth study of teachers' testing practices, a subject requiring close observation over some time (Spindler 1982; Watson-Geogoe 1988). A larger group of teachers spread over a more extensive area would not have been a practicable proposition.

Secondly, the school focused on in this study is in many ways representative of similar schools, not only in the circuit but also in the district and entire province. The basis of this claim is two-fold: the five years' experience of the author as an English second-language teacher in the former Ciskei and Transkei, and a pilot study, which covered three circuits in the education district of the current study (Ssemakalu 1996), both provide evidence that secondary schools traditionally attended by Black pupils, and formerly falling under the defunct Department of Education and Training (DET), are similar in at least the following ways: the low-income backgrounds of students, the poor school education and college training of teachers, under-staffing, large classes, poor physical structures and a lack of material equipment, irregular teacher and student attendance, wide service areas for single schools, and poor transport.

According to Stenhouse (1984), case study information is generalisable if in the judgmental comparison of readers the case being described is similar to another. On these grounds it is hoped that information obtained from this study, based on one school, will

be reflective of the situation obtaining in similar schools in the province.

The study examined the language progress testing practices of only grade ten teachers of ESL. The choice of this class was inspired by a few important considerations: firstly, the researcher, who is also an ESL teacher and Head of Department (HOD) of English in the same school, did not have English classes in the grade. The choice thus sought to counter the researcher subjectivity and bias which might result from researching one's own work.

Secondly, because of its level within the recent designation system, grade ten seemed to be the most suitable class for a study of this nature. Prior to 1992, grade ten formed the highest level of the junior secondary phase, now part of the GET band, and pupils at this stage were required to write an external examination for the award of the General Education Certificate (GEC). In 1992 the GEC was scrapped, and grade ten was shifted to form the first of the three levels of the senior secondary phase, now the FET band.

In 1996, a separate revised ESL syllabus based on the CA to SLT and evaluation was implemented for this group of young adults who, at least in principle, should range between the ages of 15 and 18. It was hoped that by examining the language progress testing practices of teachers in the first grade of the final formal education phase the author would gain the desired insight into teachers' conceptualization and implementation of the recommended approach, the problems they experienced, and as Maley (1986) puts it, the strategies they developed to go on in spite of the problems. It was also hoped that the critical interpretive and descriptive report resulting from the study might provide suggestions for improvement, which could be used to inform future in-service and facilitator programmes organised for all ESL teachers serving at this level.

1.3 Narrowing the area of focus

1.3.1 Definition of language tests

For many educated people and educators, a language test is understood as a written device, in a classroom context, which tries to assess how much has been learned on a

language course or some part of the course (Oller 1979:2). This, however, describes only one form of language tests.

For applied linguists and researchers, language testing represents a large industry, consisting of a variety of complex enterprises (Spolsky 1968). Oller (1979) has observed that there are in fact language elements in all tests, whether these are language or content tests. This kind of situation dictates the need to define the scope of a small-scale and focused piece of research such as the present one.

In spelling out the distinction between language tests per se and other tests, Bachman (1990) has asserted that the uniqueness of language tests resides in the fact that language constitutes both the "tool and object" of testing in language tests. In educational measurement in general, language is used as a tool to measure a specifiable object other than language, e.g. language may be used to elicit or express data, facts, responses, personality traits, attitudes, concepts or whatever the object of testing might be. In language tests, where the "tool" and "object" of testing are the same, emphasis is put on language or language ability as the "object" of testing.

The different language abilities tested are spelled out by Oller (1979:3) as relating to, among other things, "progress and achievement testing, intelligence and aptitude measurement". The different forms these tests can take include "spoken, heard, read, written or merely thought, or some combination of these . . . in a formal or informal situation" (Oller 1979:5).

This study focused on the **formally written** language tasks in which teachers tested the **progress** of the "communicative competence" (this concept being used in the broadest sense) of their pupils. Because even this domain is too broad and complex to be covered in a single research project, this study approached language progress tests from only three main vantage points, which were considered to be of crucial significance to regular testing practices in a classroom situation. Thus, firstly, language tests were examined as tests per se, in which case questions of validity, reliability, practicality, and wash-back or instructional value were considered (Oller 1979).

Secondly, language progress tests were considered from the point of view of the learners themselves. The questions asked in this case sought to establish whether the tests, although in a written form only, offered learners opportunities to use language creatively and critically, and in accordance with the socio-linguistic norms of appropriacy (Oller 1979; Canale 1983; Bachman 1990; Singh 1994;); whether they provided open-ended questions which allowed learners to express their informal schemata (Carroll 1983; Barkhuizen 1993); and whether they encouraged learners to demonstrate, exercise, challenge and enhance their cognitive ability (Piaget 1952; Vygotsky 1978, Peirce 1992).

Thirdly, language progress tests were examined for their appropriateness in assessing the grammatical competence of pupils. Grammatical competence is recognised in the communicative paradigm as an important strand which provides the foundation of meaningful communication, and Thompson (1996:10) has warned against "the most persistent misconception" of over-stressing the teaching of functional skills -- e.g. making a telephone call to book a hotel room or scanning a text to extract specific information -- at the expense of knowledge of the underlying language structures needed to actually perform these functions.

In addition to these three angles of approach to language progress test analysis, the actual set tests were examined for qualities that might affect the performance of learners, including syntactical clarity, simplicity, and accuracy; lexical appropriateness, question length, clarity of instructions, layout, and familiarity with the genres of texts used (Barkhuizen 1993).

1.3.2 The case for language progress tests

The use of language progress tests in trying to achieve the aims of the study was based on their specific properties:

- (i) they are "designed, constructed and used" (Allen and Davies 1977:42) by the teachers themselves, who are the implementers of theoretical innovations underpinning classroom practice, e.g. the CA;

- (ii) they are used by the teachers "to find out how well the students have mastered the language areas and skills which have just been taught" (Heaton 1990:8);
- (iii) they constitute the class record which is used together with the final year scores for promotion purposes (Bachman 1990:226);
- (iv) in addition, they provide data which can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching/testing methods used.

Thus these language tests can be used to gain insight into the language areas the teachers have taught, the teaching methodologies they use, their conceptualisation of language, language teaching/learning and acquisition, language testing/evaluation, and their criteria of what constitutes success in these areas.

1.3.3 The Department's conceptualisation of language progress tests

Although the foregoing description of language progress tests is acceptable by educational theorists, practioners and administrators, the last mentioned, in translating the foregoing conceptualisation of these tests into practical guidelines for the teachers, tend to stress one function of these tests at the expense of the others. It is believed by the departmental authorities that in order to serve as part of the final year assessment, progress tests should be written monthly. And in the particular case of language progress tests, a monthly test is expected to look as a micro-sample of the final year examination i.e. testing several areas of language e.g. grammar, composition, comprehension, and possibly literature every time a monthly test is written.

1.3.4 Structure of the thesis

The content of this thesis is organised as follows: In chapter one the general aim of the study is stated -- to assess teachers conceptualisation and implementation of the CA to language testing by examining the official documents for clarity about the approach, and analysing teachers' language progress testing documents for evidence of the CA to language testing. The chapter then outlines the theoretical developments in linguistics leading to the CA and

its application to teaching and testing, suggests the significance of these developments for educational transformation within a rapidly changing South African society, and contrasts them with the concrete situation obtaining in the specific context of this study. The chapter closes with a theoretical account of language tests in general and progress tests in particular.

Chapter two begins with the definition of terms. This constitutes a multiple and tentative framework of specialised conceptual referencing which makes it difficult enough for experts to discuss language testing issues, not to mention the understanding of these by the field practitioners. The various uses of language progress tests are then outlined, followed by a detailed, chronological critical review of the theoretical approaches leading to the CA to language testing, and finally, a discussion of the essential requirements for tests in the communicative paradigm.

The research theory and methods of ethnographic case studies, within the educational context, are discussed in chapter three. In keeping with the protocols of ethnographic research, also discussed are the limitations of the data collection techniques, problems experienced during field work (Smith 1996), problems relating to researcher subjectivity, and ethical issues (Stenhouse 1987, Cohen and Manion 1989). In the interests of transparency, copies of the research report and open discussion of the findings are pledged to all parties in the researched community.

In chapter four the data collection process is described, and the data is analysed and interpreted within the framework of the theory and methodology outlined in chapters two and three. In chapter five the findings are discussed and applied, and conclusions are drawn. In brief, these are that the teachers' conceptualisation of the CA differed from that of the linguists, curriculum designers and syllabus writers; owing to inadequate pre-service training and a lack of support structures, coupled with hard working conditions, teachers were not implementing the CA to language testing. Finally, certain recommendations are made, the limitations of the study are acknowledged, and further areas for study are projected.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEORY OF LANGUAGE TESTING

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Language testing, as Palmer et al has observed (1981), is such a broad and complex multitrait-multimethod field of study that to be meaningful, a small-scale study such as this should maintain a steady focus on and even re-state its aims and goals at every major stage in its unfolding. This approach will help both author and reader to keep track of the factors relevant to the research question, distinguishing them from a multiplicity of others which in the broader language testing field intimately and intricately overlap, interrelate with and affect one another in ways that are difficult to specify and measure.

Hence it is considered useful for a small-scale study in the language testing field, in defining its area of focus, to pose and answer at least four major questions of practical import. These questions concern, first, the purpose for the language tests under consideration; secondly, the context in which the testing is taking place; thirdly, the nature of the language abilities to be measured; and lastly, the testing procedures used to elicit and measure the target language abilities (Bachman 1990).

In this study, these questions were addressed in the general introductory chapter. To recapitulate: the language tests dealt with in this study are those set by teachers to measure pupils' progress in the acquisition of communicative competence in ESL in a classroom context in a particular secondary school. The testing technique used is the formally written language test, in different formats. Of particular concern to this study are the problems identified by Barkhuizen (1993) as responsible for the pupils' poor performance in language tests (see 1.3.1).

This chapter attempts a critical review of theoretical thinking about language testing in relation to the questions posed above. The main aim is to highlight major approaches to

language testing prior and leading to the popular communicative approach to testing, which is this project's major object of study. The major forerunners to the CA to language testing are the structuralist approach, with its analytical, discrete-point test formats (Davies 1978), and the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach advocating an integrative method of testing (Oller (1979)).

It must be acknowledged from the outset that one of the major problems in pure and applied language studies is the lack of a precise, unified framework for conceptual referencing (Easterman 1992). Hence, especially in the language testing field, authors concerned with clarity and precision define each and every technical concept before they use it. Bachman (1990) is a case in point. Yet these commendable efforts remain beleaguered by ambivalence and ambiguity since they have not been given collective recognition and expression. In striking contrast to Easterman (1992) are other scholars who introduce and use technical terms without bothering to explain them, for example Weir (1993). In order to make the following discussion as clear as possible, working definitions of key terms are supplied, on the understanding that, in the circumstances, they must be somewhat tentative.

2.2 Definition of Terms

Evaluation, Measurement and Test

In this study, the term that stands in greatest need of conceptualisation is "test". But since in much of the literature on language testing this term appears alongside and is sometimes used synonymously with the other terms, I concur with Bachman (1990) that the distinctive characterisation of these companion terms, however marginal, is vital to a full understanding of the debate about language tests.

2.2.1 Evaluation

Bachman (1990:26) has defined evaluation as "the systematic gathering of information for purposes of making decisions." Sometimes the evaluative information may be quantified,

as in the case of ratings and test scores often used to make decisions about the selection, placement, and progress of individual pupils. But evaluative information as such need not be derived from tests, and may not necessarily be quantified. In the same way, test information, although always quantified, need not, per se, be evaluative: for example, non-test verbal descriptions of overall impression may provide important information for evaluating individuals' language potential (ibid).

2.2.2 Measurement

The following definition of measurement has been adopted from Allen and Davies (1977) and Bachman (1990). According to these scholars, measurement consists in assigning theoretical mathematical models to objects and events with the aim of finding out more about them. In the language testing field this involves the quantification of observations of individuals' behaviour or characteristics according to explicit procedures and rules. For measurement purposes, observations may be obtained in a variety of ways, one of which is the direct, formal, controlled and focused approach of testing. Other types of measurement include a naturalistic approach to data collection, over a long period of time, such as that used in teachers' rankings and grading, or through a direct, informal and uncontrolled contact between subject and observer.

Observations are quantified according to four types of measurement scale: ordinal, interval, nominal and ratio (Allen and Davies 1977; Oller 1979; Bachman 1990; Heaton 1990). In the testing field in general, all may be used, but for the purpose of this study, only the first two are described because of their vital importance in language progress tests.

The ordinal scale, as the name suggests, relates to an "ordering process" of observations (Bachman 1990:28). It is the one most used by teachers in grading, when they compile merit schedules ranking pupils "first", "second", "third", etc., according to some attribute or ability (Allen and Davies 1977).

"Equal interval" is the most characteristic property of the interval scale. With this scale

different levels of ability are allocated numbers in such a way that the distances or intervals between them are equal (Bachman 1990:28; Allen and Davies 1977:13-14) The second property of the interval scale is "ordering": After levels have been allocated numbers, they may be ordered in the desired ascending or descending order. It is this "ordering" property that forms the basis for teachers' rankings and grading in the ordinal scale. Figure 2.1 below illustrates the "equal interval" and "ordering" properties of the interval scale (see the test score axis).

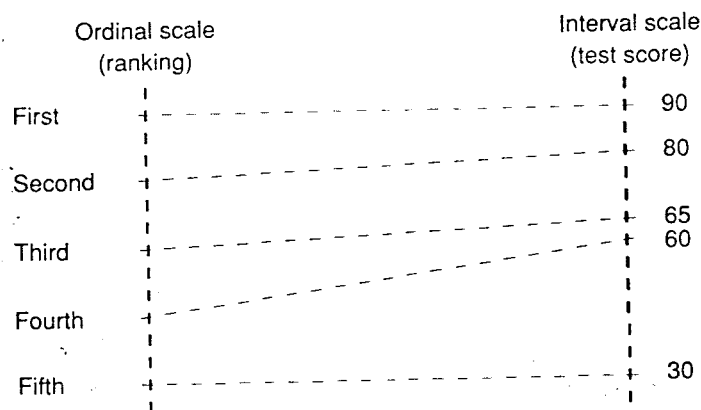


Figure 2.1 Comparison between ordinal and interval scales (Bachman 1990)

The statistics appropriate to the interval scale are called "parametric statistics" (Allen and Davies 1977:14). These are often used by teachers to do the necessary calculations of totals, percentiles, means, etc., on the basis of which teachers, parents, and test users make evaluative statements and decisions about pupils. The major difference between the ordinal and interval scales is also illustrated in figure 2.1 above.

In the illustration, the test score axis on the interval scale indicates that the testees are not equally distant from each other on the ability measured. The ranking on the ordinal scale however, seems to suggest that the intervals between the five testees are all the same. In other words, both the ordinal and interval scales have the quality of showing which testee is better than the other, but the interval scale has the additional quality of specifying the extent to which the better testee is higher than the runner-up. For discussion of the limitations associated with the use of these scales in the measurement of fluctuating human mental attributes, see Allen and Davies (1977:13-14) and Bachman (1990:32-40).

2.2.3 Test

Oller provides the following definition of "test":

any observable activity a student is asked to perform under controlled conditions in order to determine his or her capacity to perform similar activities under less rigid controls. (Oller 1979:184)

Carroll (1968) agrees with Oller, pointing out that the distinctive element of a test is that it is designed to obtain a specific sample of an individual's behaviour or characteristics, by using carefully designed elicitation procedures. He emphasises that a test necessarily quantifies an individual's characteristics, which the test user can interpret as evidence of the individual's attributes or abilities in a disciplinary area of interest (Carroll 1968:46).

Thus a language test is a unique type of measurement which focuses on the specific language abilities of interest, which, according to Cummins (1980), may include cognitive/academic language skills, writing abilities, informal interaction skills, etc.

Bachman (1990) proposes that in order to make correct inferences and proper use of test scores (and thus maximise the chances of making correct decisions about the language testees), it is important that language tests have the essential qualities of validity, reliability, and efficiency. These concepts are discussed in detail later in the chapter (see 2.6), but a brief description of them at this point will illuminate arguments in the review of theoretical approaches to language testing which follows shortly.

According to Allen and Davies (1977), when a test measures "that which it is supposed to measure and nothing else, it is valid" (Allen and Davies 1977:18). Oller (1979) argues that the "reliability of a test is a matter of how consistently it produced similar results on different occasions under similar circumstances" (Oller 1979:4). Bachman selects words more expressive of accuracy to describe the concept of reliability: he argues that "reliability is a quality of test scores pertaining to the extent to which they are free from measurement errors" (1990:48). The concept of efficiency is concerned with matters of

practicality and cost in test design and administration (Weir 1987).

The earnest concern with accurate measurement scales, and valid, reliable and efficient tests shows the importance scholars, teachers, students, parents and other test users attach to them. Briere (1969) refers to tests lacking in these qualities as "criminal" because such tests, especially those lacking in validity and reliability, will necessarily lead to wrong inferences and ultimately to wrong decisions about testees, whose entire lives can be jeopardised by such decisions (Briere 1969:214).

In most educational programs, testing in general, and language testing in particular, remains one of the most enticing ways of gathering evidence for making very important decisions about pupils and teachers and educational programs. Highly detailed discussions of the different types and uses of language tests are found in Allen and Davies (1977), Oller (1979), Bachman (1990) and Heaton (1990). Some of these were mentioned and discussed in the introductory chapter of this study. The next section focuses on the overlapping social, research, and educational uses of language progress tests, and tries to consolidate the discussion initiated in the first chapter.

2.2.4 Other terms

There are a few concepts which, in the context of this research, have acquired a slightly but significantly different shade of meaning from their common dictionary definition. They are used so frequently in this study (especially by the research participants) as to require some clarification. In this study, the terms **pupil** and **child** are used synonymously to express the same meaning as the words **student** and **learner**. The concepts **facilitator** and **subject adviser** are also used interchangeably, as are the terms **standard eight** and **grade ten** in reference to the class researched. The term **mistress** or its short form **miss** is used to refer to a female teacher, while her male counterpart is referred to as **teacher**.

2.3 Uses of Language Progress Tests

The concept of language progress tests has already been defined in the first chapter of this

study (see 1.3.1). About the general uses of language progress tests, Prodromou (1995:8) suggests:

given at the right time and in the right proportions, language tests can be valuable in assessing learners' proficiency, progress, and achievement. They are good devices for diagnosing learners' errors, and difficulty, providing motivation to both teachers and pupils, imposing discipline, ensuring attention and regular attendance.

2.3.1 Research Uses of Language Progress Tests

Language progress tests play an important role in providing useful research data. Henning (1987) proposes that whether research is focusing on mother-tongue or second-language considerations, whether it is being conducted in orderly laboratory surroundings or in a natural setting, tests will at some point be necessary to check on the learning that has taken place so far. Clark and Swinton (1979) suggest that language tests will also be found useful when the focus of research is theories of language, or methods of language teaching, or language teaching materials -- to which may be added, theories and methods of language testing. All in all, tests must be seen as important research tools in educational research.

2.3.2 Educational Uses of Language Progress Tests

In educational programs, language progress tests serve several purposes. This study examines only the following major ones: finding out about pupils' progress, encouraging learners and teachers, diagnosing learning/teaching problems, and providing a washback effect.

(i) Finding out about progress

For most or all of their careers, the majority of language teachers are not involved in research work in education. But for them, too, language progress tests are highly

important, as a means of finding out what progress their pupils have made. Braley and Raatz (1984) describe this somewhat sceptically: language tests, they say, are supposed

ideally to compare pupils with an already determined standard . . . in practice however, the ideal aim is hardly ever achieved: in most cases it is pupils compared with one another, and the already determined standard is a fiction (Braley and Raatz 1984:135-136)

Whatever the faults in the use of language tests to measure progress, it is certain that all teachers need and use them: they need to know how their pupils are getting on and how well what has been taught has been learned. Thus according to Skehan (1991), the less technical but common-sense view of a language test will include "any test, combining as many test methods as possible, and preferably set by the teacher with the express aim of assessing how far learners have gone" (Skehan 1991:10). The information gained will help teachers determine the next step in their teaching; it is useful to pupils too, for stock-taking purposes.

(ii) Encouraging students and teachers

In many content subjects, pupils can easily get a rough idea of the progress they have made by looking back at the number of topics or discrete facts and items they have covered over a given period of time. With language learning the case is slightly different: Heaton (1990) points out that, according to communicative theories of language and language learning/teaching and testing, learning a second language does not only consist in mastering a discrete set of rules and items. It also involves learning skills and strategies of language use. But these are extremely difficult to specify and sequence in learning order, which makes it very hard for pupils to make even the roughest estimate of the progress they have made in language learning in a given period of time. A well-designed classroom test may be useful in giving students an idea of the progress they have made, thus increasing their motivation and encouraging them to aim at better results. Although there are some dangers in generalisations of this kind, Heaton (1990:10) makes the point that there is at least "some connection between liking something and being good

at it."

Language progress tests also provide encouragement for the teacher. According to Fabian (1982), a good class performance in a progress test is the most immediate reward for the committed teacher: it confers a sense of efficiency, self-confidence and fulfilment. In the event of a poor performance, the teacher need not be discouraged: s/he must grab the opportunity to identify the reason for the poor result, which might range from an unsound language and/or language teaching theory, and the syllabus based on such theory, to a genuine learning problem or weakness pupils are experiencing (Hughes 1989). Language teachers in a classroom context are normally concerned with the last-mentioned problem, which is usually investigated through a diagnostic test.

(iii) Diagnosing learning/teaching problems

According to Bachman (1990) a diagnostic test is a use made by a teacher of the information provided about the presence or absence of a skill or part of a skill. A good diagnostic test will thus help the teacher to check pupils' progress for specific weaknesses and problems they may have encountered. According to Cohen (1980), a diagnostic test may be specially designed and constructed for the purpose, or may form part of another type of test, especially a classroom progress test. Hence diagnostic tests should be regarded as an integral and ongoing part of a language teaching/assessment program (Candlin 1987). Alderson and North (1991) claim that the ultimate aim of the diagnosis and identification of pupils' problem areas is the planning and implementation of timely and appropriate remedial action by the teacher. The remedial action may call for a review of the teacher's methods of teaching, marking one of the occasions when testing partly determines the focus of future teaching. This would be an instance of what is known as the washback property of language progress tests.

(iv) Providing the washback effect

The "washback effect", also referred to as the "backwash effect" (Allen and Davies 1977; Alderson 1993; Prodromou 1995), can be defined as the direct or indirect effect of tests

on teaching method. Morrow 1986, Weir (1987) and Porter (1993) maintain that washback is a very important part of test validity. They argue that a valid test should be timed to follow as closely as possible on the teaching that precedes it, while a test envisaged at the end of part of the teaching course should influence the teaching that precedes it. In other words, pupils should be taught in the same way as they will be tested, and they should be tested in the same way as they were taught. Thus a communicative test will lead to the adoption of the communicative approach to language teaching, and vice versa.

Carroll (1980) and Alderson and Wall (1993), however, sound a caution that there is no one-to-one relationship between tests and their effects on teaching method. This is because the relationship is mediated by factors such as the teacher's competence, the resources available, and the importance of testing in a particular society. These exercise an effect on classroom practice, which overlaps with the washback effect. For this reason these scholars suggest that the current assumptions about washback effect need to be empirically verified in order to establish the extent of the effect of tests on teaching methods, and the nature of this effect: whether or not it is always positive.

2.4 Theoretical Approaches to Language Testing: A Critical Review

2.4.1 Introduction

Spolsky (1969) suggests that in order to know what to test, it is important to know the theory underpinning testing procedures. Referring to the field of second language testing, Upshur notes that "trends in second language testing tend to follow trends in second language teaching, and in recent years, trends in second language teaching tend to follow trends in linguistics" (Upshur 1969:177). Although the observation predates the CA, it remains true and can be interpreted to mean that there is an important and intimate relationship among theory, testing, and teaching. And this means that discussion, conclusions, and policy decisions about any one of these will necessarily impact on the others.

Upshur 1969 and Oller (1979) have argued that in the 20th century, all major trends in language teaching and testing have been underpinned by three overlapping but significantly distinct theoretical views of language. The first of these stems from structural linguistics, which emphasizes knowledge of the forms and structures of the language system. This theoretical orientation advocates a discrete point approach to testing (Spolsky 1976).

The other two approaches, namely, the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach and the communicative approach, spring from a variety of pragmatic theories of language. The psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach introduced the view of language as a dynamic, creative and functional system which must be used according to sociolinguistic rules of appropriateness. The idea of communicative competence was introduced by this school of thought (Oller 1979). The communicative approach is an expansion of the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic theoretical view: while the central concern of the latter was limited to knowledge and use of the language system, the communicative approach is also concerned with "performance" (Hymes 1972; Canale and Swain 1980;). Both approaches, however, recommend a more global, integrative approach to language testing, and mark a departure from the atomistic approach promoted by structuralist theory.

In this study, the first two approaches to language testing mentioned above are discussed only to highlight the extent to which they paved the way for the communicative approach, on which the discussion dwells longer.

2.4.2 The Structuralist View of Language Testing

It has already been pointed out that structuralist linguistics emphasized knowledge of forms and structures in language teaching/learning. Its approach to testing is variously and interchangeably referred to as analytic, atomistic, and/or discrete-point. Oller (1979) gives the following description of discrete-point testing:

discrete-point analysis necessarily breaks the elements of language apart

and tries to teach (or test) them separately with little or no attention to the way those elements interact in a larger context of communication
(Oller 1979:212)

The clear advantages of testing "discrete" linguistic items are that they yield data which is easily quantifiable, as well as allowing a wide range of item variation. According to Weir (1987), tests which focus on "discrete" linguistic items are efficient, and have the usual reliability of marking associated with objectively scored tests. But Oller (1979) argues that discrete-point test formats suffer from the defects of the construct they seek to measure and hence raise validity questions. He expresses their defects as follows:

What makes [discrete-point analysis] ineffective as a basis for teaching or testing languages, is that crucial properties of language are lost when its elements are separated. The fact is that in any system where the parts interact to produce properties and qualities that do not exist in the parts separately, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts Organising constraints themselves become part of the system which simply cannot be found in the parts separately. (Oller 1979:212)

Some years before, Savignon (1972) had also noted the limitations of discrete-point analysis and cautioned that grammatical competence was not by itself a good predictor of communicative skills.

To correct the deficiencies of discrete-point analysis, Kelly (1978) and Rea (1989) advise that applied linguistics should make a decisive departure from sterile, artificial, and irrelevant testing measures which assess language as an abstract array of discrete items, and become interested in the measurement of testees' ability to take part in specified communicative performance, and in the production and comprehension of coherent discourse within a specified sociolinguistic setting.

The structuralist approach dominated language teaching and testing practice until the early 1970s. But during this period criticisms of the approach were accumulating and slowly

evolving into an alternative, distinct theoretical approach to language teaching and testing -- the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach.

2.4.3 The Psycholinguistic-Sociolinguistic Approach to Language Testing

Oller (1979) is the leading exponent of this school of thought which in the place of discrete-point tests advocates global integrative tests such as cloze and dictation. Oller (1979) claims that such tests go beyond the measurement of a limited part of language competence -- the grammatical competence -- achieved by discrete-point tests. He asserts that cloze and dictation tests are more apt to measure testees' ability to integrate disparate language skills in ways which more closely approximate the actual process of language use.

Read (1981:10) described the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic contribution as follows:

from a psycholinguistic perspective, language came to be seen as less of a taxonomic structure and more of a dynamic, creative, functional system. It was recognised that natural language contains a considerable amount of redundancy, so that it is difficult to show that any single linguistic unit is indispensable for communication . . . The sociolinguistic contribution centres on the concept of communicative competence, which represents a broadening of the Chomskyan notion of competence to cover not only knowledge of rules for forming grammatical sentences, but also rules for using those sentences appropriately within different and specific contexts . . . Thus the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives have enlarged the basis on which the validity of a test is to be judged

Oller himself acknowledges the limitations of the test methods advocated by the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach: cloze and dictation tests do not actually test communication itself, which requires "performance" under real life constraints. Carroll (1980) explains: "[cloze and dictation tests] are based on indirect assessment tasks of language ability in which the language norms followed are those of the test setter or the

original author of the text, rather than the testee's" (Carroll 1980:9). And Morrow (1979) raised the criticism that cloze and dictation tests do not offer pupils opportunities for the spontaneous production of language of the sort that oral and non-controlled written tasks are apt to provide. In other words, according to Morrow (1979), cloze and dictation tests are fundamentally suspect because they are in fact indirect tests of underlying ability rather than actual performance. They basically depend on and test knowledge of the language system (linguistic competence) rather than the ability to operate this system in authentic, real-life settings (communicative competence).

Having discussed the deficiencies of the structuralist and the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approaches and the associated discrete-point and more integrative test formats, I now move to the discussion of the communicative approach to language testing.

2.5 The Communicative Approach to Language Testing

2.5.1 Clarification of Terms

According to Weir (1987), in order to clarify what is meant by communicative testing, it is necessary to examine closely the concept of communicative competence.

Chomsky (1973) had introduced the term "competence" to refer to his "Ideal speaker-listener's" capacity for tacit knowledge of the internal structure of language which can, at least in principle, be used to produce all possible grammatical sentences. Hymes (1972) broadened the Chomskyan notion of competence to include also the knowledge of the rules for using grammatical sentences appropriately within different sociolinguistic contexts. Thus for the first time in the language learning/teaching field, Hymes coined the concept of "communicative competence" to refer to the combination of these two language abilities. A widely accepted definition of communicative competence is found in Brown (1987:199): "communicative competence is that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and negotiate meaning interpersonally within specific contexts." And in trying to expand his definition, Brown echoes Savignon (1983), who referred to communicative competence as:

a relatively dynamic interpersonal construct that can only be examined by means of overt performance of two or more individuals in the co-operative process of negotiating meaning interpersonally within specific contexts. (in Brown 1987:199)

Several other pure and applied linguists such as Widdowson (1978, 1983), Brumfit and Johnson (1979), Maley (1986) and, more particularly, Canale and Swain (1980) continued to expand and refine the concept of communicative competence, which is today considered to consist of four distinguishable communicative strands: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and the overarching strategic competences. Morrow (1979) went as far as suggesting that there was a need in the CA to make a distinction between communicative competence and communicative performance, the distinguishing feature of the latter being the fact that performance is the realisation and interaction of the four above-mentioned competences "in the actual production and comprehension of utterances under general psychological constraints that are unique to performance" (in Canale et al. 1980:6).

2.5.2 Communicative Testing

The theoretical concepts of communicative competence and communicative performance logically led to the practical concepts of communicative language teaching and testing. Morrow (1979) and Canale and Swain (1980) argue that communicative language testing should be concerned not only with what the pupil knows about the form of the language and about how to use it appropriately in specific contexts of use, but also with the extent to which the pupil is actually able to demonstrate this knowledge in a meaningful communicative situation -- that is, what the pupil can do with the language or, as Rea (1989:39) puts it, "his (or her) ability to communicate with ease and effect in specified sociolinguistic settings".

It should therefore follow that the communicative performance tasks that pupils are faced with in communicative tests should be representative of the type of tasks they might encounter in their own real-life situation, and should correspond to normal language use

where an integration of communicative skills is required with little time to reflect on or monitor language input and output (Weir 1987). In the same way, the criteria used in the assessment of performance on these tasks should relate closely to the effective communication of ideas in a specific context.

It was noted in section 2.5.1 that Morrow (1979) found it necessary to distinguish between communicative competence and communicative performance. Sharing his view are scholars such as Kelly (1978), Carroll (1980), Rea (1985) and Weir (1987), who have found it desirable to distinguish between "testing communicative competence" and "testing communicative performance".

There seems to be consensus among these scholars that a performance test is one which samples behaviour in a single setting with no intention of generalising beyond that setting. The moment any test wishes to generalise about communicative ability to effectively handle other similar situations, the concept of communicative competence creeps in. In other words, as Weir (1987:10) puts it:

in communicative language testing we are involved in evaluating samples of performance, in certain specific contexts of use, created under particular test constraints, for what they can tell us about a learner's underlying communicative competence.

In practical situations, therefore, communicative competence cannot be evaluated except through its realisation in performance. Only performance can be observed and hence evaluated. Nevertheless, it may be useful to note that in their practical application in everyday, less academic contexts, the two terms are often used as if they were simply synonymous.

2.5.3. Practical Implications for Testing in a Classroom Setting

This consideration calls for the correction of the many misconceptions about the concept of "communicative testing". In the foregoing discussion, an attempt has been made to

give (on an abstract level) a definition of communicative competence: its essential elements are dynamism, interpersonality, negotiation of meaning, and overt performance. However, what is normally seen in a practical testing situation in a classroom setting is a group of testees, sitting and working individually at their desks, with their teacher posted in front or at the back of the classroom intent on quelling any attempt at inter-student communication during the test time. A quick glance at the test content sometimes reveals large chunks of grammar-based tasks, with a few controlled reading comprehension and writing tasks. A crucial question arising from this quick observation is: can such test conditions and tasks be communicative in any way?

A variety of responses to the question have emerged in recent literature on the communicative approach to teaching and testing. Harmer (1991) has referred to the test conditions and tasks described above as controlled and non-communicative. Alternatively, Littlewood (1992) has referred to the same conditions and tasks as controlled pre-communicative. In both cases, conclusions are reached for the obvious reason that there is a lack of visible physical interpersonal communication (speaking) taking place.

A contrary view, and one that is regarded as more acceptable in this discussion, is that of Thompson (1996). He strongly contends that the conditions and tasks described above have some potential to be communicative as long as the teaching preceding them was communicative, and the task content is relevant to the testee's future communication needs in real-life situations. Thompson argues that the concept of communicative competence means much more than merely talking appropriately and effectively. It obviously also includes "listening, reading, thinking and writing" appropriately, critically, and effectively (Thompson 1996:11-12). In the controlled test conditions in the classroom, testees are busy giving written evidence of their ability to communicate in real-life situations. That a test includes grammar-based tasks may also have nothing to do with the uncommunicativeness of the test: grammatical competence is a major strand of communicative competence which must also be tested, and it is widely held that "grammatical accuracy is the basis of meaningful communication" (Brown 1987:212).

There is much more about communicative testing that is still incomprehensible,

controversial, assumptive, and mythical (Oller 1979; Maley 1986; Weir 1987, 1990), but the few basic facts known about the approach are enough to enable practising teachers to set tests based on the communicative theoretical approach.

According to Weir (1990), communicative tests should involve tasks which are as direct as possible and which incorporate as many of the features of real-life language use as possible. The testing conditions should also be as realistic as possible, and the test activities authentic enough to ensure a positive washback effect in respect of the teaching that precedes the testing. In very simple terms, and as most teachers would agree, this means that a good class test should relate as much as possible to how the pupils were taught, should reflect the syllabus, and should be appropriate to the pupils' level of competence.

In basic terms, most language tests aim to assess pupils' capacity to listen, read, write and speak appropriately, critically, and effectively in different specifiable language situations. To achieve this, the teacher must first of all identify the skill that is being tested; secondly, he/she must try to be as explicit as possible about what the skill consists of; thirdly, the teacher must try to be clear about the real-life conditions in which the pupil will need to apply the skill in the future; and fourthly, the teacher must consider what and how the pupils were taught, so that he/she has a fair idea of the kind of performance to expect. Having taken the above into account, the teacher may now proceed to design elicitation activities and operations which will match the capacity or skill being measured.

Language tests devised in this way will meet the necessary criterion of validity. But Weir (1987) maintains that a good communicative test must have two other essential qualities, reliability and efficiency. Briefly, a test is reliable if the scoring, marking and interpretation of scores of the test items are as accurate and consistent as possible, while it is efficient if it is practical, acceptable, and economic (Weir 1987). These three requirements will now be discussed.

2.6 Essential Requirements of Language Tests

In a classroom test, pupils are given a set of items to answer under controlled conditions. The quantified test items are marked, the numerical values (marks), usually in interval scale, are totalled up and in each case recorded against a testee. These marks are usually interpreted as evidence of the pupil's progress in the acquisition of language abilities and skills required to perform whenever s/he is called upon to exercise, outside the test situation, the skill or characteristic or bundles of skills and characteristics which have been assessed. Thus from a small sample of the pupil's behaviour, the teacher makes inferences about how the pupil might be expected to perform in all other present and future situations demanding the same abilities and skills.

But for the teacher's inferences to be correct, the test items must be valid: that is, the condition for the pupil to pass the test must only be "possession of the characteristic or bundles of characteristics we wish to measure" (Allen and Davies 1977:15). As already pointed out (see 2.2.3), the concept of validity refers to the question of whether a test measures "that which it is supposed to measure and nothing else" (Allen and Davies 1977:18). The role of the test in providing a washback effect with regard to the teaching that precedes it has already been discussed in section 2.3.3 (iv), and what was said there applies equally to washback validity. Three further types of validity -- face validity, content validity and construct validity -- will be discussed in terms of their importance to language testing in general and language progress testing in particular.

2.6.1 Validity

(i) Face Validity

All language tests, written or otherwise, should have this type of validity. Face validity should not be viewed as validity in a technical sense: it simply refers to the superficial acceptability of the test by pupils, administrative personnel, test users, and all other interested parties such as parents. According to Bachman (1990), face validity refers to the fundamental question of rapport and public relations.

Although face validity is one of the most disputed types of validity (see Ingram 1977; Palmer et al. 1981; Bachman 1981), Anastasi (1982) stresses its overall importance thus:

certainly if the test content appears irrelevant, inappropriate, silly or childish, the result will be poor cooperation, regardless of the actual validity of the test. Especially in adult testing, it is not sufficient for the test to be objectively valid. It also needs face validity to function effectively in practical situations. (Anastasi 1982:136)

However, other forms of objectively determined validity (e.g. content validity and construct validity) should not be sacrificed in favour of face validity.

(ii) Content Validity

This type of validity is of particular appeal to pupils, teachers, subject experts, and researchers. It often happens that after writing a test, pupils quickly refer back to the learning that preceded the test to determine the fairness of the test and to make predictions about the results. Teachers and moderators are also always concerned to ensure that the test that has been set or is about to be set is as representative of the content coverage as possible. And a researcher, faced with a test already set, would instinctively seek to establish, in the words of Anastasi (1982:131), whether "the test content covers a representative sample of the behaviour domain to be tested." Anastasi (1982) gives the following useful guidelines for establishing content validity:

1. the behaviour domain to be tested must be systematically analysed to make certain that all major aspects are covered by the test items and in correct proportions;
2. the domain under consideration should be fully described in advance rather than being defined after the test has been prepared;
3. content validity depends on the relevance of the individual's test

responses to the behaviour area under consideration, rather than on the apparent relevance of item content. (cited in Weir 1987:25)

Thus the directness of fit and adequacy of the test sample is dependent on the quality of the description of the target language behaviour being tested.

Carroll (1961) and Moller (1982), however, express concern about the difficulties involved in defining the area of language from which a representative sample is to be taken. But this fear would only appear to hold for large scale achievement or final year summative examinations. In progress tests with a small content coverage, sampling should be relatively easy.

(iii) Construct Validity

Weir (1987) refers to construct validity as a superordinate concept embracing all other forms of validity. In the words of Anastasi (1982), construct validity describes the "extent to which the test may be said to measure a theoretical construct or trait" (Anastasi 1982:144).

The most direct use of construct validity would be in research. Applied linguists hold the view that every test is designed according to some theoretical construct: Cronbach (1971), cited in Weir (1987), suggests that the "construction of a test itself starts from a theory about behaviour or mental organisation derived from prior research that suggests the ground plan for the test" (Weir 1987:24). And Davies (1978) argues similarly that "it is after all the theory on which all else rests, it is from there that the construct is set up and it is on the construct that validity, of the construct and predictive kinds, is based" (Davies 1977:63). Still on the same point, Kelly (1978) asserts that:

the systematic development of tests requires some theory, even an informal, unexplicit one, to guide the initial selection of item content and the division of the domain of interest into appropriate sub-areas. (cited in Weir 1987:24)

Although this perspective is widely held, its application to communicative testing has evoked some sceptical reactions. Jakobovits (1970) and Hawkey (1982) have expressed the concern that since in the communicative paradigm the question of what it is to know a language is not well understood, the idea that a communicative test be framed with reference to a theoretical construct is very problematical. And even if it were possible to construct a communicative test with "construct validity", there would still be problems in establishing sufficiently valid criteria against which to measure it.

This concern would appear to have some truth for two reasons: the available tests staking a claim to being communicative are themselves unvalidated. So they cannot be used as criteria for concurrent validity (see Allen and Davies 1977 for a detailed discussion of concurrent validity). The other validated tests available may be less integrative and communicative, which makes them unsuitable for use to validate a communicative test.

Weir (1987) proposes a way out of this dilemma. He suggests that:

though there is a lack of an adequate theoretical framework for the construction of communicative tests, this does not absolve test constructors from trying to establish a priori construct validity for a test conceived within the communicative paradigm. A test should always be designed on a principled basis, however limited the underlying theory. And wherever possible, after its administration, statistical validation procedures should be applied to the results to determine how successful the test has been in measuring what it intended to measure. (Weir 1987:23)

Since, as pointed out by Jakobovits (1970) and Hawkey (1982), a posteriori statistical criteria for the validation of communicative tests are not available at the moment, Weir (1987) recommends the use of non-statistical a priori validation procedures by which the test constructor is supposed to ensure that s/he is guided by the theoretical construct in choosing, ordering, and sub-dividing items for the test (see also Cronbach 1971; Davies 1978; and Kelly 1978).

Weir (1990) argues that it would be logical to assume that success in a theory-driven test would depend on nothing other than the testees' possession of the psychological abilities, traits and skills stipulated by the theory.

2.6.2 Reliability

According to Davies (1965), Porter (1983), and Bachman (1990), reliability is another fundamental criterion in terms of which tests must be judged. According to Bachman (1990), reliability is an attribute pertaining to test scores: it relates to the accuracy and consistency of what is measured under validity. He argues that there should be accuracy in scoring the test from marker to marker (intermarker reliability), and that each individual marker should be consistent throughout the marking session (intramarker reliability).

Thus a perfectly reliable test score would be one which is free from errors of measurement. But there are many factors other than the ability being measured that can affect performance in tests and constitute sources of measurement error. According to Allen and Davies (1977), these are of two kinds: extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

Extrinsic factors comprise examiner variability and variability of testing conditions. Common-sense precautions can be taken to reduce these: examiner variability is eliminated by objective testing (although this poses validity problems in the communicative paradigm). Variability of testing conditions can also be reduced by providing testees with very clear instructions and, if need be, explaining these during the test session.

Intrinsic sources of error are more problematic. These arise from a lack of test stability. A test has got stability or test-retest reliability if it has been given twice to the same group and on both occasions produced the same relative ordering and distancing between individuals in the same group. Sometimes this is best achieved by giving two equivalent "clones" of the same test to the same group, on two different occasions. In this case a test would be said to have equivalence reliability if there is a high correlation between the

results from the two tests.

But Allen and Davies (1977) warn that there are many psycho-physical and emotional factors affecting equivalence reliability, for example, the testees' mood, fatigue, anxiety, stress, time of day, hunger, sickness, etc. Just as serious are constraints of a practical and economic nature, for example, the cost of the time and effort involved in setting and marking a language test, given the typically massive size of language classes. A detailed discussion of the practical considerations in test designing follows below.

Validity and reliability are fundamental qualities of language tests which educators should make every effort to achieve. However, they remain ideals which are to a degree incompatible. Particularly in more integrative tests such as those conceived in the communicative paradigm, a more valid test will be lacking in some degree of reliability. In the event of tension between the two qualities, the question of which one should be sacrificed is highly contentious. However, the weight of opinion in the literature on communicative language testing is in favour of more valid tests with less than normally acceptable reliability (see Moller 1982, Weir 1987).

2.6.3 Test Efficiency

As pointed out earlier (see 2.2.3), the concept of test efficiency is concerned with matters of practicality and cost in test design and administration. Allen and Davies (1977) argue that a valid and reliable test would be of little use if it did not prove also to be a practical one. Practicality involves issues of economy, ease of setting, scoring, access by pupils, marking, administration, accommodation, equipment, distribution, etc.

Usually the longer the test the more the practical constraints. Language progress tests are among those less affected by practical problems because they are usually small-scale. But most teachers find communicative tests difficult and time-consuming to set, score, and mark; they require more material resources to construct, and sometimes more equipment to produce. Many ordinary schools, such as the one explored in this study, experience difficulties in overcoming these problems, especially because of insufficient funding and

equipment, and sometimes because of a lack of the necessary basic skills.

These problems are sometimes sufficiently major to create problems of face validity (see 2.6.1) in progress testing. Although Barkhuizen (1993) writes about final examinations, he recognises that what he is saying is also applicable to progress tests. The question raised above of tests not being easily understood by pupils is of particular concern here. According to Barkhuizen, this problem is caused by the numerous linguistic deficiencies typically found in tests, which obscure meaning. Among the more common of these are ungrammatical structures, wrong choices of words, errors of omission and spelling, deviation from syllabus requirements, unclear/ambiguous instructions, and poor typography and layout. The result of these is that pupils misunderstand questions and hence perform poorly in their tests.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND OUTLINE OF DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an outline of the data collection process: the choice of the field of study and the participants, preparation for the research and the equipment used. This is followed by a discussion of the research theory applicable to the study, explaining the choice of ethnographic case study as the research method, and identifying observation, the interview, the questionnaire, and the collection of written documents as the data collection techniques. Finally, practical and ethical problems encountered in conducting this research are discussed.

3.1.1 The choice and justification of the field of study

This research project examines and attempts to give an interpretive description of teachers' practices in ESL progress testing in a particular school and place (see 1.1). My interest in this area of study springs mainly from my experience as an ESL teacher at secondary school level in African schools in the Eastern Cape Province. I have worked in this capacity for the last nine years, during which time I have also marked matriculation examinations (both as a sub-marker and senior marker) and been Head of an English Department. Thus as a teacher, marker, and internal test and examination moderator, moreover one with a keen interest in applied language studies, I have become one of many teachers, facilitators and applied linguists concerned about the quality of ESL programmes and language teaching methods. This concern is the basis for my interest in the questions of language testing raised in this study. Nuttall and Murray (1986:223) have articulated the object of general concern as follows:

pupils in Black schools in South Africa spend many hundreds of hours over a number of years attending classes in second languages, and yet the success of these learners in acquiring communicative competence in these

languages is extremely modest, and certainly not commensurate with the time and effort expended on language teaching programmes.

This situation has led to the following sort of concern about language testing:

the problem is that students, and especially students in developing countries, who receive several years of formal English learning, and have frequently written several language and content tests and examinations in English, remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language and to understand its use, in normal communication whether in spoken or written mode (Howatt 1984:277).

That most tertiary institutions have, as part of their curricula, a bridging academic skills program, catering for the language skills and academic development needs of such students, offers concrete evidence of the seriousness of the problem of language deficiency among these students.

Earlier studies have identified several causes for this state of affairs world-wide, including inherent errors in the syllabus design (Brumfit 1980; Candlin 1982), language teaching methodological problems (Brumfit & Johnson 1979; Candlin 1982; Maley 1986), poor teaching materials (Reynolds 1995), poor teacher training, rural setting problems, and inadequate educational financing problems (Mchazime 1997), and so on. Some problems relating to testing and measurement errors have also been researched (Allen and Davies 1977; Weir 1987, Heaton 1990; Bachman 1990; Barkhuizen 1993), but most of these studies have focused on established, standardised tests and examinations.

This study attempts to ascertain whether there are any internal language progress testing anomalies contributing to the problem of chronic language deficiency among the students referred to above. My aim is two-fold: to provide insight into such language testing anomalies, if indeed they exist, and to help teachers to become conscious, critically reflective, and evaluative of their routine language testing practices, with a view to improving them. I also hope to offer in-service facilitators, subject advisers and

researchers suggestions about areas that need developmental action and further research.

3.1.2 The choice of the research participants.

The reasons for the choice of the grade ten class for this study have already been discussed (see 1.2.6). In addition to the suitability of the class per se within the entire FET band, its choice was also determined by the positive attitude of grade ten teachers of English toward the prospect of being researched.

One of the major obstacles to classroom-based research in African schools is that the "culture" of research and being researched is unfamiliar to the teachers. In a pilot study (Ssemakalu 1996) carried out to assess teachers' conceptualisation and implementation of the CLT approach to ESL, in four secondary schools in the Alexandria circuit, I experienced difficulty in obtaining the cooperation of some of the teachers. The reasons volunteered for their resistance included the following: some teachers regarded the researcher as a stranger, an intruder, a disguised agent of the department, a fault finder intent on uncovering and reporting their weaknesses to higher authorities. Other teachers simply felt ill-at-ease at being singled out for questioning and having to provide a rationale for routine behaviour. Others were resistant to the idea of being used for the collection of information which the researcher was at best going to use for his own ends (i.e. getting a higher degree).

However, there was also a reasonably large group of willing participants, among whom the grade ten teachers were particularly enthusiastic. These teachers readily expressed their willingness to participate in the future follow-up research. For this reason, they became my automatic first choice of subjects for the current study.

Another reason which inspired the choice of these particular teachers was the fact that the contemplated study was an ethnographic project, involving informal and formal observation of the teachers' testing practices over an extended period of some four months. For this reason I thought it would be beneficial and cost-effective for me to research subjects located in my normal working environment. Furthermore, an amicable

working relationship between myself and the prospective research subjects already prevailed, and I expected this to make cooperation easier in setting dates for the tests and gaining access to sample question papers, marking schemes, mark lists and pupils' marked scripts. My class visits for observation purposes would also be less disruptive than they might have been were the students and teachers to be meeting me for the first time.

And finally, for ethical reasons, I was going to need to obtain permission from the teachers, the pupils, and their parents to carry out this research, and it seemed quite clear to me that it was going to be easier to obtain such a sensitive concession from people I was already working for and with.

3.1.3 Preparation for the research

In 1996 when I first contemplated doing this research, the targeted grade ten class had six streams and was taught by four different teachers of English. When the new academic year opened in 1997, the number of pupils entering grade ten had dropped, leaving only five streams and three teachers: a male and two females. The two female teachers happened to be pregnant, with one of them due for maternity leave right at the beginning of the first quarter. This was going to leave me with only two teachers. While I was debating whether or not to proceed with the study, the district office sent us a teacher to substitute for the one about to take maternity leave. I immediately got the two teachers to interact, to ensure a smooth transition and continuity in the teaching and learning process.

As we talked over a range of things with the new teacher in the next few days, I decided to ask him if he was willing to participate in the small-scale research project I was planning: the second female teacher seemed to be at an advanced stage of her pregnancy, so I could not rule out the possibility of her leaving sooner or later. After getting a positive response from the new teacher, I requested a meeting of the grade ten teachers of English which was also attended by the teacher who was soon going on leave.

At the meeting I asked for confirmation that all the teachers were still willing to

participate in the proposed research project. I explained to them the nature of the exercise: we were about to engage in a common effort to reflect on our testing practices, to identify problems and suggest solutions. I would accumulate observations, comments and suggestions, analyse them, and compile a descriptive and interpretive report of our findings which might be of future use to us, other teachers, subject advisers, in-service lecturers and researchers in the field of language testing theory.

To achieve these objectives, I was firstly going to observe what went on in the classroom while students were writing tests. Secondly, the teachers were going to fill in a small questionnaire for me, and talk to me in a recorded interview situation. Thirdly, as part of the critical reflective process of the research, I would ask them to allow me to look at a sample of the marked scripts, and at their marking schemes and mark lists. Finally, we would from time to time have discussions about the information I had collected and the report I was drafting. I also encouraged the teachers to feel free to look at the report I was compiling any time and comment on the accuracy of its representations (see 3.1.4 regarding ethical concerns).

The meeting lasted about 15 minutes, of which I claimed over half the talking time. I realised that this first meeting may have located us in permanent power camps for the rest of the research period. The ethical implications of this are discussed later in the chapter (see 3.1.4).

My next step was to approach the students and the parents. I visited each of the five streams of the class, and obtained their consent. For practical reasons however, it was impossible to meet the parents of every student (over 200 in all). I opted to secure the permission of the parents via the school governing council, which comprises 51% parent representatives, the remainder including the principal, a permanent member, and student and teacher representatives (including myself). The council was therefore in a position to formalise not only the parents' consent, but also that of the teachers and students.

In the letter I wrote to the parents I explained to them the aims of the research and pointed out the ways in which the school stood to benefit from it. I requested them to

indicate their approval by signing a letter, a copy of which was to be appended to the research report.

3.1.4 Ethical concerns in this research

Although the decision to conduct this research in my own working environment facilitated a number of things -- e.g. securing teachers', parents', and pupils' permission; gaining easy access to data; making it possible for me to work and conduct research at the same time in the most cost-effective way; allowing me to use my personal experience in interpreting data -- it may also have imposed a number of constraints, both on me and on the research participants, with potentially serious ethical implications. For example, all the interested parties who gave this research the go-ahead may not have felt they really had an option because of their working relationship with me. My position of power as HOD might have unsettled as well as coerced my teacher colleagues, had they harboured suspicions as to my motives for seeking the information I did.

Smith (1996) has noted that, by its nature, ethnographic research will always be plagued by ethical problems of the sort raised above: ethnographic study is an intrusion among people, touching on their values, attitudes, personalities, feelings, etc., and as such, it is bound to cause problems. Nevertheless, research has to be conducted, and perhaps the only way out of the dilemma, as Spindler and Louise (1987) propose, is to be fully aware of these problems. Cohen and Manion (1989) suggest that a way of minimising their impact is for the researcher to be as honest and up-front as possible with his/her participants, so that they are as fully informed as possible about the purpose of the research.

In the case of this research project, seeking written permission to conduct the research (see appendix A), meeting with the research participants, and encouraging them to examine and discuss the data and the report draft and undertaking to discuss the findings of the study (see 3.1.3), were all part of an effort to address the ethical concerns described above.

3.1.5 Research equipment

Two interviews were conducted to collect data: the abortive one with the subject adviser of English, which was therefore not audio recorded, and another, which was recorded, with the teachers at the target school.

For recording purposes I obtained a specialised microcassette recorder with a built-in microphone. Once in record mode, it was sound-operated: the tape moved only when there was a reasonable amount of sound to record. It was fitted with a red light which flickered to indicate that recording was going on, and went off when sound levels were too low to record. A green light next to the red one indicated that the power supply was adequate. A clicking auto-stop function warned that the tape was over. All one had to do to operate the machine, then, was to place it between the interviewer and interviewee, press record and monitor the lights. Its fast playback function made review very easy.

Because of its small size and high degree of automation, this equipment was unobtrusive and allowed the interview and recording process to unfold in the sort of natural atmosphere necessary for interviewees to reveal their feelings in a relaxed mood (Tuckman 1978).

3.2 Research Methods

In sections 1.1 and 3.1.3 of this research report, I describe the aims of the study and the steps taken to achieve them. The remainder of this chapter attempts to locate these aims and procedures within the framework of the research method which informs them, the ethnographic case study. It also attempts to justify the use of qualitative and descriptive-interpretive methods in classroom-based research.

3.2.1 Ethnographic Case Study

This research takes the form of a case study: it attempts a "focused in-depth" study of practices associated with language progress testing in a particular school. According to

Johnson (1992:134), this study falls within the ethnographic research method: it focuses on the practices of a "group" of teachers. Smith (1996) points out that although there are many similarities between ethnography and case study, and most ethnographic studies take the form of case studies, not all case studies are necessarily ethnographic: a case study of the effect of computers on education, for example, would not be ethnographic. Further discussion of the two concepts and how they differ and interact seems appropriate at this point.

3.2.1.1 Case Study Research

According to Walker (1986:189) a case study may be defined as "a selective collection of information of an instance, which will give that instance meaning." An "instance" may range from a single event, phenomenon, or individual variable, to a set of these (Yin 1984). The current study focuses on a set of teachers' practices in ESL progress testing. A case study researcher carries out a "focused in-depth study" of the instance (Smith 1996:5) which, according to Stenhouse (1987:28), involves

definition of the case, delimitation of its boundaries, collection and recording of data about the . . . elements comprising the case, relation among the elements, assessing the development of the case under investigation, considering its history and contextual influences and lastly the preparation of a . . . report.

Walker (1986:190) argues that case studies are guided by the wish to study the "idiosyncratic and the particular as legitimate in themselves." He therefore disputes the claims of critics that case studies are invalid because their findings are not generalisable. In Walker's view, a case can always be a source of reality to readers in a similar situation. He maintains that "it is the reader who has to ask: what is there in this study that I can apply to my own situation?" (Walker 1986:191). Bassey (in Bell 1991:7) concurs, arguing that "the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his or her decision making to that described in the case study."

The generalisability of the current study is based on the similarities of context and working conditions obtaining in African ESL schools in the circuit, district and province (see 1.2.6). A study like the current one, although based on a single school, has the potential to influence testing practices in other schools operating in similar circumstances.

Besides accusations of lack of generalisability, case study research is also criticised for lack of reliability and validity. Since such limitations pose an obvious threat to the usefulness of the current research, it is necessary to discuss what they mean and how they can be minimized.

(i) Validity

According to Bachman (1990), validity is a quality of research conclusions which requires that they match the reality from which they are drawn. Yin (1984:37) refers to this as construct validity, and suggests that in order to maximise this type of validity, the case study researcher must fulfil three conditions in respect of his or her data. Firstly, s/he must use "multiple sources of evidence" in data collection (ibid.), so as to assemble correlating data from different sources about the same instance. Such data is regarded as more expressive of reality than data drawn from only one source. In keeping with this requirement, I have used a variety of data collection techniques (see 1.1, 3.2.1).

Secondly, the researcher is advised to accumulate a "chain of evidence" about an instance. This may, for example, involve observing the same situation several times to ensure it is habitual rather than accidental. In my research validation of this kind was achieved through observing a number of test writing instances, and examining more than one set of question papers, marking schemes, mark lists, and marked scripts.

Thirdly, Yin advises that the case study researcher must be prepared to make the "draft of the research report" available for reading and external validation by the research participants. In this study, an undertaking to this effect was made to everybody concerned, including those not directly involved (see 3.1.2). The school was promised its own copy of the research report so that anyone could check the data against reality and

ensure that I had not imposed my own subjective interpretation. This was done not only for ethical reasons, but also in sympathy with Smith's (1996:6) concern that case studies rely so much on "human instruments" that the only sure way to overcome the intrusion of subjectivity, misinterpretation and bias is to allow the participants to verify the findings.

(ii) Reliability

According to Bachman (1990), the concept of reliability describes the extent to which two or more researchers, applying the same research procedures under similar conditions, can produce the same results. Stenhouse (1987) maintains that reliability is an almost unachievable goal in case study research. This is because the object of in-depth focus in case study research involves a complex interaction of variables which tend to elude definition in operational and quantifiable terms. This invariably results in different researchers having different interpretations of the same instance (Walker 1986). To overcome this problem Walker advises that descriptive-interpretive research should always be as democratic, open, consultative and explicit as possible.

Although reliability remains an ideal in case study research, in the current study I have tried my level best -- through careful deliberations with parents, students and teachers, as well as subject advisers, departmental officials, and research experts, through a rational choice of research participants, and through the use of a wide variety of data collection techniques -- to maximise transparency, explicitness and consultation, and therefore reliability.

3.2.1.2 The Nature of Ethnographic Case Studies

Smith (1996:9) writes that case study and ethnography are "twin research approaches", though not quite identical. For this reason it is always easier to compare rather than contrast these two research approaches. As described above, a case study takes the form of a focused in-depth study of a phenomenon, event, individual, or of an aspect of such variables. According to Johnson (1992:134), a case study is ethnographic if the object of its focused in-depth study has an "essential ingredient of social behaviour" of a "group"

of people (rather than that of an individual or number of individuals). In the words of Spindler and Louise (1987:112), ethnography (ethnos-graphia) can be defined as

a picture of the way of life of some identifiable group of people. These could be any culture-bearing group of people in any time and place . . . to do ethnography is to acquire cultural knowledge.

Watson-Geoghegan (1988:576) offers a somewhat stricter definition of ethnography as "the study of the people's behaviour in naturally occurring on-going settings, with focus on the cultural meaning of behaviour." The element which this formulation adds to Spindler and Louise's (1987) and Johnson's descriptions of ethnography is an emphasis on "the context and meaning" of the group's cultural behaviour.

The concept of "culture" in ethnography is usefully discussed by Wolcott (1970), Goodenough (1976) and Smith (1996). These writers view "culture" as a broad concept consisting of "interacting individuals, customs, practices, institutions, events" (Wolcott 1970:111), and the "concepts, beliefs, and principles of action" (Goodenough 1976:4) which the ethnographer has found could successfully be attributed to members of a society in the context of his dealing with them (Smith 1996:9).

In the educational research context, Hornberger (cited in Cummings 1994:689) offers a useful description of what is meant by a "cultural group" and its behaviour:

a cultural group may range from a large community to a single classroom group, and cultural behaviour may range from the whole complex system of the regular activities of a large community to a single event or series of events as in a teaching/learning (or testing) program.

This particular educational ethnographic case study focuses on the regular practices of a small group of teachers in an ESL progress testing program in a particular African school. It looks at language progress testing as an "enculturating process" (Spindler 1982:2) generating and reflecting a system of practices. These include the perception of

the educational achievements of pupils studying under these conditions (see Nuttal and Murray 1986, and Howatt 1984, in section 3.1.1 above), and the expectations and methods of the teachers working under these conditions (and the theory which informs these: see 1.3.2 above).

3.3 The Paradigm within which the research is located

Geertz (1973) refers to ethnography as a complex, multitrait-multifaceted process. Spindler's (1982:2) explanation for this is that the objects of ethnographic study involve such a complex interaction of highly variable factors and issues that are difficult to define or quantify, or even identify their most important and common elements. For this reason it is not possible to conduct ethnographic research within a positivist paradigm, that is: proceeding from hypothesis formulation, identifying a research population, taking a random representative sample from the population, collecting quantitative data about the population sample under very rigorous and precise experimental control conditions, carrying out a systematic correlation of the findings/observations, and finally going back to the hypothesis to make generalisable conclusions about the entire population based on statistical evidence.

According to Yin (1984) the research procedure described above is so popular in empirical research that it is sometimes referred to as "the scientific" method. Yin argues that it is futile to apply the positivist method to educational ethnographic research because of the high rate of variability of issues focused on in this field of inquiry, which does not allow for the taking of a random representative sample from the population.

The more appropriate research approach in educational ethnography is therefore what Delamont and Hamilton (1986:34) refer to as the "metaphysical" multiple technique approach, falling within the descriptive-interpretive paradigm. Within this approach, the educational ethnographer uses a variety of methods to collect data, usually of a qualitative kind, which is then triangulated, analysed, and recorded in the form of a descriptive-interpretive report.

Geertz (1973) writes that the educational ethnographer is guided by the question "what is going on here?" In the process of answering this question, the researcher is trying to understand how one particular regularly interacting group, in one particular cultural context, described in detail, is not only unique, but shares characteristics with other interacting groups in similar cultural contexts. This implies that the study of an individual educational phenomenon -- such as language progress testing -- could enhance our understanding of educational action more generally and, through the systematic and reflective documentation of experience, help to develop or refine educational theory in the relevant field.

In this particular educational ethnographic case study, I used a number of data collection techniques (see 1.1 & 3.2.1) to attempt to answer Geertz's (1973) question in relation to teachers' practices in language progress testing. I invited teachers to reflect upon their practices, to describe what they do, to think about the reasons for their practices, to identify what they found easy or difficult, to consider suggestions for improvement, and to propose solutions to problems. The teachers' responses were compared and verified using a variety of methods.

The limitations associated with ethnographic research and the application of the descriptive-interpretive approach have caused considerable concern among scholars. Spindler and Louise (1987, in Smith 1996:9) argue that both the ethnographic process and the final product will be affected by limitations arising from

the nature of the problem that sends the ethnographer into the field, the personality of the ethnographer, the research subjects, the course of events during field work, the process of sorting, analysis, and writing that transforms the field work experience into the completed account, the expectations for the final account, including how and where it will be circulated, and what its intended audience and purposes are.

The problems arising from these elements of the ethnographic procedure can be summed up as researcher and participant subjectivity, bias, and relativity. Participants wanting to

present themselves in a better light may become "reflexive" (Delamont and Hamilton 1986:34), while researchers in pursuit of personal ends they may or may not be aware of may consciously or unconsciously manipulate and misinterpret the data. These problems, and potential solutions to them, were described and discussed in the section on case study research, at 3.2.1.1 above. As already pointed out, every effort was made to render this research project as objective as possible in the circumstances.

3.4 Research Techniques used in this Study

In keeping with the requirements for the successful implementation of the interpretive research method, a wide variety of data collection techniques was used in this study (see 3.2.1.2). In this section, the nature, strengths and weaknesses of these research techniques are discussed in relation to the ways they were used in this research project.

3.4.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation was one of the data collection techniques used. Many writers including Geertz (1973), Gearing and Epstein (1982), Spindler (1982), Goetz and Le Compte (1984), Delamont and Hamilton (1986), Adler & Adler (1987), Wolcott (1988), Johnson (1992), and Smith (1996), have written about participant observation in relation to the research they were conducting. According to Smith (1996:5) the aim of observation

is to discern the cultural context of the behaviour observed and identify those mutually understood sets of expectations and explanations that enable the ethnographer to interpret what is happening and what meanings are probably being attributed by others.

Delamont and Hamilton (1986:37) express the aim of observation in interpretive research more concisely: "to gain understanding not only of overt behaviour, but also of the reasons behind that behaviour." This describes precisely the objectives of observation in my classroom-based research, in which I attempt not only to identify and describe

teachers' practices in language progress testing, but also to interpret these in terms of the theoretical frameworks underpinning them.

Spindler (1982) distinguishes two major varieties of participant observation: active participant observation and passive participant observation (also known as non-participant observation). In active participant observation, which was employed in this research project, the ethnographer ideally makes a study of a cultural system which s/he has already been part of. The great strength of this type of observation is that the researcher does not lose time establishing rapport with the participants, and finds it easier to detect and acknowledge participant reflexivity, i.e. a change of behaviour on the part of the participants owing to their being under observation. This benefit of active participant observation was foremost in my choice of research field and participants.

3.4.2 Observation tools used

Three types of observation tools are recommended by Anderson and Burns (1989): focus and rating scales, video and/or audio-tape recording, and note taking. The last-mentioned was found to be the most suitable and affordable in this study: within the set-up of controlled test writing conditions (Oller 1979), it would have been intrusive and disruptive for the observer to have moved from place to place looking for audio information to record. Video-recording would perhaps have been preferable to note taking, but could not be afforded. Besides, the operation of a piece of equipment very rare in the rural area would have had a distracting effect on the mystified pupils. The problem with note taking as an observation tool is that the observer may miss something while concentrating on writing notes. A wrist watch was also used to record time.

3.4.3 Interview

My research also relied heavily on the interview, a key, multifaceted research technique in ethnographic and other qualitative research fields.

Several writers cited in Smith (1996) -- Cohen and Manion (1980, 1989, 1994), Moser

and Kalton (1977), Adler and Adler (1987), Seidman (1991) and Yow (1994) -- seem to agree on the following definition of an interview which he provides:

anything that intrudes upon the natural setting, and is done with the conscious intent of obtaining information directly from the participant/s. This usually takes the form of a two-party conversation initiated by the interviewer who wishes to draw on the participant's value system i.e. his or her knowledge, references, attitudes, and beliefs, for any research relevant information. (Smith 1996:9)

Cohen and Manion (1994:243) have identified several types of interviews from which the researcher may choose. Whatever the choice, however, Mishler (1991:28) advises that in interpretive research "the interviewer must focus the interview on the content specified by research objectives of systematic descriptive prediction or explanation." In keeping with this stricture and other requirements of research methodology (see Cohen and Manion 1994:243), I considered only two types of interview: the structured and the unstructured.

In the structured interview, the researcher prepares an interview schedule which determines the pattern the interview will take. The researcher then follows the order of the questions in the schedule; the coding or categorisation of the answers is also determined in advance.

In the unstructured interview, on the other hand, the interviewer may prepare an interview schedule for purposes of focusing the interview on some specific content, but s/he need not follow the order of questions in the interview schedule. The choice of the next question is determined by the interview conditions: these may relate to the discretion of the interviewer, or to the type of response the subject has made to the previous question. Some questions in the schedule may even end up not being asked if, in the judgment of the interviewer, the response to such questions has become irrelevant or has come up in answers to previous questions.

In this ethnographic case study I used the focused unstructured interview. The aim was to

use open-ended and unrestrictive questions in order to allow the interviewees to express their opinions, attitudes and feelings as freely as possible. Cohen and Manion (1994:243) recommend this type of approach, especially "when complex attitudes are involved."

The major problem with the interview as a data collection technique has been well expressed by Seidman (1991:5):

Objectivity is a very difficult goal to achieve through interview. Both interviewer and interviewee bias and subjectivity can very easily interfere with the interview process thus affecting the validity and reliability of the information obtained.

Cohen and Manion (1989) take the argument further when they observe that the interviewer may be tempted to structure questions in such a way as to seek answers to support his or her own preconceived ideas. And the interviewee, on the other hand, may intentionally evade giving honest answers if these do not project a positive image of him- or herself. In the case of an unstructured interview with open-ended questions it is very easy for the interviewee to get off the point, especially when the interview is being conducted by a research assistant rather than the researcher himself or herself.

To overcome these problems, the interviewer is advised to create a tension-free interview atmosphere to encourage the interviewees "to reveal aspects of themselves in a more humane situation" (Cohen and Manion 1989:319). The interviewer is also advised to be as up-front as possible so that the interviewees are as clear as possible about the intentions of the research. I have already described how "up-frontness" was secured for this project by discussing the research and securing the written approval of all the parties concerned (see appendix A; 3.1.2). In the two interviews conducted in this research, the atmosphere was as friendly as it could have been. Admittedly, some of the questions in the teachers' interview schedule sought to evoke a range of reflectional, judgmental and attitudinal responses on issues pertaining to the quality of teachers' services, and therefore had the potential to impact on personal prestige and job safety. But I made sure that a thorough discussion of the research was held well in advance so as to clear any air of suspicion

between myself as researcher and them as respondents.

Cohen and Manion (*ibid.*) also advise that the interviewer should draw up an interview schedule which can be criticised and refined by experts before the final copy is drawn up. In the case of my research all interview schedules were discussed more than once with the supervisor (see appendices J & K). To keep the respondent on the point, the interviewer must intervene from time to time to probe, confirm points or intercept an irrelevant line of response. Finally, and very importantly, the interviewer should read as much of the available literature on interviewing as possible.

3.4.4 Questionnaire

Stenhouse (1987) argues that although, according to Spindler (1982), some research techniques such as questionnaires are rarely used in qualitative research, they may sometimes be found useful for one or more of their purposes: to obtain information concerning facts or the beliefs, practices, feelings and intentions of participants. In this research a very short structured questionnaire was used to obtain factual information about teachers' pre-service training backgrounds, their working experience and conditions, and their teaching resources. To achieve this objective, easily analysable, close-ended questions were used in the questionnaire (see appendix H).

3.4.5 Audio Equipment

The type of audio equipment used in this project has been described above (see 3.1.5). It was used in only one of the two interviews conducted, with the explicit permission of the participants involved. The reasons for recording information include the need to preserve evidence that the research was carried out, should such evidence ever be called for. It also makes data available for anyone wishing to check the findings and helps to make the interview process natural and conversation-like. With recorded information, the interview scenario can be re-enacted as frequently as is desired, during which time minute details that could not be picked up during the interview might be recognised.

According to Cohen and Manion (1989), besides the danger of equipment malfunctioning, a major problem with recorded information is that an analyst who was not part of the recording process may easily miss out on contextual data.

3.4.6 Written documents

According to Tuckman (1978), another valuable way to obtain relevant research information is by collecting and analysing written documents for specific information. Quite a number of written documents were used in this research. These included official documents such as the syllabi, the guideline document to the CLT approach, the official document on continuous evaluation, and other relevant documents such as samples of test papers, marking schemes, mark schedules, and marking grids.

Documents provide evidence which can easily be checked. Of course, the researcher must be equipped with the requisite analytical skills and be clear about what s/he wants and know how to arrive at it. In the interests of transparency and explicitness many of the documentary sources of information used in this study have been appended to this research report. Since qualitative research tends to draw upon a tremendous quantity of such data (see 3.2.1.2), it is impossible in practical terms to present everything. For this reason I have in some instances had to select a representative sample to append, e.g. in the case of the teachers' testing documents, and in other instances to offer abridged versions, such as in the case of the transcription of the interview with the teachers.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I set out to pull together my field experience from which, through a gradual process of analysis, and in the light of the theoretical and methodological considerations described in chapters two and three, I attempt to build up a comprehensive, critical, descriptive-interpretive research report: the ultimate product of this ethnographic case study. This report will form the basis for the conclusions, suggestions, recommendations and proposals for further research made in chapter five.

I shall proceed by, first, describing what goes on in the classroom during a test giving/writing process, which I try to understand in the light of the theory and tenets of the CA to language testing. Secondly I examine and analyse teachers' testing documents: the question papers, the marking schemes, mark lists, and marked scripts, as part of the critical reflective process of the research project. Thirdly I describe and analyse the short questionnaire completed by the teachers, with the aim of gaining a richer understanding of the identity of the teachers whose language testing practices are focused on in this research project. Fourthly, I examine the official documents, and fifthly, give an account of the interview with the subject adviser, in both cases to try to access the extent to which curriculum design, educational planning and administration influence teachers' practices in language progress testing. Lastly, I bring in the invaluable voice of the teachers in an interview situation because, in the consultative spirit advocated by Delamont and Hamilton (1986), I regard this as the appropriate place for teachers to reflect on, describe and evaluate not only their language testing practices but also the interpretation of these by the researcher. I also thought this a strategic point to solicit teachers' supplementations, corrections and criticisms of my findings -- in recognition of the need to be consultative in descriptive-interpretive research (see 3.2.1.1. ii), in acknowledgement of the subjective limitations of the research (see 3.3), in response to the

ethical appeal for openness, explicitness, and transparency, and in line with the working of multi-faceted, multiple-method ethnographic research.

But as pointed out previously, the semblance of orderly procedure described above is more representative of the researcher's mental design for the research report than the actual data collection process in the field. It must be said, however, that order in the report which follows is sometimes compromised in favour of the triangulation of information obtained through different research techniques.

4.1.1 Observation

In this research project, observation as a research technique was used to "allow cultural activities to talk" (Smith 1996:4), enabling the researcher to identify teachers' contextualised, naturally and habitually occurring testing practices, which could then be interpreted in terms of the theory and tenets of the communicative approach to language testing.

The type of observation applied in this study and the reasons for its choice, the categories and/or aspects of cultural behaviour and the contexts focused on in this observational exercise, and the observational tools used, are all discussed in chapter three (3.4.1 & 3.4.2).

4.1.2 Observation report

Four one-hour language progress test giving/writing sessions were observed, at the rate of one a month, one in each of the streams A, B, C, and D, involving each of the four teachers offering ESL in the five streams of the grade ten class. No observations were made in the fifth stream: this would have meant observing the same teacher in action twice, which may well have induced reflexive behaviour on the second occasion (the teacher being primed by the experience of the first observation exercise to have some idea of what the researcher was looking for).

I refer to the observed tests as one, two, three and four, according to the sequence of observation. Because the four sessions had much in common, after my detailed report of the first test observed I omit description of much that is repeated and focus rather on the unique elements in each successive test.

4.1.3 Test one (Appendix B)

This observation takes place in the month of February in stream D of the grade ten class. It has forty-two pupils in a relatively small classroom (originally planned for 30 pupils). The pupils are sitting two per desk, their school bags either on top of their desks, or on the floor just next to them. I am inside the classroom, standing against the wall at the back of the classroom. I am holding a pen and a notebook ready to take notes (see 3.4.2). I am considering passing slowly around the classroom, casting a curious eye at the teacher, the pupils, the question papers, and at the watch. A male teacher is standing in front of the classroom behind his desk, a heap of papers on the desk. He has Practical English at university level and six years' teaching experience, all of it teaching ESL to grades ten and eleven.

The time is 8:57 a.m. The teacher initiates communication by calling for attention: "Listen, silence everybody", he calls out loudly, but the pupils continue talking. "Keep quiet everybody!", he shouts at the top of his voice, assuming a show of anger on his face. And there is instant silence. Then follow a few orders and threats: "You are going to write a test over the next two periods. You must clear your desks of all the books except the test books. Anybody without a covered test book will not be marked. And anyone caught copying will be severely punished." The atmosphere is very tense now and orders are executed in total silence.

After this communication the teacher keeps quiet, signalling to me to help with the distribution of the question papers. By 9:03 we are done. The teacher resumes his position of control in front of the class and sits down on his chair. For the next few minutes, he casts a fear-inducing and searching gaze at the pupils, apparently with intent to identify wrong doers. It is now nine minutes into time, and no instructions have been

given to the pupils to start writing. A few of them have started, while others are still looking at the paper, apparently waiting for the order to start. Then comes the signal: "What are the rest doing, why don't you start, Peter? You have only one hour and no extra time this time." In the next two minutes everybody has started working. At about the same time a few pupils started tearing pages out of their test books, apparently because they have started off wrong. I notice at least five such pupils within a few minutes, and I wonder why they don't cross out only what has been done wrong, correct it, and continue working! I am made to understand the reason only after the exercise: "We deduct marks for dirty work, so they wouldn't like to take a chance."

The test is relatively short, a fifty-mark, two-page question paper to be answered in one hour. It is handwritten on a hand stencil which is duplicated to produce enough copies for all the pupils. But poor duplication has made some of the scripts almost illegible, while others are fairly legible (see appendix B, test 1). This alone exposes the pupils to inequality of opportunity! Although it was not the aim of this observation exercise to analyse the question paper, at face value, the paper appears sufficiently demanding to warrant fifty marks.

As the pupils work through the question paper, I notice them leaving many blank spaces: pupils seem to proceed according to the order of the question paper, answering those questions they know, and for those they don't know, writing only the question numbers and sub-numbers, skipping an estimated sufficient space, and going on to the next number. One wonders why they are not taught to begin with the numbers they are sure of so that their work is one continuous block of script! Another interesting observation is that almost all of them have gone for the few objective questions about the comprehension passage, in spite of the fact that on some question papers the passage is not clearly legible. They appear to have attempted it in about the first fifteen minutes. Is this because the task is easy, or because it can be guessed?

It is 21 minutes into time, and ever since he reprimanded the students for taking long to start, the teacher has communicated neither with the class as a whole nor with any individual pupil. He hasn't even bothered to walk around in the classroom to make

himself available where he might be needed. He is still posted on his chair from which, from time to time, he projects a searching gaze around the classroom. About this time a pupil raises her hand, which remains unnoticed for about a minute. Then comes the response: "What is the problem, Nazo?" "Sorry teacher, must we write symbols there in number 1.5?" inquires the pupil. The teacher takes a quick look at the question paper, and in a way distracting to the whole class he retorts: "Have you read the instructions? You must always read the instructions. Look there, what do they say? I need symbols only in that number. Symbols only unless you are going to mark yourself."

Moments later the pupil who has asked the question tears a leaf out of her test book and spends a few minutes copying something from the loose sheet into the test book. About three other pupils who have been listening follow suit, but the rest ignore the teacher and work on.

By the end of the 24th minute several pupils have stopped writing, closed their books and are sitting idle at their desks. It appears they are afraid of handing their books to the teacher and going out. By the 27th minute many more have finished and the teacher has realised this and gives his final order: "Those who have finished must bring their books and go out."

This raises a few questions for me: Why did the pupils finish so quickly, in less than half the time? What do the pupils know about the proper utilisation of time in the writing of tests, or the teachers about the role of time when they are setting the test? What are the implications of this for the quality of the test and the answers to it? These questions would come up later in the discussions and interviews with the teachers. By the 29th minute everybody has finished and gone out of the classroom. And the teacher is still seated at his desk, trying to arrange the books in preparation for leaving 31 minutes early.

In chapter three I pointed out that discussion of the information collected with the research subjects would be an important tool for the enhancement of the reliability of data in this study (see also 3.1.3 & 3.2.1.1. ii). And it was in this light that I seized the

opportunity of the remaining 31 minutes of the period to try to discuss a few observations with the teacher. First I asked him why most of the pupils seemed to have finished so fast. His reply was that "Most of the time it is those who have found the test very difficult, and those who are naturally lazy and do not have anything to write." This seemed to make some sense, because I had noticed many pupils leaving a lot of blank spaces in their scripts. But one would still want to know why they found the test difficult, or why they appeared to be demotivated. Secondly, I asked the teacher's opinion about the quality of the print on the question paper, in response to which he admitted that there was a problem. "Some of us are not good at typing, and it may take us a whole weekend to type a small question paper. But there is nobody prepared to sacrifice that amount of time, given the pressure of the work and our private problems. So we resort to hand-stencils."

4.1.4 Test two (Appendix B)

Test two is written during the month of March in stream A of the grade ten class. There are 23 pupils in the classroom, and I have counted up to 28 chairs which are not occupied. I am later made to understand that this class has a roll of 51 pupils, of whom 55% happen to be absent today. A male teacher is sitting at his desk in front of the classroom looking at one of the question papers. He has English III and two years' teaching experience, teaching ESL in grades 8, 10, and 11. About three times, he has walked from his desk to the door, apparently to see whether there are still some pupils on their way. The teacher checks his watch: the time is 10:03 a.m. He faces the class and greets them, and asks them about their friends who are not yet in the classroom. He is told they are absent and he says, "Well, we are not going to keep on waiting for people who have told themselves that success in academics is none of their business." And in a rather imperative tone, he continues: "You are going to write a test over the next hour. I don't want to see any other books on your desks except your test books, and I hope those sitting two at a desk are not going to attempt to copy. And before I distribute the question paper I should expect everybody to keep quiet." The pupils are absolutely quiet by the time the teacher walks around the class to distribute question papers to them. I have decided to remain in position at the back since the teacher has not asked me to help with

the distribution of papers, but when he goes past me I stretch out my hand for a copy of the question paper, which I am given.

The time is now 10:12 a.m., everybody has received a paper, and the teacher is back in his position in front of the class. The teacher looks at his watch, and at the pupils; he notices that some of them have already started writing and as if for the sake of those who have not yet started, he says, "The time is a quarter past ten, you may now start writing." The teacher spends the next few minutes going through the question paper at his desk. When he raises his eyes he notices a pupil who has not yet started writing. For the last five or so minutes I have been looking at this child trying to signal to her friends to lend her a pen. She can neither talk nor move about in the classroom, so friends who might help have not seen her. This is definitely an individual problem, but the teacher addresses her from his desk, "And what is your problem, Piko?" "I borrow a pen, teacher", she answers. "Why did you not carry your pen, can you go to work in the garden without a spade or hoe?" fires back the teacher. Most of the pupils are now looking at this pupil who is visibly terrified, but at least she has secured permission to go around the class to borrow a pen. By the time she gets one she has lost about six minutes of working time.

The question paper seems to have face validity: it is typed and well duplicated and its instructions, sections and numbers are clearly distinguishable. For the moment, I refrain from comment on the material content of the paper, which belongs in the section on question paper analysis. The pupils seem to be working through the 50 mark paper with relative ease: most of them appear to be concentrating, and I have seen only two of them tearing pages out of their test books. The teacher has not been called upon to clarify anything. Of some concern, however, is the observation that by 10:47, most of the pupils have finished writing, and when the teacher calls for the books of those who have finished two minutes later, the whole class heads for the teacher's desk to hand in their work and go out. The pupils have worked for a maximum of 34 minutes on a paper which I had feared to be too weighty for 50 marks.

In the remaining eleven minutes I managed to discuss two issues arising: firstly, I wanted a second opinion as to why most pupils were not using their time properly. This teacher's

response was not very different from the one I had got during the first observation: "Probably they don't have enough to write, I don't quite understand why! There must be a problem because they always write shallow answers. All teachers complain!" Secondly, I wanted to know why the teacher had decided to give a test to less than 50% of the class. The response was not hesitant: "You cannot afford to wait for everybody! You will never have them all. They are so irregular at school, and some of them do it deliberately to avoid a test." "So how are those who have not written affected eventually?" I probed. And the teacher pointed out a range of things that may apply to them: those who have a good reason for being away may be allowed to write the same test the following day, the others may simply be marked absent, or given a class average depending "on the nature of their case." I was left wondering what these words meant, but I couldn't ask further lest I be considered too inquisitive (see 3.4.2 for comment on the ethical constraints of my position as HOD/researcher).

4.1.5 Test three (Appendix B)

Test three is written in the month of April, in stream B of the class focused on in this study. The class has a roll of 42 pupils, of whom 24% are absent on this day. The pupils are already seated by the time I walk into the classroom just behind a female teacher. I pause for a few seconds in front of the class as the children stand up to greet us, after which I proceed to my observatory position at the back of the classroom. In this school, a female teacher is referred to as "mistress" (or "miss") and it is only her male counterpart that is conventionally known as "teacher". In this study I have tried not to deviate from referential conventions. Thus the mistress giving test three has English I at university level and five years' teaching experience, for three of which she has been involved in the teaching of ESL at grade ten and eleven levels.

On this occasion the mistress goes through the initial communication with the pupils in a way and tone not different from the those described in tests one and two. The test is meant to be written between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., but the general assembly and the late duplication of the paper have delayed the exercise by 10 minutes. The hand-scripted paper is looking so horrible after duplication that the mistress feels she needs a few more

minutes to go through checking for areas that might need correcting. These have turned out to be so numerous as to discourage any attempt to correct them. Asked about the quality of the print, the mistress made a lengthy response in an apologetic tone:

To be sincere it was very poor. And especially on page 2; about three quarters of the page was not clear. Sincerely I felt discouraged to start correcting it. I imagined it was going to take up all the time. I hoped the pupils' copies were better than mine, but that was wishful thinking. I told myself I would go around the class clarifying things for those who raised questions. You see we don't have the right pen to write on the hand stencils . . . I hope your research will solve some of our problems

The mistress's own corrected copy, indicating the amount of correction carried out, is appended at the end of this research report.

By the time the pupils start writing it is 19 minutes into time. The mistress has advised the pupils to ask for clarification of illegible words, especially in the question section. And only a few minutes later a few hands are raised, which become more and more as time goes on. In some cases the mistress is physically doing the correction herself on the question papers of pupils, until in the 26th minute she identifies a more problematic section which she rewrites on the board. This claims a whole three minutes of the pupils' time, but at least it reduces the volume of inquiries significantly. But there is still a pupil who has got her hand up. Her problem is different and more urgent, but she has been drowned in the common problem. Most probably she has had her hand raised since the 19th minute when writing started, but she has not been noticed. The pupil has forgotten her test book, and she wants to ask for permission to use a loose piece of paper to write her test. And this means that all this time she has not yet started writing! "Yes! yes!", says the mistress as she pats her back and bends down to speak to her individually. "And you should have told me a long time ago, or you should just have written and told later. Hurry up anyway." And she goes on and draws her attention to the corrections on the board and advises her to ask immediately if she needs more help. From time to time throughout the session the mistress monitors her progress.

This particular paper is out of 100 marks. The time allocated is not indicated anywhere on the question paper, but the pupils have been told that they are going to write a test during the first two periods, i.e. from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. The time now is 8:50, and the pupils are still working, with the exception of two or three who may be finished or just resting. I am expecting the mistress to extend the time due to the many interruptions that have been experienced during the course of session, but she has not yet done so. As I consider what questions I am going to discuss with the mistress, the 9 o'clock bell for the change of periods rings and I am shocked to see about half the class getting up from their desks and heading for the mistress's table with their test books. I look around the class and what I see are pupils hurriedly drawing lines separating different questions in their test books. Hardly any of them are still writing. Within the next three minutes all the pupils have rotated to another classroom for the next lesson.

The mistress is in a hurry to get out of this classroom because other children and their mistress are waiting to enter, and I have a double period with a matric class a block away, so I don't get the chance to discuss anything with her. But the questions which raise themselves are: Should there be no difference in terms of time allocation between a 50 and 100 mark test? Secondly, shouldn't the pupils be reminded from time to time of how much time they had used and what they had left? Thirdly, had these particular pupils gone out because they had finished or because they had to rotate to another classroom? I hoped to bring up these questions later in the interview with the teachers.

4.1.6 Test four (Appendix B)

Test four is written in stream C of grade ten in the month of May. The class has 30 pupils in all, just the ideal teacher-student ratio in these schools. But the reason for keeping the class at this size, as I was told later, is that it is a special class: pupils in this stream, both males and females, are doing typing, accounting and home economics in addition to the three languages. The school has only 32 typewriters, of which one is for the mistress and 31 for the pupils. This limitation was crucial in obliging the circuit administration and parents to allow the principal to maintain that particular class at that size.

The test is scheduled for the first two periods after the lunch break, i.e. 11:40 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. But the pupils tend to drag their feet to class at this time of day. This time the mistress has also come in 8 minutes late from the direction of the duplicating room. She finds me and a few pupils in the classroom and hurries to the back to tell me she has been trying to get help with duplicating the paper, but that the teacher in charge was not available until the last minute of the lunch break. Then she hurries back and stands at the entrance so that the pupils who are late can see that she is waiting for them. The class is full within the next 3 minutes except for one pupil who is, however, known to be around. The mistress has quickly called for silence, she has rushed out at those who have come in late, and she goes on to recite the pre-test set of instructions in the same tone as previously described in tests one and two.

The mistress, a teacher training graduate with Special English III, teaching experience of five years, and a similar period in the teaching of ESL, has assumed a look of seriousness which she maintains to the end of the session. While the distribution of question papers is still in process, the outstanding pupil comes in running. The mistress halts the process and berates the pupil for latecoming, without giving her a chance to explain why. By the time she sits down in her place she looks terribly humiliated.

By the end of the 17th minute every pupil has started writing. This 100 mark paper is also written on a hand-stencil. The duplication is also poor, although the pupils appear to be working through it steadily as if they are used to this kind of situation. Much of what happens during the session is similar to what has already been described in the previous tests: this mistress, although not rooted to the control centre of her desk, is moving around the classroom with a look of great seriousness, presumably intended to intimidate those who might be tempted to copy. No mention of used or remaining time is made. At 12:36 p.m. the last pupil is walking out of the classroom, which means that the slowest pupil has worked for 39 minutes instead of 60.

There are some four minutes left but I don't have any question about this particular test. I have discussed similar cases with other educators before. But since the mistress is now asking whether I have a question, I decide to squeeze in one I had no opportunity to ask

at the end of the last observation (test three). "Do you think both a 50 and 100 mark test should be allocated equal time?" I ask. And she responds: "I personally have never seen a monthly test of more or less than one hour. Or what do you think?" But before I respond she continues, as we walk out of the classroom: "but bothering about enough time causes you headache for nothing. These pupils, even if you give them 30 minutes, they will finish before the end." "But why?" (I hasten to exploit this opportunity.) "I don't know, they are just like that." I thank her and we take different directions.

4.2.1 Analysis and interpretation of data

As stated in 4.1.1 the aim of the classroom observation was to identify teachers' testing practices so as to interpret them in terms of the theory and tenets of the CA to language testing. The pattern of behaviour recorded below was noted in all or at least most of the observation sessions described above.

(i) Testing atmosphere

It was noted that throughout the tests observed the test giving/writing atmosphere was tense rather than calm and conducive to free, critical, and creative expression. In all their initial pre-test communication with the pupils the teachers/mistresses intimidated the whole class by the manner in which they called them to silence and delivered a chain of instructions and threats of punishment, e.g. "You must clear your desks of all books" and "anyone caught copying will severely be punished."

(ii) The teacher's role

In three of the four testing sessions observed the teacher's role was manifestly to control and instruct rather than facilitate. This is reflected, in tests one and two, in the way in which the teachers posted themselves in their position of control, from where they cast fear-inducing looks at the pupils, ostensibly to catch them or deter them from copying. In test four the mistress attempted to achieve the same effect by moving around silently with an intimidating look of seriousness. It was only in test three that the mistress appeared to

play a facilitating role, moving about the classroom trying to make her test more legible to the pupils and responding kindly to the pupil who wanted to use a loose piece of paper to write her test on. But one could argue that she may have changed her attitude because she felt accountable for both situations.

(iii) The role of progress testing

None of the four teachers seemed to have made use of the diagnostic and washback properties of language progress tests. There were obvious problems: for example, pupils tearing pages out their test books because of slight mistakes, leaving a lot of blank spaces in their books, and using on average only 55% of the time allocated. Asked for reasons for this, teachers didn't seem to know: "I don't know, but there must be a problem", was the response of a long-serving mistress when asked why pupils did not utilise their time properly in test four. This means that these teachers had not bothered to use their previous tests to identify pupils' test writing problems and help them to overcome them, or even to think about the time allocated and revise their estimates of how long questions would take to answer.

(iv) Types of questions

Although it was not the aim of the observation exercise to investigate question paper content, the fact that all four teachers were seriously concerned about deterring pupils from copying (all of them uttered threats about punishing cheats and thereafter kept on the lookout for culprits), leads to the inference that the tests were for the most part structured atomistically, eliciting answers which could easily be copied. This kind of situation usually applies to the discrete point and cloze types of tests which are characteristic of the structuralist and psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approaches to language testing (see 2.4.2 & 2.4.3).

4.2.2 Conclusion on observations

From the foregoing analysis and interpretation of testing practices in the four observations

made, it appears that the teachers were far from implementing the CA to language testing. This would have required on their part a more facilitative, tension-free, pupil-centred approach to language testing (see Barkhuizen 1993). The teachers also showed no sign of having used previous language progress tests to diagnose and address pupils' test-writing problems -- such as using their time properly, starting with the easy questions, correcting an error without tearing the offending page out. The characteristics manifested by the teachers were more akin to the teacher-centred structuralist approach to testing, in terms of which the pupil is expected simply to reproduce in testing the knowledge imparted in teaching.

4.3 Analysis of teachers' testing documents

In sections 2.4.2, 2.4.3, and 2.5.2 I reviewed three major trends of thought about second language acquisition, which in the 20th century have underpinned trends in second language teaching and testing (see Upshur 1969). In analysing the teachers' testing documents, and especially the question papers, the marking schemes, and the marked scripts, I have been concerned to explore and illustrate the extent to which these documents exhibit tendencies characteristic of one or other of these schools of thought. To achieve this objective I have been guided by questions such as: What test types do papers combine, what order of questions is most prevalent, what expected answers have been projected in the marking schemes, how much room is there for the pupil to deviate from the expected answer, what cognitive challenge do the questions offer the pupil, and to what extent is the test task content relevant to the testees' future communication needs in a real-life situation.

4.3.1 Gaining access to the teachers' testing documents

Although, as is claimed in section 3.1.2., I had based my choice of research participants on their willingness to participate in the research, when the actual field work started and I requested the testing documents I met with some resistance. Among the promises and excuses I often heard were: "Sorry, I forgot the marking scheme at home"; "I have misplaced the question paper, I will give it to you as soon as I have found it"; "I will

give you the mark schedule as soon as I have entered the marks from the pupils' books"; "I have something to correct on that list, I will send it to you soon." Although at times I had teachers giving or sending me documents before I requested them, or giving them to me on the first request, I generally only got documents on the second or even third request. I was inclined to think that these evasive tactics were inspired by teachers' anxiety about what exactly I was going to do with the data I was collecting. At one point a teacher said: "I hope whatever you are going to do with all this material has nothing to do with us as grade ten teachers of English!" I had to reassure her and even suggest that before they gave me the documents, they had a right to erase any information that identified themselves, their class or the school. Some teachers were not very confident about the quality of their papers: for example, after handing in his paper to me one teacher said, "I am sure you are going to find something wanting about that paper: I myself was not quite satisfied with it after setting it." Other teachers did not have anything to submit. Having been asked three times for a marking scheme one teacher said: "For this particular test I actually didn't need a memo so I didn't write one, I knew everything off by heart."

The hardships of acquisition notwithstanding, I collected 12 question papers out of the 16 anticipated. The papers were collected at the rate of one per stream per month. The two male teachers each failed to give me two of their papers, although other records such as mark lists and test books showed that the tests had been written. It became both nagging and a matter of ethical concern for me, given my position as an HOD-researcher, to push beyond a third request for these test papers.

Having obtained a working amount of data, however, I labelled my question papers A to L for referential convenience, since in most cases the head information, including dates, had been erased by the research participants: my feeling was that the restoration of these dates for referential ease might constitute an ethical offence against the research subjects.

Of the twelve papers obtained only 8 had marking schemes or memos as they are called. The mark lists were available for all the classes, although the teacher teaching two streams gave me lists for only one of her streams. She claimed that the outstanding list

had been borrowed by the grade ten E class teacher, who was having trouble finding it. On three of the four mark lists teachers had placed the 100 mark monthly record for May after the 300 mark mid-year (semester) record for June. Asked why, one of the teachers responded: "By the third week of May you are so pressurised for setting the mid-year examination that the marking and recording of the May test sometimes escapes your memory, and you remember it only when you need to submit the half year mark to the HOD or principal for that matter." As regards the pupils' test books, I requested a sample of two books per class: I asked teachers to pick what they considered to be two distinguished students from two streams, two average students from two streams, two weak students from two streams and an arbitrary choice of four books from the other two streams, which made a total of ten -- two from each of the five streams. I hoped thereby to be dealing with a reasonably representative sample.

My agreement with the teachers was that they would give me the records as they were, or with the "undesirable" information already erased. Their preference for the latter alternative was sometimes too enthusiastic: they cleared all the head information off the document, so that I had to rely on the body content to relate the record back to grade ten. In most cases, the teachers asked me to photo-copy the document and hand him/her back the original. Where possible, however, I preserved as much of the information about class, stream, and date on the document as I could, and only eliminated sensitive information about the teachers', pupils' and school's identity.

4.4 Analysis and interpretation of the test documents

I analysed all the test documents collected. I thought that the quantity of data was handy enough for analysis in its totality, and my feeling was that a reasonably complete picture of the situation obtaining would emerge.

4.4.1 Analysis and interpretation of question papers

(i) Composition, letter and short writing topics

Three out of twelve question papers have open-ended questions of the kind mentioned above (see 4.3). And these were set by only two teachers, for only two streams out of five. In all three papers there are five essay or composition topics, one short writing topic, two formal and two informal letters. Four of the five composition topics are essentially narrative in form: they require the pupils to recall and recount a past experience. The remaining composition topic is discursive: it requires the pupil to challenge the culturally fixed roles of the man and woman in the rural setting -- the one in the garden, and the other in the kitchen. Three letter topics out of four are also narrative: the pupil is required to retrieve information about recent events and relate it to a friend, a sister, and the police. Only one letter topic involves persuasion, although the appeal it is supposed to make is also based on the recall of (fictitious) recent happenings. The short writing topic is about taking the minutes of a recent meeting. Obviously here too memory testing is involved in addition to the testing of an important real-life skill (see appendix L for a list of these open-ended questions). One of the three papers featuring these topics didn't have a marking scheme at all. The two that did, did not have a marking grid for composition. Only one paper had a brief marking grid for the letter, indicating marks allocated to its different structural components: address, salutation, body, conclusion. It does not indicate how marks are allocated to quality of expression (see appendix D for a copy of the type of composition and letter marking grid prescribed for use).

(ii) Comprehension

All the papers but three have a comprehension task which, in all cases except three, consists of a comprehension passage followed by comprehension questions. In the three exceptional cases, comprehension texts are followed by language questions based on the passage. Three comprehension texts from three different question papers have neither a title nor a question relating to the possible title of the passage. In seven out of nine cases,

the comprehension texts are very short, ranging between two short paragraphs and half a page. In the other two cases texts cover one full page. It should further be noted that although some three comprehension texts (tests A, D, and J) addressed contemporary concerns such as flying aeroplanes (D), drugs (A), and alcohol (J), there were many passages which were not stimulating: most of them were extracted from folkloric or fictional stories, dealing with baboons and meales (H), the unwise shepherd (H), the death of an old wise father (C), the flying diamond (G), the leopard and baboons (L). Finally, I think it is noteworthy that the teachers (except one, test L) did not acknowledge the sources of their texts. Did teachers give any thought at all to the appropriateness of the texts to the level of their pupils' maturity (Weir 1987)? Were the teachers actually aware of their sources? Where did they expect the pupils to find the original sources should they have been motivated "to carry on with their learning process on their own long after the language task had ended" (Maley 1986:89)?

The questions based on all the comprehension texts fit into what Reynolds (1995) subsumes under low to middle order categories: objective questions in tests A & D, and several yes-or-no answer questions. For example, in test C, comprehension question 6 runs as follows: "Was his (Amodi's) father alive?" -- and the answer from the marking scheme for the paper is "Yes." Question 7 in the same paper is exactly the same: "Did he recognise Amodi immediately?", the answer in the memo being "No". Others are closed questions requiring one word, one phrase or, at most, one sentence answers. For example, in question paper G, comprehension question 2 runs thus: "Where does Mrs. Perkins hide the diamond?" The answer most pupils gave in their test books is: "in the clock," a phrase answer. The next question in the same paper asks the name of Mr. and Mrs. Perkins' daughter, and the answer to this is only one word: "Polly." It is probably true to say that all the questions in all six of the question papers with comprehension passages require only straightforward, surface comprehension and elicit closed answers.

(iii) Language tasks

With one exception, the test papers analysed have large sections based on the formal grammatical aspects of language: vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and syntax. In some

cases these tasks, usually in a section entitled "language", claim 50% of the paper and more. In question paper A, the language section is allocated 25 marks out of 50, in paper E, 40 out of 100, in paper F, 30 marks out of 50, in paper I, 50 marks out of 50. The teachers are so overtly specific about the formal discrete language aspect they are testing for that there can be no doubt as to the language theory informing their practice: the structuralist view of language testing (see 2.4.2). The sub-section instructions in these tests are revealing: "Write the following sentences in indirect speech" (test D, five questions); "Complete the following sentences by using the correct preposition" (test B, six questions); "Give the correct form of the verbs in the brackets" (test C, five questions); "Choose the correct spelling . . ." (test A, five questions); "Punctuate the following passage" (test A, five marks); "Change the following sentences into the continuous tense" (test G, six questions), etc. The cloze test so popular in the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic testing tradition (see 2.4.1) appears occasionally, e.g. test I, questions 3 & 4, and test A, question 4. But such examples were so rare in the question paper sample that it would appear that teachers are not familiar with the testing theory it embodies.

Of notable interest too is the extent to which teachers used contrived, decontextualised sentences to test the formal aspects of language. Examples of these are everywhere to be found: in test E, question 5, the sub-section instructions are: "Begin the following sentences with the underlined words." Sentence C runs as follows: "The jackal is catching ten sheep." The answer in the marking scheme is: "Ten sheep are being caught by the jackal." One wonders under what circumstances grade ten pupils are likely to need to use such a sentence, or others like it, in a **real-life situation** that the communicative approach to language testing aims to approximate as closely as possible (see 2.5.3).

(iv) The literature tasks

One test paper out of a 100 marks (test K) is entirely on literature. Although there are two books prescribed for grade ten, a novel and a poetry anthology, test K is set on the novel only. There are nine other tests with literature tasks, all of them set on the novel Comfort Herself by a Ugandan woman writer, G. Kaye.

Only one paper out of ten (test J) has a small sub-section on two poems from Poetry Quest, an anthology edited by a South African, P. Southey. Unfortunately this sub-section is one of several in this particular paper which are unscored. In the other papers, the literature section comprises between 20% and 40% of the paper. The obvious imbalance between literature tasks based on the novel and those based on poetry is cause for concern. If some washback effect can be assumed (see 2.3.3, iii & iv), does this not mean that the preference for the novel is also present in the teaching? I had already conducted my interviews by the time this question came up, so I opted to raise the matter informally (I had made provision for discussing my findings from time to time with the research participants (see 3.1.3). One teacher responded: "Well, with the novel you understand the story easily, you enjoy it, you and the pupils enjoy the story and somewhere between the book you begin to understand the themes etc. even if you didn't have a study guide at the beginning. But poetry is hard. The pupils do not enjoy it. We need study guides to deal with it." And in response to a question about how many poems they had taught this year, another teacher said: "Not yet many this year. At least not in my case. We told you we needed study guides but you have not yet provided us with any (the reference to me is as an HOD in the school). The themes and figures of speech are difficult to identify without study guides."

The questions in the literature section, like those in the composition section, all fit into the low to middle order categories (see Reynolds 1995), with several questions expecting one word, one phrase, or one sentence answers. To give a few examples, the first three literature questions in test paper D are:

- Q.1. Who is Mante's wife?
- Q.2. Who is Ayambili?
- Q.3. Who is John's wife?

The expected answers to these questions, as given in the marking schemes, are respectively, "Efula"; "Mante's servant"; and "Winnie". Several other question papers have similar questions, e.g. test papers C, F, G, and H. In other cases, low order questions are based on vocabulary. For example, in test paper G, question 2b reads as

follows: "Give the meaning of the following words . . .", and a list of ten words drawn from the prescribed novel follows. Each word is allocated one mark, and in the marking scheme only one word answers are given. It is not made clear to the pupils whether they have to give the meanings of the words as used in the context of the novel or as defined in the dictionary. Although the former seems more likely, it cannot be taken for granted.

There are a few questions which expect answers of up to one short paragraph. But these too are based on memory. For example, in test paper C, there are a few questions of the kind: "Give the picture of Comfort as given by the author." And the one-sentence, five-mark answer, a direct transcription from the text to the marking scheme, is: "Her eyes were deep black and her hair was thick and springy round her head and she had neat little ears and tiny gold earrings."

Similar questions appeared in test papers B, H, and J. Like the comprehension questions, they were all of the kind requiring closed answers and straightforward surface comprehension. There is not a single question relating to the themes of the novel.

4.4.2 Individual test problems which might have impacted on performance

In sections 1.3.1 and 2.1.1 I refer to the individual test problems of the kind identified by Barkhuizen (1993), which might have had an adverse impact on pupils' performance in progress tests. Although the entire Barkhuizen (1993) list (see 1.3.1) may not apply to the tests analyzed in this study, a few of these problems affected a number of the analyzed tests in ways and to degrees that are worth noting. Of particular concern to this study are typography and lack of clarity of instructions.

Weir (1990) points out that in order to design a communicative test making use of some non-verbal illustrations that are part and parcel of the present day daily communication system, e.g. diagrams and photographs, charts, tables, and graphs, the test designer must have access to, and know how to use the appropriate equipment which may include photocopiers, typing equipment, etc. Although the school focused on in this study has a number of typewriters and at least some limited access to a photocopier, some teachers do

not know how to use the former, while the latter is too expensive for the school to use to the full satisfaction of the needs of all the pupils. The result of these constraints is the production of poorly written papers such as tests C and D in appendix B. The comprehension gaps in these tests are illustrated in test C2, the typed version of test C (see appendix B). With so many illegible words and punctuation marks, it is obvious that such a test will be very difficult for a pupil of limited competence to follow. It should be noted however, that some of the tests, including a few written on hand stencils, were properly produced and that teachers should be commended on that note (see appendix B, tests A, B, and J). For lack of affordability none of the tests used non verbal illustrations.

In several cases, the instructions in the test papers were obstructive: either they were vague or ambiguous, or when carried out, the result didn't make sense. An example of clear, precise instructions is found in test A (appendix B), against which instructions in many other test papers contrast significantly as the following examples will illustrate.

In test B, sections B opens with no instructions at all. And at the end of the comprehension text, the pupil is not told that the questions that follow are about the preceding reading text. The pupil is expected to make the links by himself or herself and be unfairly penalised should the wrong links be made. In test D, each of the underlined words in the comprehension passage has to be matched with its synonym from a list of words given below the text. The instructions run as follows: " Choose from the underlined words, the word which has the same meaning in the list given below." This sounds very vague although it may be argued that the pupil will use his/her previous experience in test writing to interpret it properly. In test G, the instructions at the beginning of the comprehension section are also vague: "Read the following passage carefully and answer the following questions." This may be interpreted to mean that both the passage and the questions are following at the same time rather than in sequence.

In addition to vague instructions are those which when carried out the product does not make sense. In test E, question 5, the following instructions are given: " Begin the following sentences with the underlined words." Question (a) under the same sections runs as follows: A dog bits [sic] him. Thus the underlined word (rather than words)

which the pupil has to begin with is "him" rather than its correct form "he". In C2 - the typed version of test C, I have also highlighted obstructive omissions of punctuation marks, and reporting words after direct speech in inverted commas. Problematic too is also a situation whereby a whole test is written in capital letters throughout e.g. test G. As pointed out above, all these problems may lead to poor performance in tests.

4.4.3 Comment on question papers

The analysis of the question papers has demonstrated that the teachers, whether consciously or not, were operating within the structuralist paradigm of testing. In the section on composition questions I discussed the absence of cognitively challenging, open-ended topics and questions which would have given the pupils an opportunity to display their discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competencies (see Brown 1987, Maley 1986, and Canale and Swain 1980, respectively). Most of the few topics there were, were descriptive, testing pupils' memory of past events and their ability to narrate them using accurate language -- qualities which are characteristic of the structuralist approach to language teaching and testing which gives insufficient attention to text and genre. What were missing were imaginatively explorative topics addressing contemporary socio-political, economic, and environmental issues and allowing for critical, creative and emotional engagement with these issues, thereby enhancing the pupils' cognitive development. For this reason there was very limited opportunity in these tests for pupils to engage with language tasks in a way which is relevant to either their present or future real-life living or working situation, as recommended in the communicative approach to language testing (see Weir 1987, 1990; Bachman 1990).

Questions of an open-ended nature were also lacking in the literature section, where the questions were even more limited and limiting than what one might typically expect in the structuralist approach to testing. There was scant trace of the standard structuralist stylistic approach to literature, involving academic engagement with the formal schemata of the text (novel, drama, or poetry) through textual analysis for characterisation, themes, attitudes, mood, atmosphere etc. No opportunity was given whatsoever to pupils to "read into the text" (Carroll 1983:64), to express their informal schemata, and to demonstrate,

challenge and enhance their cognitive ability.

In the comprehension section, most of the comprehension texts did not have face validity as test texts for grade ten pupils. Some of them did not have titles, and it did not appear that these had been deliberately left out to test the pupils' creative and imaginative abilities. Other passages were too short for pupils in the first year of the FET band, which culminates in the all-important matric examination only two years later. With two or three exceptions, the subject matter of the texts had nothing to do with the pupils' real-world situation.

4.4.4 The scoring of test tasks

To find out about the scoring system(s) used to mark the test papers analysed, I looked at the question papers and the marking schemes concurrently. The matter was difficult to investigate via the question papers alone: some sub-sections in the question papers were left unscored, e.g. test paper B, question 2 and section B; test paper J, questions 3 & 4, and the entire poetry sub-section; test paper L, questions 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5. In the latter paper only the last section on literature was scored. But scoring patterns emerged clearly when the test papers were examined alongside the marking schemes: in most cases these were drawn in linear, point form with each identifiable/verifiable item response standing out clearly and in many cases marked by one or two ticks, indicating the one or two marks allocated to the item. At the end of a sub-section, a sub-total was given, so that the grand total mark could be reached in two ways: either by counting the individual ticks top-down, or by adding up the sub-totals at the end of each sub-section. Three out of nine test papers with marking schemes -- D, E and J -- followed this objectively verifiable system. In the other six cases -- tests C, A, G, H, I, and L -- the same procedure was followed, but the ticks were omitted. A deviation from this pattern admitting some subjectivity occurred only in the one case in which the questions in a sub-section required up to one paragraph answers, in which instance a whole paragraph was allocated five or six marks in a way that seemed to be subjectively determined (see test paper C, sub-section C, i-v).

In all cases but one, the teachers didn't seem to have overscored any of their test items, a finding which supports Oller's (1979) view that accuracy of scoring is most easily achieved within the atomistic approach to testing. There appeared to be over-scoring in the literature-only test paper K, which consisted of ten middle order questions of ten marks each. I failed to establish whether this paper was ever written by the pupils, or even duplicated. The copy I received was in the teacher's own handwriting, and the paper has no marking scheme attached. Could it be that the teacher set a test with no face validity at all just to fill her half-year test quota and keep the HOD/researcher quiet? It was one of the frustrations of this study that at times there was no ethical window through which I could gain access to such interesting information.

It would appear that the highly objective, reliable scoring system led to a similar marking pattern. In all the test books analysed it was relatively easy to establish where the right answer was and how many marks were allocated, which in turn made it easy to arrive at the total mark of the individual pupil (see appendix F for a sample of marked scripts).

4.4.5 Comment on scoring of test tasks

The scoring system established above, together with the marking scheme and script marking formats identified, are all illustrative of the language testing theory informing teachers' testing practices: the structuralist approach, which boasts a highly objective and reliable test scoring system (see 2.6.2), based on the approach's ability to define, specify and itemise the behaviour domain tested into discrete points which are easy to verify and score (see 2.4.2). This probably explains why teachers tried to avoid the less familiar open-ended, high order questions, which would have called for the more sophisticated yet less objective and reliable scoring formats associated with the communicative approach to language testing (see appendix E for a composition marking grid in the communicative testing tradition).

4.4.6 Analysis of mark lists

In section 4.3.1. above, I explained how I gained access to the mark lists and why the

one for the stream E class of grade ten was missing; I also suggested why in three of the four mark lists available, the May mark out of a 100 was recorded after the June half-year examination mark.

All four mark lists were well set out in alphabetical order of pupils' names, and with the marks recorded according to the interval measurement scale (see 2.2.2). Although most of the head information had been erased from the mark lists by the research subjects, there was still enough to identify the stream, sometimes the date (see 8A mark list, appendix G), the maximum and minimum marks, and the subject. The middle part of the mark list featured the names of the pupils in the class, and against the names, the individual marks recorded, in two colours: blue for those who passed, red for those who failed. Across the page, the individual half-year monthly total marks, converted into percentages, were worked out, and kept ready for combination with the half-year examination mark and the oral mark, to obtain the final first semester score. At the bottom of the mark list was the summary information including class total mark, total number of pupils in the class, class average and average percentage. But teachers did not seem to understand the purpose of this hard-to-work-out summary information, except as a bureaucratic requirement (see appendix G for samples of mark lists).

4.4.7 Comment on mark list analysis

Although I could not infer very much from the mark lists about the testing theory informing the teachers' testing practices, it was salutary to note that they at least maintained viable pupil records. With the communicative approach to language teaching and in an improved teaching situation, such records could be used to monitor the pupils' progress in the acquisition of communicative skills both inside and outside the classroom, to compare their class progress with their real-world communicative ability, to diagnose learning problems and plan future teaching accordingly. At present, the role of tests and mark lists seems to be oriented towards meeting bureaucratic requirements rather than communicative concerns.

4.4.8 Conclusion on test document analysis

There is evidence from the analysis of the testing documents that, either consciously or sub-consciously, the analytic/atomistic structuralist approach to language testing exercised a strong influence on teachers' testing practices. A strong tendency to avoid open-ended high order questions in the composition, comprehension and literature sections has been noted, as has been the total absence of non-written forms of testing such as oral, listening, reading aloud, etc. Although such activities are associated with a low scoring reliability, they are very popular in the communicative approach to language testing because of their high content and construct validity (see 2.6.1, i & ii). The virtual absence of any marking scheme for the open-ended composition questions could have been indicative of the fact that teachers did not know what to do, and the preference for language questions based on discrete point testing could have indicated that that was the area teachers were most familiar with. The tendency to set low and middle order questions requiring easily scorable, verifiable answers, would appear to corroborate this view. Although this evidence is not in itself conclusive and requires support from other sources, it has played a major role in pinpointing possible directions in this research.

4.5 The questionnaire (Appendix H)

The type of questionnaire used in this research, and the purpose of the data collected through this research technique, are discussed in chapter three (see 3.4.3). The general aim was to try to gain some understanding of who the teachers focused on in the study are, in terms of their pre-service training, experience, work load and access to teaching materials. The full text of the questionnaire is appended to this research report. Although the data obtained from the questionnaire does not relate directly to testing, I share Nuttall and Murray's (1986) belief that teachers tend to teach and test the way they were taught or learnt through experience, and that the way teachers teach, the materials they use, and the conditions under which they teach, will have an effect on their testing practices (see 2.3.3).

4.5.1 Questionnaire breakdown

The questionnaire was divided into three sections, each with a distinct focus:

Section I. This small section aimed to give the research subjects the general context of the research, partly for ethical reasons (see 3.2.1.1).

Section II. This was another small section whose aim, following the suggestion of Stenhouse (1987), was to give teachers clear and precise guidelines on how to go about filling in the questionnaire (see also 3.2.1.1).

Section III. This, the largest of the three sections, consisted of the questions teachers were requested to respond to, and on which the data analysis and interpretation in this section is based. For procedural convenience it was divided into two subsections: subsection A tapped information about teachers' personal details (**Q.1**), pre-service training (**Q.2**), experience (**Q.3, 4, 6**), and work load (**Q.5**). Subsection B inquired into teachers' teaching material resources. The further subdivision of subsection B into three parts was based on the way in which teachers subdivide the ESL course subject matter into teaching areas: thus subdivision **III B, 1** looks at the prescribed and other material used to teach the ESL course area referred as "grammar", which covers composition, comprehension and English grammar. Subsection **III B, 2** looks at the prescribed and other material used to teach the novels and/or plays, and sub-section **III B, 3** inquires about the prescribed and other materials used to teach poetry. The inclusion of **other materials** was intended to check whether teachers used any supplementary materials of the kind the CA would encourage teachers to use both in their teaching and testing.

4.5.2 Questionnaire data collection report

Since my research subjects were few and close by, I personally distributed the four questionnaires, explained to the teachers what was expected and asked them to return the completed questionnaires as soon as they had finished. One of the teachers completed and gave me back the questionnaire on the same day, another on the following day without having to be reminded. The remaining two questionnaires came in on the fifth day after their distribution, after the teachers concerned had been reminded three times.

The questionnaires appeared to be well filled in, apart from a few areas: One of the four teachers filled in the information for subsection III B, 3 (about the prescribed work for poetry) in subsection III B, 2 (the place for the prescribed text for novels and/or plays). And this particular teacher did not provide the name of her prescribed book for this area of the ESL course. Asked if this meant that she had not yet started teaching the novel or play, she responded: "No! That is not the case, I am teaching "Comfort" [a short form of the novel's title], I am in the middle of the book. I just don't know why I omitted it and got the whole thing wrong." Question six under subsection III A was also not properly filled in: Two of the teachers did not indicate the streams of standard eight they taught, and the other two teachers put down more than the streams they were actually teaching that year. I asked one of the teachers whether he actually taught A to D streams, and he replied: "No I only teach D this year, but I have taught A, B, and C in the past."

I ought to mention that the questionnaire contained a typing error. In section 1.2.5 I expressed my intention to use the new class level designation terminology, according to which the old term **standard** has been replaced by **grade**. But since the shift was still very recent, the old term resurfaced when I was typing and reviewing my questionnaire. I only recognised the mistake after the questionnaires had come back from the teachers.

[section 4.5.3 commences on following page.]

4.5.3 Analysis and interpretation of questionnaire data

4.5.3.1 The categories and frequencies of responses

Q. No.	Variable	Category	Frequency No.	Observation
1	sex	a. males	2	-----
		b. females	2	-----
2	qualifications in Eng.	- Univ. level	2	trained
		- College level	2	trained
3	exp. in teaching	1 - 2 yrs.	1	inexperienced
		3 - 4 yrs.	0	-----
		5 - 6 yrs.	3	experienced
4	Exp. teaching Eng.	1 - 2 yrs.	1	inexperienced
		3 - 4 yrs.	1	semi-experienced
		5 - 6 yrs.	2	experienced
5	No. of subj. offered	2 subj.	4	overloaded
	No. of periods	- up to 36	1	normal
		- above 36	3	overload
	Total No. of pupils taught per teacher a day	+ 200	4	large classes
6	exp. teaching other classes	English	4	experienced

4.5.3.2 Interpretation of section III A data

In some cases, the information breakdown tabulated above made interpretation of the questionnaire data easy, while in other cases it tended to be misleading. For instance, according to the response in No. 2, all the teachers had done an English course as part of their University or college training: hence the observation **trained**. This could easily have led the reader to the conclusion that all the research subjects were qualified as teachers of English. But triangulation of questionnaire and interview data contradicted such a conclusion: two responses to the interview question as to what teachers felt about the

quality of their pre-service training as teachers of English were particularly interesting. A male teacher who had attended university said:

Well, I was trained a guidance teacher, and I did guidance method. As regards Practical English, that was compulsory for everybody at Fort Hare. It was not for teachers of English. The teachers of English had to have an English major, English III or II at least, plus English method. For us we teach English because we can't help it: there is shortage

And a mistress who did Special English at college said: "My Special English was a compulsory minor course for all STD students at Cape College [those doing the senior teacher's diploma]. I have Mathematics method, not English. I was forced to teach English because that was the vacant post when I joined the school in 1991. And the situation has never changed." According to these responses, only one teacher with English III was fully qualified as a teacher of English. The other three didn't have English Method training, and in the teachers' opinion this meant that they were not qualified English teachers.

What partially compensates for their inadequate training is their experience: 3 out of four teachers fell into the category of experienced teachers and this was encouraging, for it is common knowledge that teachers learn a lot about testing and all other aspects of their work through experience. Unfortunately, however, the value of the teachers' relatively long experience seemed to be counterbalanced by their heavy teaching load. According to the departmental guide for drawing up a timetable, a teacher with no managerial duties is supposed to be allocated a normal load of an average of 7x5 periods a week. Under abnormal conditions of understaffing, a maximum average of 8x5 periods a week may be allocated. According to this guideline, three out of four teachers were heavily loaded. This was made even worse by the fact that all four teachers were also heavily loaded in terms of subjects offered: two subjects per teacher, hence setting and marking two tests per month for well over 200 pupils in all. This meant that the teacher is busy much of the working day, and if s/he secures a rare free period, s/he grabs the opportunity to rest rather than plan, set, type or mark his or her tests. To illustrate the impact of the

prevailing situation on testing, I found it necessary to triangulate questionnaire and interview information. In response to a probing interview question as to whether teachers enjoyed the testing part of their work, one of the teachers answered: "Not in the least, not with such a large number of scripts to mark in short time" Another, in response to the same question, summed up the prevailing state of affairs: "We are struggling, you have too many classes, too many periods, too many pupils, too many test books to mark, two subjects to teach, and a large syllabus to cover. No time to rest."

It was also noted that teachers' apparently long teaching experience was devoid of professionally enriching in-service training which might have made up for deficiencies in their training as teachers of English. Again, the interview data corroborated inferences from the questionnaire: asked in an interview question how often the teachers had either met the subject adviser or attended in-service courses, all the teachers made responses to the effect that the focus of attention of both the subject adviser and the in-service courses was grade twelve teachers and students, rather than those lower down in the system.

4.5.3.3 Interpretation of section III B data

Although this section was not directly related to testing I hoped that analysis of its data might contribute to an understanding of the extent to which teachers were familiar with the CA as such, and therefore with its application to testing. All the teachers claimed to use text books: either one or two of the text books currently prescribed for the ESL course, or one that was prescribed some years back. And while 50% of the teachers made no use of alternative supplementary materials, 50% of the teachers cited magazines, newspapers, study aids and student companions as their supplementary sources of teaching materials.

However, triangulation of this data with information obtained through the test paper analysis cast doubt on the latter claim: I checked all the available question papers for traces of evidence of the teachers having used any extracts, captions or illustrations drawn from newspapers or magazines, and I found none. I couldn't even find a test task based on a TV or radio programme; nor, for that matter, could I find a test task that could be

attributed to the personal creativity of the teacher.

This made me wonder if the teachers claiming to use supplementary materials of the kind recommended by the CA to testing were only attempting to portray a better image of themselves! Delamont and Hamilton (1986:34) warn researchers against what they call "respondent reflexivity", i.e. a situation in which respondents undergo a sudden "mental shift" on account of being used to obtain information that in one way or another has a bearing on their personalities or jobs. Reflexivity may arise in a respondent under observation or being interviewed or responding to a questionnaire (see also 3.3).

4.5.4 Conclusion about questionnaire data analysis

In this section I set out to gain more information about the teachers whose testing practices are the focus of this study. The questionnaire data projects a picture of teachers who are inadequately trained as teachers of English, with long years of unenriching experience; teachers who are therefore unlikely to have had much exposure to the CA to language testing. The work of these teachers, who in the first place are not quite sure of the demands of the CA to language testing, is made even more demotivating and frustrating by their heavy work load and large classes. These are working conditions under which the time-consuming and challenging CA will not thrive. Thus instead of being innovative and creative in terms of supplementing and diversifying their teaching and testing materials, teachers resort to using prescribed texts only, which means less work because these are already designed for them, and can be used over and over again.

4.5.5. Examination of official documents

The main aim of examining official documents was to determine the extent to which curriculum design, educational planning and administration influence teachers' practice in language progress testing (see also 4.1). The official documents examined and analysed in this study include the interim core syllabus implemented in 1995 for grades ten and eleven, and in 1996 for grade twelve; and the supplement to the syllabus, the "Guideline document for Communicative Language Teaching." At the time I started planning this

research in 1996, these were the two authoritative documents offering guidance to teachers implementing the ESL course program based on the CA. It should also be noted that the syllabus analysed in this research is a revised version of the original communicative ESL syllabus, which in South Africa was implemented as far back as ten years before the current study. The current syllabus should by now be constitutive of teachers' established practices.

Two other curriculum-related documents which might have had some bearing on the CA to language testing and assessment/evaluation (see 2.2), namely the documents on Continuous Evaluation (CE) and Outcomes Based Education (OBE), both of which are based on curriculum 2005/2009, have not been examined in detail for two reasons: firstly, in the Eastern Cape Department of Education, the directive authorising their implementation came in 1997 after this study had commenced (see Circulars 36/97, 38/97, and 39/97). Secondly, since this study set out to examine and interpret teachers' **cultural practices**, it was felt that CE and OBE were still too new to have been assimilated into these practices (see 3.2.1.2). However, since CE does not represent a different approach from that of the core syllabus, its concerns do feature in this discussion to the extent that they form part of the objectives of the core syllabus.

4.5.5.1 The interim core syllabus on progress testing

In the syllabus, reference to progress testing is made only via its implied relationship to summative testing, which is dealt with in the sub-topic **Assessment** (section 5 in the core syllabus, pages 9 to 12 inclusive). The most striking aspect of this section is that its main concern is with end-of-year final assessment. The largest subsection in the entire section 5, subsection 5.5, states the following: "The following requirements relate specifically to the standard 10 examination but **could** also be used as a guideline for assessing standard 8 and 9 examinations" (p.11). The subsection goes on to describe the physical structure of the standard 10 (grade 12) final examination in some detail.

In this subsection, reference is made to tests only once, and then only in relation to the extent to which tests are controlled by **examination boards**. Thus it is stated in

subsection 5.1: "Examination boards may decide for themselves what form the examinations and tests will take." Now in common usage, the concept of progress testing refers to forms of classroom-based assessment which are not under the direct control of examination boards. It is therefore likely that the concept of test invoked in this section is synonymous with "examination". This means that no direct reference is made to progress testing (in the sense defined in this study) in the entire core syllabus.

By making inferences from what has been written in this section, however, one may discern a form of indirect reference to progress testing. Subsection 5.1 quoted above continues:

However, these [examinations and tests] must be designed to assess how far the stated objectives of the syllabi have been attained . . . and the types of the questions asked MUST be in line with the objectives of the core syllabus and the marking must follow these criteria (p. 9)

And under subsection 5.2 on the next page, the objectives of the core syllabus -- treated at length on pages 3 to 9 of the 12 page document -- are summarised and interpreted as follows:

The communicative aims of the syllabus imply that assessment should be concerned with what is successfully communicated rather than what has been memorised and mechanically reproduced. Pupils who engage actively with a subject and are adventurous in their use of language are likely to learn more than those who keep to simple, prosaic structures; nevertheless, they are also more likely to make mistakes. They should, therefore, be given full credit for what they have achieved, taking into account both the sophistication and vigour of their work, and the extent to which their errors impede communication. (p.10)

The syllabus document proceeds to encourage the use of continuous assessment, the implications of which are described thus:

- (a) Listening and speaking should be assessed while pupils are engaged in normal class work and speech situations rather than during a formal "oral";
- (b) progress in reading ability, and comprehension of reading matter rather than a one-off reading "performance", should form the basis of assessment;
- (c) the writing process, a variety of writing tasks, progress in writing ability, etc. need to be considered when pupils' writing competence is assessed rather than the final product only. (p. 10)

4.5.5.2 The guideline document for CLT on progress testing

This document does not differ in any essential way from the communicative core syllabus discussed above. In the words of its author, the guideline document, also known as the "Teachers' Guide", is "merely an attempt to provide some means of support to those teachers who feel a need for it" (p. 3) in making the transition from the traditional to the CLT approach. Thus in the first 12 pages after the introduction (pp.3-15) the document concentrates on clarifying the terminology used in the CLT approach, while in the last 6 pages it deals with issues of lesson planning within the new approach (pp. 15-21).

Nowhere in this teachers' guide is any mention made of progress testing, or even of testing as such. The closest reference to the subject of testing appears on page 3, where the concept of **assessment** is mentioned and very briefly interpreted in terms of continuous evaluation. On page 6 the subject of continuous assessment is picked up again, but its interpretation is no different from that provided on page 10 of the core syllabus (see also this report 4.5.5.1), except in its spelling out of the promotional and diagnostic purposes of continuous assessment (p.7), which represent only an aspect of the functions of progress testing (see 2.3.3).

4.5.6 Comment on examination and analysis of official documents

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the washback effect of the final matriculation ESL examination has taken its full toll on the author of the teachers' guide. Although the document is meant to interpret the core syllabus and thus facilitate teaching, testing and assessment at all the three levels of the FET band, attention has been lavished on the top level, grade 12, at the expense of the other two grades. In this regard, the core syllabus is no different from the guidelines document: on page 11, for example, it categorically states that "the following requirements relate specifically to standard 10 examinations" before going on to describe the structure of the three final examination papers in this grade. The impression a grade ten teacher might get here is that the syllabus and the guidelines document do not attach any importance to progress testing.

Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to assert that the teachers' guide and the core syllabus are totally irrelevant to progress testing in a classroom situation. I have already pointed out the teachers' guide's effort to clarify the concept of continuous evaluation, which constitutes an important element of progress testing. And although only indirectly, the core syllabus also touches on areas of great importance in progress testing, stressing as it does an assessment approach concerned with successful communication through the active, explorative, critical, and creative use of language, engaging with issues of contemporary concern in life-like testing contexts; an approach concerned about the assessment not only of the final product but also of the process in written language. The syllabus also recommends an approach which values the assessment of the inferential, extrapolative, and evaluative ability of pupils, with a variety of marking criteria appropriate to the assessment of communicative language ability.

4.6 Interview with the subject adviser (Appendix J)

The general aim of the interview with the subject adviser was described in section 4.1, above. The specific aim was to establish how the subject adviser, as a specialised resource in the employment of the Department of Education, facilitates teachers' work in the area of language testing by providing support to those in need of it. The reasons for

using the interview as a research technique, the type of interview and questions used are also discussed in chapter three (see 3.4.2).

4.6.1 Interview question breakdown

To focus the interview, an interview schedule was prepared (see 3.4.2, and appendix J). The terms adviser and facilitator are used synonymously, in the way they normally are in the schooling context. All the open-ended questions were designed to achieve the aims of the interview, but great restraint was exercised to avoid leading questions. However, whenever a response seemed to deviate excessively from the desired content, a probing question was used to prompt the respondent in a more appropriate direction. Questions 1-2 anticipated information about the academic and professional qualifications of the subject adviser. Q. 3-4 sought information about the working experience of the facilitator. The aim was to gain insight into the adviser's areas of interest. Q. 5 was concerned with any other qualities considered in appointing a subject adviser. Q. 6 aimed to know about the procedures followed in employing a subject adviser. In Q. 7 some understanding of the employer's and teachers' expectations of the subject adviser was sought. Q. 8 sought information about the preparation facilitators receive for their job. Q. 9-10 aimed to establish the work load of the subject adviser, and Q. 11-13 focused on the planning and content of, and teachers' input into, the facilitator programs. Q. 14 was concerned with other facilitator programs known to exist, and how these related to the subject adviser's work. The last question, 15, asked about the officer's attitude to his or her work: whether it was fruitful, whether the teachers responded, and how easy or difficult it was.

4.6.2 Interview report

Although I had worked as an English teacher at the school researched for three years, I had not met the subject adviser for English. But having met the geography facilitator, I took it for granted that an English counterpart existed. When the research-related need arose for me to contact this person, I telephoned the geography subject adviser for information about his English counterpart. He advised me that such information lay with the coordinator of the subject advisory service, whose phone number he gave me. After a

few attempts I reached the officer over the phone. She sounded a confident, relaxed white lady. I introduced myself, explained the purpose of the call and tried to motivate my cause. She explained that she was a Deputy Education Specialist and coordinator of the subject advisory service; stationed at the Port Elizabeth departmental headquarters, she was responsible for coordinating the whole Eastern Cape province.

With regard to my request, the lady very sympathetically and regretfully advised that the only subject adviser for English in the entire province was in central region (East London). The region served by this adviser was some distance from the area delineated for study, and as a result I gave up the interview. But the coordinator advised that I find out from the EDO for my circuit if there was any alternative service available. All the attempts I made, both telephonic and physical, to get in contact with the latter were in vain: he was always away, either on a course or on some district representation errand. Besides, of the two circuits he was running, in addition to other responsibilities, he played a voluntary acting role in ours and, I suppose, only during his rare free time.

4.6.3 Comment on interview with subject adviser

Although the interview was an apparent failure, my experience did cast further light on the plight of the teachers focused on in this study. With inadequate pre-service training, and seemingly no possibility of in-service training or assistance, it was perhaps not surprising that their test papers showed little evidence of acquaintance with the CA to second language testing.

4.7 Interview with grade ten teachers (Appendix K)

The general and specific aims of the interview with the grade ten teachers are dealt with at length in chapter three (see 3.2.1.1, i & ii; 3.3). They have also been summarised earlier in this chapter (see 4.1). In general, the aim was to try to enhance the validity of the research data and hence the conclusions based on it, by allowing the research subjects to confirm, comment on, supplement, correct, and criticise the data (see also Delamont and Hamilton 1986). The type of interview and questions used, and the reasons for using

them, are similar to those used in the planned interview with the subject adviser (see 4.6).

4.7.1 Breakdown of the interview guide questions

In this interview, as in the previous one, an interview guide schedule was drawn up to focus the interview on the desired content (see 4.6.1; for the full text of the interview guide schedule see appendix K). Although this schedule had been prepared during the early stages of the research, it was reviewed several times as new questions arose from data collected and analysed. The review took the form of the addition of new questions and the elimination of others. For the sake of verifying the teachers' sincerity, however, a few questions for which answers had been obtained were purposely retained in the interview schedule. The interview questions anticipated responses about the following:

Q. 1 - 2. These questions inquired about the type and frequency of the progress tests teachers gave to their pupils. **Q. 3 - 5.** These questions sought teachers' opinions of continuous evaluation, about which there was much enthusiasm at the time I embarked on this research. **Q. 6.** This unfortunately multiple question aimed at establishing which official curriculum related documents talking about CA in general teachers had seen; and whether they had surveyed them for what they said about the CA to language testing. Questions 3 - 6 were inspired by the need for clarification and verification of the information that had already been obtained from other data collection sources. **Q. 7** focused on teachers' evaluation of their pre-service training. **Q. 8 - 9.** These questions were concerned with the facilitator programmes teachers may have attended and how these addressed issues about communicative testing. **Q. 10 - 14.** These questions dealt with issues to do with the setting of tests. They aimed at establishing the criteria for determining the test content, mark allocation system, duration of tests, and use of scores. They also explored teachers' feelings about and interpretation of the way pupils used their time. **Q. 15.** This question was concerned with teachers' general evaluation of progress testing in relation to their pupils. **Q. 16.** This last question sought evaluative response concerning the application of the CA to testing to their working context.

4.7.2 Interview report and analysis of data

A summary of teachers' responses to the interview questions is given below. In a few cases responses are quoted to allow the interviewees' voices to be heard directly.

Q. 1. Type of progress testing given: All four teachers affirmed that their progress tests consisted of a written class test out of either 50 or 100 marks. One teacher claimed that her tests were all set out of 100 marks, but this was not borne out by her mark schedule.

Q. 2. Frequency of progress test: All the teachers claimed that they gave one test every month. Although none of the teachers had a mark record for the month of January, the claim seemed to be true because at least three teachers had mark records for February to May inclusive.

Q. 3. Continuous evaluation: The responses to this question were rather confusing. All four teachers held that they had a continuous evaluation component in their progress tests, but none of them had recorded the continuous evaluation scores on their mark schedules. As was established later during the interview, and during the execution of my teaching duties at the same school, all the teachers had set out to do continuous assessment. It was required by departmental policy. But later on the idea was bit by bit abandoned for lack of clarity as to what was actually expected (see teachers' comments in question 6 below).

Q. 4. Types of continuous assessment: The following forms of assessment were mentioned by all four teachers: giving the class work, assignments and group and pair work; oral tests, tests of reading and listening comprehension, and projects. As already pointed out above, if these forms of continuous assessment were done in accordance with the requirements of circular No. 57/95, then a record of scores was supposed to be available as evidence of what had been done. But since none of the teachers had one, it is possible that they made the claim to project a good image of themselves (see 3.4.2).

Q. 5. Frequency of continuous evaluation: Responses to this question varied: one of the teachers said she did it once a month, another claimed she did it once every two weeks,

and the other two teachers said they did it every week. The circular recommended that teachers do something with a different group of pupils every day. The range of frequency cited in response to this question tended to consolidate doubt about their claims.

Q. 6. Official documents encountered by teachers: Two of the teachers had not seen any of the three documents, but claimed to have heard about them, one at a course she had attended the previous year, and another at the previous school where he had worked for a short time in 1996. Of the other two teachers one had seen and read all three, and the other one had only seen the syllabus and the teachers' guide. The follow up questions as to how clear and useful the documents were, were answered by only two teachers: in connection with circular No. 57/95 on continuous evaluation, the teacher who had seen it said: "It is not easy at all . . . all I can say is that it is very vague. You don't understand what you are required to do." As regards the syllabus and the teachers' guide, the two teachers said that these were easy to understand, "but you can't apply them the way they are. You have to adapt them to your needs," said one. And she continued: "They almost say nothing about communicative testing. They are concerned mainly with teaching."

Q. 7. Teachers pre-service training: The two male teachers claimed that their pre-service training was sufficient: "I didn't experience any problems with regard to teaching English", said one who had English III at university level. The lady teachers, on the other hand, felt strongly that "It is not easy at all for the new teacher from college: this is because at college only theory is done, no practicals." This was the claim of the teacher who had English I at university level. The other lady teacher argued that since she had not done English method at college, it was not very easy to make the shift from the college to the classroom. She had to take some time adapting her Maths method to English. And she admitted she needed a few in-service courses before she could cope. The teacher with English III, the only one with English method, was asked in a probing question what he thought about the main focus of the pre-service training and he responded readily: "It is mainly the teaching of English, yes, communicative theories are dealt with, but mainly in as far as teaching is concerned. There is very little on testing, but it is also dealt with."

Q. 8. Attendance of in-service programmes: All the teachers claimed that they had not attended any externally arranged in-service training courses this year. "I have never even seen a subject adviser," said the teacher with teaching experience of two years. But the other three recalled having attended facilitator programmes in the past. "Yes, we had 'Inset' from 1992, I guess until last year, and it was useful," said a male teacher with 5 years' teaching experience.

Q. 9. How in-service courses addressed communicative language evaluation issues: The teachers maintained that the tendency in all the courses they had attended had been to focus on communicative teaching rather than testing. "Nobody says anything about setting communicative tests. They may give you past papers if you teach standard ten, but they don't teach you how to set your test," asserted one of the teachers.

Q. 10. Construction of tests: Responses to this question revealed that the teachers all used the prescribed texts and past papers in setting their tests, and also that all of them were guided by the work covered during the month. Two of the teachers also mentioned the use of extracts from magazines and newspapers. Another teacher claimed the use of the syllabus as well.

Q. 11. Mark allocation: This was one of the easiest questions for the teachers to respond to: "there is nothing difficult," said one of the teachers, "I allocate every point a mark, hence if I allocate 10 marks I expect 10 points," he continued to say. Another teacher who had done special English at college said: "For simple questions, I allocate one point or two. For sentence construction I allocate three points, like that." The other answers were all variations on the same theme.

Q. 12. Determination of test duration: Responses to this question, which was inspired by my observation of test writing sessions, were similar for all four teachers: "One hour, it has always been one hour for monthly tests", as one of them put it. One of the teachers even assumed it was a requirement of the syllabus: "One hour is the time proposed in the syllabus," she said. Anyway, for whatever reason, one hour was the standard time for all tests, whether out of 50 or 100 marks.

Q. 13. Comments on the way pupils use their time: All the teachers shared the same attitude regarding this issue. They all tended to put the blame on the students: "They are not serious, they don't want to work. No matter how much or little time you give them, they will always finish before time." "But why?" I probed. "I really don't know. All teachers in all subjects complain," she answered. The other female teacher expressed a similar view: "Time is not an issue with our pupils; any time allocated is enough." The most interesting thing about this is that all the teachers realised there was a problem, but they simply took it for granted that this was an immutable state of affairs.

Q. 14. The purpose of the language progress test scores: All the teachers pointed out that the marks counted for a quarter of the year mark. Two teachers gave additional purposes: one said that the marks helped students to compare themselves with other pupils, and were thus encouraged to work harder the following month. Another teacher thought that the marks helped the teacher to establish how well s/he had been understood by the pupils.

Q. 15. The importance of language progress tests to pupils: Although the teachers had expressed complaints about pupils' lack of seriousness, and their high rate of absenteeism from progress test writing sessions, and in spite of the admission that the whole process of testing weighed heavily on the teacher in terms of his/her work load, all the teachers strongly believed that language progress tests were very important to pupils. "They force them to revise the work they have covered during the month," commented one of the teachers. Another teacher believed that these tests gave the pupils "a sense of where they stand." One of the male teachers did not seem to have a reason for his belief: "well, testing pupils is always good so it must go on," he said.

Q. 16. Applicability of the CA to testing to the teachers' working conditions: The teachers' responses to this question revealed that they didn't understand what was being asked. As I analysed the data I felt that it was a mistake on my part to have asked teachers to evaluate an approach that, according to the information available, they did not have a clear understanding of. But in the end, their responses were a revealing indicator

of how little they knew about the approach. Two of the teachers expressed the view that the approach was not applicable to their conditions because, as one of them commented, "our pupils do not want to talk, so how do you apply communicative testing?" This was echoed by one of the others: "In our conditions only written rather than communicative tests apply." The other two teachers also talked of communicative tests as tests which involved talking. One asked me: "Do you mean oral tests?" "Yes, and others as well," I replied. But in his response, he referred to oral tests again: "For some pupils oral tests work, they get good results, but others cannot express themselves at all."

4.7.3 Comment on the interview report

The significance of Delamont and Hamilton's (1986) view that researchers must use a variety of data collection techniques in ethnographic studies, to enhance the validity of their data and the conclusions drawn from it, has been highlighted by the teachers' responses in the interview reported above. Teachers seemed to provide answers which projected a good image of themselves, sometimes giving information contradicted by other sources of data.

The responses reported above also revealed that the teachers engaged in a number of routine testing practices without reflecting on what they were doing, why they were doing it, and what implications it might have for pupils and/or teachers. Take, for example, the views they expressed about the duration of tests, the frequency of tests, and their pupils' use of time. They had simply accepted these things the way they were, without questioning or challenging them.

The responses about the allocation of marks to questions -- "I allocate a mark per point" -- and the competitive rather than cooperative purpose attributed to language progress tests reflect characteristics other than those advocated by the communicative approach. The fact that the teachers had neither read nor understood the official documents about the CA, nor been trained in the implementation of the approach, or even specially trained as English teachers, increased the probability of their being unable to apply the CA to language progress testing.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the degree of awareness, understanding, and implementation of the CA to language testing among a group of Eastern Cape schoolteachers. To achieve this, an attempt was made to establish the extent to which the available sources of information about the approach, namely the ESL syllabus, the teachers' guide to the CA approach, and facilitator programmes, actually assisted teachers to assimilate and implement the CA to language testing. Class language testing sessions were observed and all the documentation involved analysed: the test papers, marking schemes, mark schedules, and marked scripts. To enhance the validity of the findings, teachers were asked to verbalise their perceptions of the approach and their own practices by responding to questionnaire and interview questions.

In this chapter I summarise the findings generated by the research process, and interpret and discuss them in terms of the CA to language testing. I proceed as follows: I re-first emphasise the role of the teachers' working context, in recognition of the significance of context in innovation implementation. The focus of the discussion then moves on to the training and experience of the teachers, and their language testing practices. Reasons for these practices are suggested, and recommendations for improvement made. In conclusion, the limitations of the study are acknowledged and areas for further enquiry are proposed.

5.1.1 Teachers' working context

In chapter one, I went to some lengths to establish both the broad and narrow working context of the teachers whose practices in ESL progress tests were to be investigated in this study (1.2.3 - 1.2.6).

5.1.1.1 The significance of context to the implementation of the CA

In the South African educational context, the communicative approach to language teaching and hence testing is a relatively recent innovation whose first implementation dates from 1986. It represents a fundamental shift in the approach to the teaching and testing of ESL (see 1.2.1).

Foggin (1991) expresses the view that for any educational innovation to be successfully implemented, one of the major factors to be considered is the teacher's physical and socio-cultural working context (see Murray 1991).

Besides being a relatively recent approach in South Africa, the CA is also foreign to the educational environment in which it is being implemented: that is, it did not evolve from a dialectical process of needs analysis and problem solving in the actual South African educational environment. As is well known, the CA was conceived in Europe in response to the particular needs of European society and the Common Market (Larsen-Freeman 1986), and was first implemented under conditions very different from those obtaining in South Africa. I argue, following Foggin (1991), that to make a fair assessment of the success of the implementation of the CA to language testing in the area delineated for this study, it is important to examine how conducive or otherwise to this process the prevailing circumstances and teachers' working conditions have been.

5.1.1.2 Summary of teachers' prevailing working context

The broader context in which the particular school focused on is operating can be summed up as consisting of rapidly evolving unstable conditions (see 1.2.3 - 1.2.6). The particular conditions obtaining at the school have also been outlined as characterised by: pupils from low income backgrounds, teachers from poor school and inadequate professional training backgrounds, under-staffing, large numbers of pupils, poor physical structures, lack of equipment, irregular teacher and student attendance, a wide service area for the school, and poor transport (see also 1.2.6). A pilot study carried out indicated that similar conditions to these obtain in several other former D.E.T. schools

traditionally attended by black South Africans (see Ssemakalu 1996).

5.1.1.3 Historical perspective on teachers' prevailing working context

According to Malan et al (1987), the conditions described above are deeply entrenched in South Africa's unique history of socio-cultural, economic, political, and intellectual isolation, which has particularly affected black South Africans. Their educational predicament perhaps dates from as far back as the Natives' Land Act of 1913 (ibid. 198), was intensified by Hertzog's official Segregation Policy of 1914 (ibid. 205) and Native Bills of 1936 (ibid. 297), and culminates in the Bantu Education Act of 1953. Prevailing conditions were made worse by the government's deliberate policy of under funding Black education (Foggin 1991), and Morphet (1991) notes that conditions deteriorated further as the result of a culture of resistance to all top-down educational efforts and innovations, which were viewed with suspicion.

Ward (1984:12) sums up the working conditions faced by the teachers in the ordinary former D.E.T schools as "to say the least, poor, apathetic, unstimulating, and demotivating."

5.1.1.4 Recommendations based on teachers' prevailing working conditions

It is commonly held by proponents of the CA to language testing that the approach thrives under working conditions vastly different from those described above. Weir (1987) describes these as highly demanding of the teacher in terms of hard work, dynamism, creativity, liberal and critical thinking (see also 2.5.3).

In my view, all the efforts to provide an equitable and just education for all South Africans based on the fundamental principles of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, unity and historical redress (see 1.2.3), and all the current changes in educational organisation, management, and practice (see 1.2.4 - 1.2.5) aimed at ensuring the attainment of these objectives, constitute a positive step in the right direction. But for these changes to be meaningful in concrete terms, for innovations like the CA approach to

language testing to be understood and accepted and to take root, there has to be a commensurate effort to improve teachers' working conditions. Thus there is still much more that urgently needs to be done via educational administration and planning effectively to address issues such as the teacher-student ratio, adequate educational funding, provision of study aids and guides, reactivation of existing teacher support programmes and the creation of more, rehabilitation of old physical structures and the construction of new -- within reasonable physical reach of teachers and pupils -- and adopting a more consultative approach to innovation implementation, involving all stakeholders in the educational service.

So far these views have not received much more than lip-service attention from the powers that be, on political occasions, in public media interviews and during arm-chair planning sessions.

5.2. Teachers as innovation agents

The questionnaire inquiries, the abortive interview with the subject adviser, and the analysis of the official documents were conducted mainly to gain insight into who the teachers were who were expected to implement the CA to testing, in terms of their training, beliefs about education and knowledge, and social and cultural backgrounds (see Foggin 1991, Murray 1991, and Ndhlovu 1993). The following observations about the teachers were recorded.

5.2.1 Teachers' training and experience

The major point emerging from analysis of the questionnaire data is that most of the teachers were not trained as teachers of English and consequently their pre-service training could not possibly have served as an adequate introduction to the CA to testing. Although most of them had long experience in teaching ESL, this had not necessarily improved their expertise since, according to the evidence of the two interviews conducted, they lacked a strong in-service support base; worse still, they had to grapple with large numbers of pupils and a heavy work load (see 4.5.2 for details). In such circumstances,

the application of the unfamiliar CA approach to testing was an additional and unwelcome burden.

5.2.2 Lack of supplementary support from official documents

Analysis of official documents, namely, the teachers' guide to the CLT approach and the communicative core syllabus (see 4.5.5.1 & 4.5.5.2), revealed that these too did not offer any useful information to the teacher about the CA to testing. The teachers' guide addressed only one aspect of communicative testing -- continuous assessment (see teachers' guide pp. 6-7). This concept normally refers to the testing of the pupil's progress during the **process of learning**. Hence it can be said that the guideline document failed to address the more familiar product-oriented approach to testing under special control conditions (Oller 1979). To carry the argument a little further, triangulation of data led to the evidence that 3 out of 4 teachers had not actually read the document (see 4.7.2, Q. 6). This probably explains in part why there was no record of continuous assessment in the mark schedules analysed.

The focus of the large section on assessment in the core syllabus (pp.9-12) was the final matric examination: the physical, content and scoring structures of the three matric examination papers (4.5.5.1). It was only by implication that what was said of the final matric examination could apply to the grade 10 and 11 final examinations and, by extension, to progress tests. Obviously, inadequately trained teachers will experience difficulty in making such inferences.

5.2.3 Lack of reflection in teachers' testing practices

An interesting question that arose from teachers' responses to interview questions concerned the extent to which teachers were actually conscious of their testing practices: whether they thought critically about their testing methods and were prepared to make changes. Delamont and Hamilton (1986) think that this skill is acquired as a result of training, because human beings don't necessarily always act rationally. The teachers focused on in the current study did not seem to be reflective in respect of their testing

practices. Asked about the way they determined the duration of the tests, they all said that the monthly test had always been one hour long, no matter whether it was out of 50 or 100 marks. And the same was true of the frequency of progress tests -- once a month, regardless -- and about the way pupils used their time: they always finished early. These were regarded as routine and immutable practices, an attitude not encouraged in the communicative paradigm.

5.3 Comment on teachers' perceptions of their situation

Our initial question may be asked again at this stage: "Who, then, are the teachers focused on in this study?" We might begin an answer with the response of one of them to a probing question as to whether they enjoyed the progress testing part of their work: "not by any means . . . we are struggling." These teachers are struggling men and women: not specially trained as teachers of English, lacking supportive in-service structures, grappling with large numbers of pupils and heavy work loads under discouraging physical working conditions, having no access to interpreted information from official documents on the approach they are supposed to implement, and going about their work mainly because it is routine. It would be idealistic to expect teachers in these circumstances to make a significant contribution towards the implementation of such a fundamental innovation as the CA approach to testing.

5.4 Teachers' coping strategies

The next question is to ask how teachers coped, given the circumstances adumbrated above. Maley (1986) argues that even in the worst possible conditions, teachers wanting to work to survive will develop strategies to cope. Van Vuuren (1991:11) points out the nature of such strategies: teachers will ignore all impositions from top-down and "at best do their own thing." In this section I outline the characteristics of teachers' testing practices as these emerged in my observation of their testing sessions and analysis of their testing documents. In general the list serves to confirm the claim that teachers did not test communicatively. Although, individually, some of these characteristics can be located along the structuralist-sociolinguistic-psycholinguistic-communicative continuum, the sum

total cannot be ascribed to any school of thought. And it should be noted that some of them fell way below the expectations of the most traditional of the above-mentioned approaches. The list runs as follows:

- (a) in the test writing sessions observed, teachers played the role of controller/giver of instructions rather than that of a facilitator helping pupils to interpret questions (Barkhuizen 1993);
- (b) pupils wrote their tests in a tense, intimidating atmosphere, with teachers threatening punishment to those caught copying;
- (c) formal, discrete language structures were directly tested in an abstract, decontextualised fashion (Weir 1987). Very few cloze type and open-ended questions were identified in the question papers;
- (d) composition writing was rarely included in the tests: where it was, it took the form of narratives;
- (e) the literature section was dominated by short, low-order memory questions, some of which fell way below the expectations of the traditional approach to testing (see 4.2.2);
- (f) the comprehension section consisted mostly of (extracts from) folklore narratives, some of them lacking titles, and so short that their face validity as texts for grade ten pupils was questionable (see 2.6.1). The questions based on comprehension texts expected short, close ended, verifiable answers;
- (g) test scoring followed a system of allocating a mark or two per point, and in marking, a similar system of putting a tick or two wherever a point was identified was followed. Though highly verifiable and reliable, this approach is not encouraged in the communicative paradigm (see Weir 1987);
- (h) mark schedules were kept in response to the top-down bureaucratic requirement, to stimulate a competitive spirit among pupils, and to serve the administrative purpose of providing a year mark;
- (i) all tests were of a written nature only: there were no oral, reading aloud, and listening tests (see Oller 1979);
- (j) tests were deficient in syntactical accuracy and clarity of instructions, and had very poor typography and general layout (see Barkhuizen 1993 & appendix B). They

illustrated the need for more professional training for the teachers in this regard.

5.5 Comment on characteristics of teachers' testing practices

The characteristics outlined above clearly show that teachers did not test according to the communicative approach. They appear to have drawn, probably sub-consciously, on a mixture of the structuralist, sociolinguistic-psycholinguistic, and communicative approaches, and on other practices they have picked up through their apprenticeship in teaching to enable them to carry on with their daily work.

5.6 Other possible reasons why teachers tested the way they did

In addition to the reasons given above, summarisable as lack of know-how and enterprise, teachers may have tested the way they did for two other related reasons:

- (i) The need to lighten their burden in the process of fulfilling the bureaucratic demands of their superiors may explain teachers' preference for the more objective, close ended, discrete point testing, scoring and marking system, with verifiability and a high reliability level as, again, a quick-fix strategy to meet deadlines in spite of the burden of work.
- (ii) Another reason may be cultural. As Alfery (1994) has pointed out, in African culture the teacher is looked at as an authority figure, not only as one who can assert and control situations, but also as one who possesses, controls and imparts knowledge. This kind of self-perception may lead a teacher to reject a testing approach with tentative, negotiated, subjective answers, which might compromise the teacher's all-powerful and all-knowing image.

All these reasons appear to have some validity, and there seems to be no single explanation. It must be conceded that the recommendations made below may only serve to improve the situation rather than transform it.

5.7 Recommendations

Ndhlovu (1993) has commented that the CLT approach and its application to testing is a fundamental innovation in the South African educational context, and that for it to take root, equally innovatory implementation strategies must be adopted. These will necessarily include more intensive strategies for the re-education of teachers by committed and persuasive facilitators, the building of mutual trust through negotiation and openness of communication between innovator and agent, and the lowering of the power barriers between them.

To realise these goals, there is an urgent need for the restoration and re-activation of reformed in-service and advisory programmes, through which seminars and workshops can be organised for the empowerment of teachers. During such sessions, teachers should be given a chance to play an active role in determining the focus of the programmes, evaluating them and sharing field experience with colleagues. Some of these programmes will inevitably focus on progress testing issues within the framework of the CA paradigm. The ultimate goal of the programmes will be to turn teachers into facilitators in their own right, capable of taking care of the needs of their own school. It is hoped that this approach, if properly implemented, will help teachers to familiarise themselves with every new development in the future, e.g. the OBE approach which is just around the corner.

A standing needs survey among schools, universities and colleges will have to be maintained to ensure output of appropriate teachers in the right numbers. This will serve to reduce the absurdity of so many qualified teachers teaching outside the area of their specialisation. To realise this objective the Education Department administration will have to intervene to ensure that teachers are not employed in posts for which they are not qualified. Where this has already happened, a cross transfer strategy should be attempted.

It is acknowledged that these are rather idealistic recommendations, given the socio-cultural, politico-economic and demographic factors that may affect their implementation. However, it is hoped that a steadfast course of action, based on clarity of purpose, dedication and perseverance, will lead to some positive results.

5.8 Limitations of the study

In this section, in the interests of transparency, some of this study's limitations are acknowledged.

- (a) My position as both HOD and researcher of a situation I was already part of and the ethical implications it raised, have been referred to in chapter three. It bears reiterating that this situation imposed certain constraints on me in the final chapter and wherever else I had to make a critical remark. The awareness of my commitment to carry this report back to the research subjects has curbed the tone my critical remarks. It is possible that I have had to refrain from making some important points in my efforts not to compromise my good working relationships with the teachers.
- (b) The space and time constraints associated with small-scale, focused studies of this nature constituted another limitation. During the course of the year, there was a renewed interest in, emphasis on and call for the implementation of programmes involving the CA -- continuous assessment and OBE, for example. However, this new surge came at a time when I had already closed the door on field research and was busy putting the report together. For reasons of their timing, my own anxiety to meet the submission deadline, and space constraints, these interesting areas of inquiry are not fully addressed in this study. It is hoped, however, that the problems I have identified as experienced in the implementation of the CA will inform future studies in this area.

5.9 Areas for further research

This study revealed the disturbing problem of qualified teachers ending up teaching outside their area of speciality, thus misallocating skills, severely disadvantaging pupils, and frustrating both the teachers and innovation implementation efforts. A future study investigating how colleges and universities might coordinate their efforts to ensure quality and quantity control in their training of educators, and might monitor their proper

placement, would go a long way toward improving the implementation of important innovations such as the communicative approach to language progress testing.

All the progress tests analysed were of a written nature only. There was a total lack of other forms of communicative testing, of the kind recommended by Oller (1979): oral, listening, reading aloud, conversational, simulation, recognition, etc. The absence of any scoring record in the mark schedules referring to these forms of testing confirms the situation. This serves to illustrate just how far teachers still are from adopting the communicative approach in language progress testing. A future classroom-based study, experimenting with some such tests, might help in providing insights as to their applicability and how they might be incorporated into teachers' testing programmes.

5.10 Conclusion

The study has illustrated the failure on the part of teachers to apply the CA to their language progress tests, although the approach has, nominally speaking, been implemented for twelve years now. The study has also attempted to suggest some possible reasons: it seems that teachers do not conceptualise the approach in the way that the syllabus writers intended, and in the face of the enormous constraints of their working conditions, have translated the little they do know into the terms of the more manageable traditional approach, so as to be able to carry on with their work. Ndhlovu (1993) believes that teachers will always react in this way to any innovation that does not easily lend itself to their understanding. The most urgent challenge facing researchers, curriculum planners, and all educators, therefore, is always to try to identify agent-related problems and to devise ways of adjusting the innovation to the agents' conditions. Otherwise, at the dawn of the new era of educational transformation in the new South Africa, it will be futile to introduce new and more sophisticated concepts like OBE.

APPENDIX A

SGC - LETTER APPROAVING THE RESEARCH

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P.O. Box 30E
Alexandria
6185

08-03-97

The Secretary
PTSA

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposed Mini Research Project 1997

This letter aims to formalise my earlier request for permission to carry out a mini research project in the school this year 1997.

The research will seek to understand and describe the process of 'progress testing' in English classes. It will involve me, as the researcher, and the pupils and their teachers of English, as the research subjects.

It is hoped that this research project will achieve the following:

1. For the researcher, it is part of the requirements for the award of an MA in English Language Teaching.
2.
 - a. It will examine and bring to teachers' consciousness their own theories about testing English.
 - b. It will inform teachers about theoretical and methodological developments in testing.
 - c. It is hoped that it will lead to better understanding of testing within the context of the present communicative English syllabus.
3. It is also hoped that the research will trigger a creative, critical and constructive dialogue between teachers, learners, and facilitators both within and outside the school, about a whole range of issues affecting teaching/learning and testing English.

I have already got the informal approval of teachers and students. Once I have the approval of the PTSA, I will seek written approval from teachers and students.

APPENDIX A
SGC - LETTER APPROVING THE RESEARCH

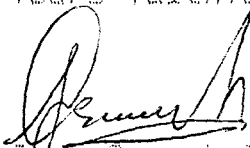
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I undertake that for ethical reasons:

1. the names of the school and all research subjects and any sensitive information about them will not, in any circumstances or in any form, be disclosed without their personal consent.
2. the final copy of the research report will be made available for all interested members of the school community to examine, discuss and criticise.

If you are willing to grant me permission, I would be grateful if you would sign below. The reason for this is that I would like to include the written permission as an appendix to my thesis.

Yours faithfully



John Ssemakalu
The researcher

Signed on behalf of the PTSA of Ukhanyo High School:

Z. S. BONGA 97/03/25
Z-S. BONGA

Instructions

1. Write neatly and legibly.
2. Number your answers correctly.

Section A: Comprehension

Read the following article and answer the questions that follow.

Say "no" to drugs

Our beautiful country is in the grip of a major drug problem. Drug syndicates have turned to South Africa to find a new market. Teenagers often fall into the trap of taking drugs but this can ruin their lives and future careers.

People think that by taking drugs, they will be accepted by their friends or overcome loneliness, emotional pain and problems. Drugs are no permanent solution and are just temporary crutches we can rely on.

Scholars using drugs will come late for symptoms school, their marks will deteriorate, they will often be ill, come into conflict with teachers and friends, tell untruthful stories, show an inability to concentrate in class, have wrong friends, not do homework, be in trouble, drop out of school and be expelled from school.

Question 1

- 1.1 What is the big problem South Africa is facing? (2)
- 1.2 How do drugs affect teenagers? (2)
- 1.3 Give 3 reasons why people take drugs. Number your answers: 1.3.1; 1.3.2 and 1.3.3. $[2 \times 3] = [6]$
- 1.4 Mention any five symptoms found in scholars who take drugs. Number your answers: 1.4.1 — 1.4.5 $[2 \times 5] = [10]$

Choose the correct answer. Write the correct letter only.

- 1.5 The synonym of "ruin" in paragraph 1 is:
A. upgrade B. destroy C. decorate (1)
- 1.6 The synonym of "permanent" in paragraph 2 is:
A. syndicate B. temporary C. decade (1)
- 1.7 By "school marks will deteriorate" in paragraph 3 is meant
A. Marks will increase B. Marks will decrease (1)
- 1.8 What is the lesson one can learn from the above article. (2)

Question 2

Punctuate the following passage.

most young people begin drugging by smoking marijuana and this leads to taking stronger and even more dangerous drugs like heroin mandrax cocaine and glue [1x5] = [5]

Question 3

Rewrite as reported speech.

- 3.1 Zukiswa says: My favourite subject is Biology.
- 3.2 Lulama said: I failed History last year.
- 3.3 Mzwakhe said: I attended a mass funeral last week.
- 3.4 Grace said: I shall never forget what Zolile did to me.
- 3.5 Xolile said: I am watching television.

[2x5] = [10]

Question 4

Fill in the missing word in the spaces provided. Write the correct answer only.

Next week on June 4, we 4.1 start writing the mid-year examinations. But not all pupils 4.2 begin on the same day. I, for example, 4.3 write my first paper on June 11. But on June 15 everybody 4.4 have started already. The school 4.5 be closing for the winter holidays on June 26. [1x5]

Question 5

Choose the correct spelling. Write the correct answer only.

Zolile was very 5.1 ^{disappointed} disappointed when he did not win the R10000 competition.

5.2 Tomorrow, ~~Tomorrow~~ I shall visit the dentist.

I was told to put the milk inside the 5.3 refrigerator, ~~refridgerator~~.

It is not 5.4 necessary, ~~neccessary~~ to open the windows when we have airconditioning.

He was born on 7 ~~55~~ August, ~~Agost~~, ~~Agust~~ 1960.

[1x5]

[25]

Total: 100

APPENDIX B TEST 2/B

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SECTION A
QUESTION 1

WRITE A LETTER OR AN ESSAY , DO NOT WRITE BOTH.

Write an essay of about 1 page on one of the following topics :

- (a) Life in a big city.
- (b) My favourite sport.
- (c) Fooled by a friend.
- (d) The day everything went wrong.

QUESTION 2

Write a letter to your brother or sister who is spending a few weeks with friends.
Give him or her all the home news.

Write to a friend describing your brother's or sister's birthday.

Write to the police give full details of an accident that you witnessed.

(15)

SECTION BQUESTION 1COMPREHENSION TEST

There was once a shepherd who kept his sheep near the sea. One very hot day he was looking at the sea when he thought how much more pleasant it would be to have a boat of his own and sail the seas instead of just looking at the sea. He thought that if he had a boat he would be much better than waisting his life looking after his sheep.

He therefore sold his flock of sheep, bought a boat and sailed away. He had loaded the boat with a cargo of dates. For a time all went well, and he enjoyed looking at the beautiful calm smooth sea, and ~~was~~ feeling the cooling breezes. The wind then began to blow, at first gently, then more strongly and finally a gale blew.

This caused the waves to swell so much that his boat was in danger of being sunk. To prevent this from happening he made the boat lighter by throwing the dates overboard. This was driven upon a rock near the shore where it was broken to pieces. The man himself managed to escape but it ~~was~~ was a very narrow escape.

Later on he was able to return to his own country where he had to go to the man who bought his flock and seek employment as a servant. Now when he looks at the sea he does not think how calm and peaceful it looks, but how deceitful it really is. When one of his friends saw him looking at the sea and said how calm it was, the man said to him

ANSWER QUESTIONS IN FULL SENTENCES :

1. Where was the shepherd at the time the story opens ?
2. Why did he want to go to sea ?
3. Where did he find the money with which to buy the boat and the dates ?
4. What did he do in order to try to save the ship ?
5. Why did he at first enjoy his voyage ?
6. How did he later earn his living ?
7. How do you know whether the man had learnt his lesson ?

(14)

QUESTION 2

Complete the following sentences by using the correct prepositions : it, after, for, from, in, of, on, to & up.

1. He walked the street.
2. They sat a rock.
3. This different that.
4. Do this me.
5. Ethel gave it ... me.
6. It is made ... wood.

SECTION C

COMFORT HERSELF GERALDINE KAYE

- A. Why at the beginning of the novel is Comfort running as fast as possible ?
1. What led to this tragedy ? (1)
 2. Why was Comfort not with Margaret when this happened ? (1)
 3. Why was Comfort not with Margaret when this happened ?
 4. What is the name of the children's home to which is taken. (2)

B. MATCH COLUMN A WITH COLUMN B.

A	B
I. Mrs. Mace	| (a) was Monte's wife in Ghana.
II. Miss Hanker	| (b) was the ringleader of the children at
P	| penfold.
III. Efna	| (c) was a landlady at Bell place.
IV. Lethe stamp	| (d) A warden at Ivyside court.
V. Aunt Phyllis	| (e) was a social worker from the children's
	department.

I. READS THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AND ANSWERS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

AT THE DEATH OF AMIDS' FATHER

As they walked towards Amids' father's house, Amid, still in doubt, strained his ears for women wailing or the singing of church hymns for the dead. All quiet. He dropped his suitcase and rushed into his father's room. His mother was sitting by the baniko bed, tending the fire that warmed her husband.

"Papa" he shouted, tears streaming from his eyes. His mother stood up and embraced him. She too was crying "My dear son, you cannot imagine my joy to see you back. Satan has thrown a big temptation on us but, by the power of the almighty God above, we shall conquer Satan. In the name of Jesus, we shall conquer."

When she released him, Amid bent down to touch his sick father. His eyes were open. He was still alive. He stared at his son for a while as if he could not recognise him. "Papa it's me. It's Amadi." His mouth slowly opened. "Amadi - when did you return?" He spoke in spurts. "Just now, sir." "Who asked you to return?" he continued. Amadi's mother replied: "Do you forget so quickly? Don't you remember you asked the teacher to go to the university to bring him back."

"Oh - it is true." The cough that followed frightened Amadi. It lasted for a full minute and each time he coughed Amadi thought he would cough out his heart. When his breathing returned to normal, he opened his eyes again and looked at Amadi. "Amadi" he called. "Sir?" "How is your wife?" In this question his face became tense and his eyes more prominent. "I am not married, sir. I did not marry that girl." The tense face relaxed giving way to a smile of relief. Son and mother looked at the sick man in expectation. "If I die now I shall be happy." "You have started talking nonsense again," interrupted Amadi's mother. "I have told you, you will not die."

The Siki man went on speaking each word dragged painfully out between long pauses. "Amadi, I am glad. I knew you did not do it. My own son could not do such a thing. But promise me that you will marry Nwakaego and I shall give you all my last blessing and die a happy man." "Papa! What are you saying?" "Have you promised?"

His mother looked at him pleadingly. "My son please promise him. Do anything that will save his life." "Yes, sir I promise." Again the words came slowly and painfully, with long rests between each word. "I am now happy. Very happy. If I die now, I shall lie quiet in my grave and not worry to find out whether you have married a foreigner or a girl from a street. Give me your hand. Your mother knows I am not owing anybody anything. She knows all my property, all my land. God bless you and Nwakaego."

and give your answer to John. You will find the 1st typed address. His eyes bulged, he coughed violently again, gasped loudly and became limp.

Answer the following questions

- 1 What was Amadi's work?
- 2 What was the trouble between him and his father?
- 3 What was his mother doing when he arrived?
- 4 What did she do on seeing him?
- 5 What did she say?
- 6 Was his father alive?
- 7 Did he recognise Amadi immediately?
- 8 Who had asked Amadi to return from university?
- 9 What for a time prevented Amadi's father from speaking?
- 10 What question did he ask Amadi after he had finished coughing?

(2X10 = 20)

(ii) Who was Nwagkago?

- 1 Before his arrival did Amadi realise that his father was dying?
- 2 Where told in the first sentence that Amadi was still in "doubt"? In doubt about what?
- 3 What suggested to him before he entered the room that his father was still alive?
- 4 What single word shows that his father felt very worried when he asked Amadi about his wife?

(2X5 = 10)

2 Give the CORRECT FORM OF THE VERBS IN BRACKETS

- (i) When Amadi was asked to return home, he (study) at the university.
- (ii) When he arrived home his mother (wait) for him.
- (iii) When his mother released him, he (bend) down to touch his father's hand.
- (iv) When he said he had not married the foreign girl, his father (smile) with relief.
- (v) When he died, he (talk) to his son.

(2X5 = 10)

3 CHANGE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES INTO PASSIVE VOICE

- a) Amadi's father is recognising him.
- b) The old man is loving university students.
- c) The girl is marrying a rich man.
- d) Her mother is cooking food.
- e) I am collecting the test books. (X5 = 10)

TOTAL: 50 MARKS

SECTION 2

LITERATURE

COMBAT HERSELF BY SUPPLEMENTARY

1) ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- (i) Who is the author of this book?
- (ii) Who is the main character?
- (iii) Where did the main character leave?
- (iv) With whom did she leave in the flat?

e) Who is her father?

B) WHO SAID THESE WORDS TO WHOM, WHY?

- (i) "You must be adaptable so as to survive." (3)
- (ii) "That's Mabel's bed and she'll be back from hospital soon as they've done her tests and she'll want her own bed, won't she?" (3)
- (iii) "Marge had got a new house in a new place and a new wife called Cliff now." (3)
- (iv) "What a funny girl you are forgetting your own granny and granddad?" (3)
- (v) "Fried?" Her eyes caught brightly. "It's your roots. That's where you ought to go to." (3)

(3x3 = 15)

C)

- (i) Give the picture of comfort as given by the author.
- (ii) "Peggy was jealousy of comfort" show things that justify this statement. (5)
- (iii) After Margaret's death, comfort was sent to a certain place. Name that place under which it was she kept? With whom did she share her room? Name two people who were working at Riverside Court who do not want worried children, organise games for the kids. (5)
- (iv) Geraldine Kays tried to give us a picture of Margaret. Write down that picture. (5)
- (v) Which kind of flowers sent by Margaret when she was knocked down by the bus. (5)

(25)

TOTAL = 50 MARKS

[GRAND TOTAL = 100 MARKS

APPENDIX B. TEST 3/C2 TYPED VERSION

READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
A THE DEATH OF AMID'S FATHER

As they walked towards Amidi's father's house, Amid, still in doubt, strained his ears for women wailing or the singing of church hymns for the dead. All quiet. He dropped his suitcase and rushed into his father's room. His mother was sitting by the bamboo bed, tending the fire that warmed her husband.

"Papa" he shouted, tears streaming from his eyes. His mother stood up and embraced him. She too was...[illegible]. " My dear son, you can not imagine my joy to see you back. Satan ...[illegible] a big temptation on us, but by the power of the almighty God above, we shall conquer ...[illegible]. In the name of Jesus, we shall conquer."

When she released him, Amid bent down to touch his sick ...[illegible]. His eyes were open. He was still alive. He ...[illegible] at his son for a while as if he could not recognise him. "Papa it's me. It's Amadi" [sic] His mouth slowly opened. "Amadi - when did you return?" He spoke in ...[illegible]. "Just now, sir ...[illegible]. "Who asked you to return"? he continued ...[illegible] Amadi's mother replied...[illegible] ...[illegible] Do you forget so quickly? Don't you ...[illegible] you asked the teacher to go to the university to bring him back...[illegible]

"Oh - it is... [illegible][illegible] that followed frightened Amadi ...[illegible] It lasted for a full minute, and each time he ...[illegible] Amadi ... [illegible] he would cough out his heart. When his breathing returned to normal, he opened his eyes again and ...[illegible] at Amadi. "Amadi" he called. "Sir" ... [omission] "How is your wife?" ...[omission]. ...[illegible] this question his face became ...[illegible] and his eyes more prominent. "I am not married, sir; I did not marry that girl," ...[omission]. The tense face relaxed, giving way to a smile of relief. ...[illegible] and mother looked at the sick man in expectation. "If I die now, I

shall be happy." ...[omission] "You have started talking ...[illegible] again," interrupted Amadi's mother. ...[illegible] I have told you will not die," ...[illegible].

The ...[illegible] went on speaking ...[omission] each word dragged painfully [many illegible words]. "Amadi, I am glad [many illegible words and punctuation marks] my own son could not do such a thing. But promise me that you will marry Nwakaego and I shall give you all my last blessing and [many illegible words]. "Papa, what are you saying?" ... [omission]. "Have you promised?" [omission].

His mother looked at him pleadingly. " My son please promise him; Do [sic] anything that will save his life." ...[omission]. "Yes sir, I promise,"... [omission]. Again the words came slowly and painfully, with long ...[illegible] between each word. " I am now happy. Very happy. if I ...[illegible] ... [illegible] I shall lie quiet in my grave and not [many illegible words] whether you have married a stranger or a girl from [many illegible words] me your hand. Your mother knows I am not owing anybody anything. She knows all my property, all my land. God bless you and Nwakaego... .. [four illegible lines over the page].

Answer the [illegible instructions].

1. What was Amid's work?
2. What was [many illegible words]. and his father?
3. What was the mother doing when he arrived?
4. What did [many illegible words] seeing him?
5. [whole question illegible].
6. [whole question illegible].
7. Did he recognise Amadi immediately?

N.B. all questions were written on chalk board because of their illegibility.

STD 8

100 MARKS

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

1. WRITE ONE PAGE ABOUT THE FOLLOWING TOPIC. CHOOSE ONLY ONE

(A) A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE KITCHEN AND A MAN'S PLACE IN THE GARDEN. AGREE / DISAGREE

(B) WRITE THE MINUTES OF A FORMAL MEETING WHICH WAS ATTENDED AT UKHIMBU HALL ON THE 29th OF AUGUST 1996.

2. READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS (16 MARKS)

AEROPLANES

1. MEN HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO FLY. MANY YEARS AGO, MEN STARTED MAKING WINGS FOR THEMSELVES WITH LIGHT WOODEN FRAME. BUT THEY FOUND THEY COULDN'T FLY. A FAMOUS ITALIAN PAINTER CALLED LEONARDO DA VINCI WAS INTERESTED IN FLYING ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO. HE MADE A PAIR OF WINGS. HE TIED THEM ONTO A MAN WHO JUMPED OFF A HIGH TOWER. THIS MAN HURT HIMSELF BECAUSE THE WINGS DIDN'T WORK WELL.

2. IN 1903 THE FIRST AEROPLANE FITTED WITH AN ENGINE WAS FLOWN BY ORVILLE AND WILBUR WRIGHT IN THE U.S.A. THE PLANE FLEW AT A SPEED OF ABOUT 50 KPH. A FEW METRES ABOVE THE GROUND. THE FLIGHT LASTED ONLY A FEW SECONDS, BUT IT MADE HISTORY.

3. TODAY, AIRCRAFT FLY ALL OVER THE WORLD. THEY ARE THE FASTEST TYPE OF TRANSPORT. THEY ARE USED FOR TAKING PEOPLE, GOODS AND MAIL FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER. AEROPLANES WITH JET ENGINES, OR JET PLANES AS WELL AS CALL THEM, CAN GO RIGHT ROUND THE WORLD IN A DAY.

1. COMPREHENSION

CHOOSE FROM THE UNDERLINED WORDS THE WORD WHICH HAS THE SAME MEANING AS THE LIST GIVEN BELOW

(A) SORT (B) WELL KNOWN (C) TWO (D) VERY TALL NARROW BUILDING (E) PERSON WHO PAINTS PICTURES

2. WRITE DOWN THE QUESTION NUMBER AND THE SYMBOL OF THE CORRECT ANSWER. DO NOT WRITE ANY WORDS.

1. DA VINCI WAS

(A) THE FIRST MAN TO FLY

(B) THE INVENTOR OF THE FIRST AEROPLANE

(C) A FAMOUS PAINTER

3. THE SPEED OF THE FIRST FLIGHT BY THE WRIGHT BROTHERS WAS

(A) 50 kph (B) approximately 50kph (C) 50kph

3. THE PHRASE MADE HISTORY IN PARAGRAPH 2 MEANS

- (A) WAS VERY OLD
- (B) WAS UNIMPORTANT
- (C) WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT IT WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR A LONG TIME

4. THE PRONOUN THEY IS USED TWICE IN THE BEGINNING OF PARAGRAPH 3. IT REFERS TO

- (A) AIRCRAFT
- (B) THE WRIGHT BROTHER
- (C) PEOPLE

5. LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING WORDS. WRITE SOME SENTENCES TO SHOW THAT YOU KNOW THEIR MEANINGS.

- (I) FLIGHT
- (II) TO FLY
- (III) FLYING
- (IV) FLIES
- (V) FLOW
- (VI) HAS FLOWN

(2X5 = 10)

(TOTAL = 10 MARKS)

SECTION B LANGUAGE

1. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD FROM THE WORDS IN BRACKETS

- (I) YOU MUST NOT (MISDEAL, MISDEAL) IN MY AFFAIRS.
- (II) HE ROWS HIS BOAT WITH ONLY ONE (OAR OAR).
- (III) THE (MILK, MILK) WAS A BLACK COAT.
- (IV) TOM RUBBED SOME CEMENT IN HIS (SOPE, SOPE) FOOT.
- (V) HE SOLD THE (FOWL, FOWL) TO THE BUTCHER.

(2X5 = 10)

2. CHOOSE THE ADJECTIVES FROM THE FOLLOWING WORDS

- (a) THE SMALL BIRD HIB IN THE TALL GRASS.
- (b) THE VERY BOY TORE A LARGE HOLE.
- (c) THERE WAS ENOUGH CREAM TO MAKE BUTTER.
- (d) MUCH RAIN FELL.
- (e) SOME PEOPLE LOST ALL THEIR CROWS.

(2X5 = 10)

2. WRITE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES IN INDIRECT SPEECH

- 2.1 "HAVE YOU SEEN MY BROTHER?" SANDHU ASKS
- 2.2 "MUST PAPPU HAVE AN OPERATION?" NODISH ASKS.
- 2.3 LIMBU SAYS "LINDA IS MILKING THE COW"
- 2.4 "I HAVE BEEN FINISHING THIS BOOK", SAYS SULLU.
- 2.5 "STOP" HE COMMANDED.

[TOTAL = 20 MARKS] (2X5 = 10)

SECTION C LITERATURE: COMFORT YOURSELF

- 1. WHO IS MINEE'S WIFE? 2. WHO IS NYAMBIILI? 3. WHO IS JOHN'S WIFE? 4. WHO WAS SUPPLYING LINDA WITH SWEETS?
- 5. GIVE THE PATTERN OF COMFORTS BRESS WHICH WAS SEEN BY THE BRESS MAKER. 6. EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING (A) HIS COMFORTFUL (B) BICYCLE FULL (C) CAREFUL (D) MISSUS (E) PICKIN (F) COMFORTFUL

TOTAL = 24 [GIVING TOTAL 100 MARKS]

ENGLISH TEST STD 8

MARKS 100

SECTION A

1. Write a letter to the Station Commando asking for help due to a troublesome man who is ^{being} afraid by everybody in the location.

(30)

2. Correct the mistake in the following sentences.

- Mother go to town to buy some groceries.
- The explorers is killed by Indians.
- John have the ability to become a great painter.
- The speaker adress ~~across~~ the crowd from a platform.
- I think you are making a fools of yourself. (5x2=10)

Give the correct form of the words in brackets.

eg Mother pour the tea into the cups yesterday.
Mother poured the tea into the cups yesterday.

- Mother and father (call) on our new neighbours last month.
- He asked me to change place when I (arrive).
- I (get) into bed and soon fell into a deep sleep.
- When one (catch) a baby elephant by the tail it stood still.
- It was after dark when we (leave) the farm. (5x2=10)

4. Choose the correct word between the two

- Our hockey (team / team) won the match.
- There is an exciting new (cereal / serial) story.
- My uncle send me a (check / cheque) for R10.
- Will you kindly (wrap / rap) this parcel for me.
- I tied a parcel with a (peace / piece) of string. (5x2=10)

5. Begin the following sentences with the underlined words.

eg Nomso is ironing the dress.
The dress is being ironed by Nomso.

- A dog bits him.
- I shall build the wall.
- The jackal is catching ten sheep.
- The snake would swallow the rat.
- The oxen drew the plough. (2x5=10)

SECTION B
LITERATURE
Comfort Herself

1 Answer the following questions

Give the opposite of the following words

- (a) narrow (b) Fond (c) old cottages (d) Granny (e) Strong girl.
(2x5 = 10)

2.

(1) What do you understand by the following terms or people

- (a) Lettie Stamp (b) Shed (c) Smithy Cottage
(d) Diary (e) Hamogate

3 Name three things that Comfort was not supposed to do in a new flat as stated by Margaret. 2x3 = 6

(B) Which things were corrected by Granny which Comfort did wrong.

(10)

(2x2 = 4)

Total = 30 MARKS

[Grand total = 100 MARKS]

APPENDIX B. TEST E.
 STD 8 ENGLISH TEST

Read the following passage

The principal of our school insists that all of us participate in at least one type of sport. He says it keeps us healthy. Most of the pupils agree with him and we enjoy spending our afternoons on the sport field.

During the first term we all take part in the athletics. Those who are not fast enough to be track athletes take part in the field events. I tried hurdling and sprints last year but found that I was too short and too slow. Therefore I switched off to the 800 metres and although I never won a race I came second on several occasions. I am going to try again this year and I am also going to attempt the 1500 m. because I am sure I have the stamina.

ANSWER The following questions

Question 1

Change the following sentences into the continuous tense.

1. The principal of our school insists that all of us participate in at least one type of sport.
2. He says it keeps us healthy.
3. Most of the pupils agree with him.
4. During the first term we all take part in the athletics.
5. I tried hurdling and sprints last year.

(5 x 2 = 10)

Question 2

Give the correct form of the words in brackets.

1. Last week the principal of our school (insist) that all of us (participate) in at least one type of sport.
2. Yesterday most of the pupils (agree) with him and we (enjoy) spending our afternoons on sports fields.
3. Last Saturday I (am) going to (try) again.
4. Those who are not fast enough to be track athletes (take) part in the field events in previous years and that (keep) us healthy.

[10]

Question 3

Change these sentences into passive voice.

1. The tourists took photographs.
2. The warden drove the jeep.
3. The employees are making a noise.
4. The girl is reading the books.
5. The prefect was ringing the bell.
6. They were receiving their wages.
7. Siphon pays the account.
8. The headmaster punishes silly children.
9. Father is watching T.V.
10. The choirs are singing songs. (10)

Question 4

Comfort herself

A

1. Under which act was Comfort kept at Ivyside Court.
2. Who said these words "Do you ever take your earrings off? I bet they're never real gold."
3. To whom were the above words said?
4. Why?
5. What do you know about these words "Save our SEAL" (10)

B

Peggy was a silly girl who was jealousy for Comfort. Write a paragraph to show why why do you think Peggy was jealousy. (10)

[Grand Total 50 MARKS]

ENGLISH TEST STD 8

READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE CAREFULLY AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

THE GRAND CHAM'S DIAMOND

MR AND MRS PERKINS AND THEIR DAUGHTER POLLY ARE SITTING IN THEIR SITTING-ROOM. THEY HAVE DISCUSSED POLLY'S BOYFRIEND, ALBERT, WHO REFUSES TO TELL HER WHERE HE IS A DETECTIVE he works every night. They do not know that NOW THE DISCUSSION TURNS TO A NEWSPAPER REPORT ON THE THEFT OF THE GRAND CHAM'S VERY VALUABLE DIAMOND. THE NEXT MOMENT A "STONE" COMES FLYING THROUGH THE WINDOW. THE FAMILY SUSPECT THAT IT IS A DIAMOND.

IN SPITE OF HER HUSBAND'S PROTESTS MRS PERKINS DECIDES TO KEEP IT AND HIDES IT IN THE CLOCK. THERE IS A RING AT THE DOOR. MRS PERKINS GOES TO ANSWER IT.

QUESTION I A

- 1 HOW DOES MR PERKINS GET HOLD OF THE DIAMOND?
- 2 WHERE DOES MRS PERKINS HIDE THE DIAMOND?
- 3 WHAT IS THE NAME OF THEIR DAUGHTER?
- 4 WHAT DOES ALBERT HIDE TO THEM, THAT HE DOESN'T WANT THEM TO KNOW?
- 5 HOW DOES THE PERKINS FAMILY TURN TO KNOW HIS WORK? ~~Cancelled~~

(10) (8)

I B

GIVE THE CORRECT FORM OF THE VERBS IN BRACKETS AND UNDERLINE THEM.

MR AND MRS PERKINS AND THEIR DAUGHTER POLLY SAT IN THEIR SITTING ROOM (DISCUSS) POLLY'S BOYFRIEND ALBERT WHO (REFUSE) TO TELL HER WHERE HE (WORK) EVERY NIGHT. THEY DID NOT KNOW THAT HE (IS) A DETECTIVE. YESTERDAY THE DISCUSSION (TURN) TO A NEWSPAPER REPORT.

(5)

1C

CHANGE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES INTO THE CONTINUOUS TENSE.

- (A) THE FAMILY SUSPECTS THAT IT IS A DIAMOND.
 (B) MRS PERKINS DECIDES TO KEEP IT AND HIDES IT IN THE CLOCK.
 (C) MRS PERKINS GOES TO ANSWER A RING AT THE DOOR.
 (D) THEY DISCUSSED POLLY'S BOYFRIEND.
 (E) POLLY SAT IN THE SITTING-ROOM. (16)
 (F) THE DETECTIVES LOOKED FOR THE DIAMOND. (14)

QUESTION 2 A

LITERATURE - COMFORT HERSELF BY
 GERALDINE KAY

1. WHO WAS COMFORT'S MOTHER? (8)
 2. WHO WAS HER FATHER?
 3. WHERE DID COMFORT AND MARGARET LIVE? (6)
 4. WHO IS MISS HANKER?
 5. HOW DOES BELL PLACE FLAT LOOK LIKE?
 6. WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK, COMFORT HERSELF

2. B

GIVE THE MEANING OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS.

- (1) SCRAPING
 (2) MANNERS
 (3) ASPHALT
 (4) gasped
 (5) embarrassed
 (6) bother
 (7) FLOATED
 (8) CHATTERING
 (9) Landlady
 (10) moaned. (10)

2C

GIVE THE OPPOSITE OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS.

- (i) LADY
 (ii) Dark hall
 (iii) NEW POLISH
 (iv) OPENED
 (v) Grounded (5)

[TOTAL = 50 MARKS]

SECTION A

1. COMPREHENSION

Mayengeni had a patch of mealies in the bend of a river at the foot of a high krans. In spite of his watchfulness, the baboons which lived in the krans continued to raid the field. Then he hit upon a plan.

One day, as dusk fell he went down to the field, taking with him a whip, without the stick, and a pocket full of dry mealies. From the thong with which the whip would be fastened to the stick he made a slip-knot. In the loop he placed some mealies and then covered the whip with the grass.

QUESTIONS

- (a) What did Mayengeni take with him to the field ?
 - (b) What did Mayengeni use to make a slip - knot??
 - (c) Where was Mayengeni patch of mealies ?
 - (d) Where did the baboons live ?
 - (e) What plan did Mayengeni made to hit upon the baboons ? (2x5=10)
2. Write a letter to your grandfather and grandmother, thanking them for a pleasant holiday you have spent with them (20)
3. Change the following sentences into indirect speech.
- (a)"I spoke to them yesterday" Said the boy to his teacher.
 - (b)"Should I take my books with me everyday ?"Mary asked Joan.
 - (c) My friend said; "My wife always drinks coffee for breakfast"
 - (d)"I hoped it would not rain" George said
 - (e)"Fire" The officer ordered the solders. (2x5 @10)
4. Begin the following sentences with the underlined words.
1. The teacher chooses the team.
 2. The snake was swallowing the rat.
 3. The police have caught the thief.
 4. I shall built the wall.
 5. The elephant trampled him to death. (2x5 = 10)

5. Join the following sentences with the conjunctions in brackets

e.g I called him. He did not hear me (but) :

I called him but he did not hear me

1. Tefo milked the cows Thabo fed the pigs (and)
2. Please hurry. You will be late (or)
3. Bukwe, Buyiswa could do the sum (neither, nor)
4. The baboons must have seen us. Hee was killed by his enemies (and)

(2x5 = 10)

SECTION B

COMFORT HERSELF BY GERALDINE KAYE

1. Define the following terms

1. air hostess
2. paddington
3. pidgin
4. achimota
5. bougain villaea

(2x5 = 10)

GIVE ONE WORD ONLY

2. (a) What is the name of the airport in London and in Ghana
(b) In which tribe did Maute belong.
(c) State things that were new in Comfort, that were done in Ghana
(d) Who is Mantes wife ?
(e) Where did they live ?
(f) In which school was Mante educated ?
(g) Who was Mantes Steward.
(h) What was Mante, and Efua's work.

(2x10 = 20)

3 Answer the following question

1. Efua was not working when comfort arrived in Ghana. Give the reason why ?
2. What was the main quarrel between John and Efua
3. Nobody can live on one salary any more, so I'll see you tomorrow.

(a) Who said these words ?

(b) To whom ?

(c) WHY ? (2x5 = 10)

TOTAL MARKS = 100

ENGLISH 2nd LANGUAGE H.C.

STD. 8

TOTAL MARKS : 50

QUESTION 1

GIVE THE OPPOSITES OF THE FOLLOWING BY CHOOSING BETWEEN in, im, dis, as, un.

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| a) bearable | b) reasonable | c) contented |
| d) effective | e) believable | f) honest |
| g) accurate | h) civilised | i) capable |
| j) conscious | k) polite | l) conspicuous |
| m) patient | n) pure | o) obedient. |

/15/

QUESTION 2

CORRECT THE VERBS IN BRACKETS. (FUTURE TENSE)

1. At the moment John (study) hard but one day he (live) the life of a rich man.
2. Tonight I (talk) to the most beautiful girl in the world, the very thought of it (make) me feel excited.
3. What (you + do) with that knife ? You (get) into trouble one of these days.
4. Look ! He (run) beautifully ! He (soon + win) races for his country.
5. Goodbye ! I (leave), but I (write) to you.

/15/

QUESTION 3

MAKE SHORT EXPRESSION TO REPLACE THE UNDERLINED EXPRESSION.

e.g. A bus passes the school twelve times an hour ((every _____ minutes).
i.e. every five minutes.

1. The trains go to town three times an hour (every _____ minutes)
2. Mr. Baloyi took a new breath ten times a minute (every _____ seconds)
3. The earth makes a complete turn once a day (every _____ hour)
4. We have an exam once a quarter (every _____ months)
5. The sun is overhead the equator twice a year (every _____ Month)

/10/

QUESTION 4

CHOOSE THE MOST SUITABLE WORD IN BRACKETSTO COMPLETE EACH SENTENCE.

- a) A good teacher can always _____ what he wants the class to do. (exaggerate, demonstrate, transfer, resound)
- b) A burn causes _____ pain. (akward, passionate, intense, prominent)
- c) Perfect happiness is a(n) _____, never a reality. (project, miracle, credit, ideal)
- d) _____ people are determined to become rich and important. (ambitious, indignant, ideal, prominent)
- e) Every problem has a number of different _____ (aspects, sticks, tributes)

She's womanly

/10/

STD 8 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE

TIME: 1 HOUR

MARKS: 100

READ THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE CAREFULLY AND ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS WHICH FOLLOW.

ALCOHOL ABUSE-A TEENAGE DISEASE?

It was two o'clock in the morning when a persistent knock on the door woke her up. Thinking it was Danny who must have forgotten his key at home, his mother got up. She noticed how late it was and decided to have a serious talk with him about coming in at that hour. She opened the door rather abruptly. Her anger immediately turned into fear when she saw that it wasn't Danny. Without waiting for her to invite him in, the police officer began speaking in a grave voice.

"Are you Danny's mother?" She just nodded but raw fear gripped at her sides. "Mrs Sithole, I'm really sorry to have to tell you that your son has been involved in a car accident. We believe he was under the influence of alcohol." She wasn't listening any further. Sobs of anger, pain and guilt racked her body. Her Danny, only 17, so strong, so full of life. For what crime?..... Alcohol abuse.

THE TEENAGER WITH AN ALCOHOL PROBLEM.

"That's me, Danny Sithole, but I am also the luckiest young man on this earth. I have survived a serious car accident. After months in hospital and a clinic for alcohol addicts, I am ready to start a new life—a life free of alcohol. I have learnt my lesson the hard way. It took me a car accident to teach me that my life is too valuable to spend so intoxicated that I am not aware of what is happening around me. I have realised that alcohol is the leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 16 and 24 by far outweighing any other drug or illness. More and more teenagers are drinking and more and more are dying as a result of alcohol abuse.

Why did I start drinking? Ignorance is the main reason, I suppose. I did not know that it actually affects both mind and body. I watched my friends getting drunk over weekends, after school and sometimes even during school hours. I thought that there could be no harm in drinking if everyone else was doing it.

The personnel at the clinic told me that alcohol causes brain cells to die off and that insanity, cancer and impotence are all directly caused by alcohol abuse. They supported me, but they were very strict. Alcohol abuse is a disease and anyone with a disease should not resist professional help. I am in matric this year and I am studying hard to pass at the end of the year. There are days when I feel like a drink, days when I feel depressed because I want to go to university, but my mother cannot afford to send me to

.....?/2/.....

I am convinced that I will be able to go to university if I study hard. I did not survive that terrible car accident to perish on the streets-I know I am bright and that I can succeed.

QUESTIONS

1. Rewrite the following words in plural form;
I) car accident II) university III) police officer IV) illness.
2. Use each of ~~the~~ the following words in your own sentences to prove that you know and understand their meaning;
i) disease-deceased ii) use-abuse iii) importance-importance
iv) personnel-personal. (12)

QUESTION 2

Change the following into indirect speech.

1. Chaka said, "I will see the white men tomorrow morning."
2. Mzilikazi said, "We arrived here last year." (14)

QUESTION 3

Punctuate the following correctly.

1. britain contains three countries england wales and scotland
2. ireland has a capital of its own duplin

QUESTION 4-

Give the correct tense of the following verbs in brackets below.

1. At the moment John (study)hard, but one day he (live) the life of a rich man.
2. Tonight I (talk) to the most beautiful girl in the world, the very thought of it (make) me feel excited.

QUESTION 5

CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD FROM THOSE IN BRACKETED.

1. Each boy (get, gets) a cake.
2. You (doesn't, don't) know your work.
3. Why (isn't, aren't) every pupil in the classroom?
4. There (is, are) a few apples on the tree.
5. The basket of vegetables (is, are) in the kitchen. 5

QUESTION 6

POETRY QUESTIONS

COMFORT HERSELF.

- When Comfort arrived at Penfold Granny gave her 3 rules. Give them.
2. Why was Comfort an exception to the children at Penfold?
3. Lettie Stamp said she is allowed into the churchyard under 2 reasons. What are those reasons?

/3/

4. Which family in Penfold was the poorest? How do we know?
5. Which family was the richest? How do we know?
6. There was a quarrel or misunderstanding between Lettie and Comfort. Explain this in full.
7. With whom did Comfort go bean-picking?
8. Granny came and disturbed the bean-picking. Why?

/20/

POETRY QUEST

The parts of take you're very sure
Are take and took and taken;
Yet bake is very wrong
As bake, book, baken.

1. Give the title of this poem.
2. Who is the poet?
3. How do we know?

Question 6b

Through the house what busy joy,
Just because the infant boy has a tiny tooth to show
I have got a double row all as white and as small

1. Give the title of this poem.
2. Give i) the synonym of joy.
ii) the antonym of joy.
3. Give 3 comparisons found in this poem.

GRAND TOTAL 100

STD: 8

MARKS: 100

ENGLISH TEST:QUESTION: 1COMPREHENSION:-

" The leopard !Look, the leopard & There !On the rock below!"

Jim shot the words out, chocky with excitement; and true enough, there the leopard was. The long, spotted body was crouched on a flat rock just below the baboons. He was broadside to us, with his forequarters slightly raised and his face turned towards the baboons. With wide-opened mouth he snarled savagely at the advancing line and, with right paw raised, he made threatening dabs in their direction. His left paw pinned down the body of a baboon.

The voices from the mountain boomed louder and nearer as, clattering' and scrambling down the face, came more and more baboons. There must have been hundreds of them; the semicircle grew thicker and blacker, more and more threatening, evr closer. The leopard raised himself a little more, taking swift looks from side to side across the advancing front; then his nerve went, and with one jump he shot from the rock into the bush.

There was an instant forward rush of the half moon, and the rock was dâvered with roaring baboons, swarming over their rescued comrade. A moment later the crowd scrambled up the slope again, taking the leopard's victim with them. In that seething rabble I could pick out nothing but all the Africans maintained that they could see the mauled one dragged along by itself by two others, much as a chld might be helped uphill.

(Adapted from "Jock of the Bushveld")

QUESTIONS:

- How did the leopard know that it was in danger?
- How did the leopard escape?
- How did the baboon take their comrade with them?
- Who was the first to see the leopard?
- Who could not see what happened after the leopard had fled?
- Who was exactly what happened after the leopard had fled?
- In what direction were the baboons moving when the people first saw them?
- How do we know that there were more than ten baboons?
- Why were the baboons so angry?
- Where was the leopard when first seen by the people?

QUESTION: 2CHANGE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES INTO THE PRESENT OR PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE:

- The long, spotted body was crouched on a flat rock just below the baboons.
- The voices from the mountain boom louder and nearer.
- The leopard raised himself a little more, taking swift looks from side to side.
- A moment later the crowd scrambles up the slope again.

QUESTION:3

BEGIN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE UNDERLINED WORDS:-

1. Zulu killed the snake.
2. The teacher chooses the train.
3. Nomsa is ironing THE DRESS.
4. Gale has washed the dishes.
5. I shall built the wall.
6. ELECTRICITY DRIVES THE TRAIN.
7. The wind blew the trees.
8. The workmen are digging A trench.
9. The whole class will read the book.
10. Mosidi cleared the table.

QUESTION: 4

CHANGE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES INTO INDIRECT SPEECH.

1. Close the door, he told me.
2. Stand firm", the captain commanded his men.
3. Do the work, he orderd them.
4. Do not leave me behind, he begged us.
5. Post the letter for me, she asked Dennis.

BEGIN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH THE UNDERLINED WORDS:-

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...
6. ...
7. ...
8. ...
9. ...
10. ...

QUESTION: 5

CHANGE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES INTO INDIRECT SPEECH.

COMFORT HERSELF BY GERALDINE KAYE

1. Name two things that were done in Penfold and were new to Comfort (4)
2. Describe the building of the school in Penfold as defined by Geraldine Kaye (4)
3. State things that were done by children after school to show that they were happy (2)
4. Give the meaning of the following words:-
 - a) Stare -
 - b) Rector
 - c) Kitten
 - d) Murmured
 - e) Shyness (1 x 5) = 5
5. Who is the main character in this book? (2)
6. Why do you say he/she is the main character? (2)
7. What lesson do you learn from this book? (1)

/20/

OPSOMMING VAN TOETSE, EKSAMENS EN MEMORANDA
SUMMARY OF TESTS, EXAMINATIONS AND MEMORANDA

(Heb relevante afskrifte aan)
(Attach relevant copies)

Datum Date	Vak en St. Subject and Std	STD EIGHT ENGLISH	Kontrole Control
		CUMULATIVE REVISION TEST.	
		(Prescribed Book) - Comfort herself	
		1. Explain fully how Margaret died (chapter I)	
		2. Discuss all that Comfort did after that incidence till she arrived at Bell-blade (chapter I)	
		3. Give a clear picture of their flat at Bell-blade (chapter 1)	
		4. Give the condition of that flat.	
		5. Write important incidences at Jayside court. (chap 2)	
		6. Discuss all incidences in Penfold (chap 3)	
		7. Discuss the families in Penfold and their conditions. i.e. Bartons, Davs & Watkins.	
		8. Discuss Comfort's stay at Hillside estate till her departure with aunt Ata.	
		9. Discuss her journey with aunt Ata to Namageri.	
		10. How Give all the family members living in the Compound with grand mother	
		[(10x10) = 100]	

APPENDIX B TEST L2-TYPED VERSION

STD. Eight English

CUMULATIVE REVISION TEST

(Prescribed book) - Comfort herself

1. Explain fully how Margaret died (chapter 1).
2. Discuss all that Comfort did after that incidence till she arrived at Bell-...{illegible} (chapter 1).
3. Give a clear picture of their flat at Bellplace (chapter 1).
4. Give the condition of that flat.
5. Write important incidence at Iyyside court (chapter 2).
6. Discuss all incidence in Penfold (chapter 3).
7. Discuss the families in Penfold and their conditions, i.e. Bartons, Davis & Watkins.
8. Discuss Comfort's stay at Hillside Estate till her departure with aunt Ata.
9. Discuss her journey with aunt Ata to ...[illegible].
10. Give all the family members living in the compound with grand mother.

[(10x10)= 100]

SECTION #

Working at University / was a student

10 many a girl from the street / a prostitute
sitting by the fire bamboo bed, kissing the fire
that warmed us inward

4 She embraced him. She cried

5 Satan had thrown a big temptation on us /
you could see in your my joy to see you /
by the power of simplicity we shall conquer

6 Yes

7 No | He could not realize love

8 The teacher | His father

9

10 96 he did many a prostitute.

(3x10=30)

(11) (i) The girl whom his father wanted found to marry
He was still alive

(ii) No | He was still alive

(iii) He had father was still alive

4 He didn't know the course system

5. leave (2x5=10)

2. studied

(ii) wanted | wanted

(iii) but

(iv) studied

(v) talked

3 (a) He is being recognized by his father
(b) University students are being loved by the old man
(c) A rich man is being married by the girl

- (d) food is being ^{fast} cooked by mother.
- (e) The test books are being corrected by me
(2x5 = 10)

TOTAL = 50 MARKS

GRAND TOTAL = 100 MARKS

STD 8

SECTION B

A/1) Geradine Kaye

- (i) Comfort
- (ii) Bell place
- (iii) Mrs Margaret
- (iv) Monte

 $2 \times 5 = 10$

(B)

(i) (a) Margaret (b) Comfort (c) So as to be strong when something can happen.

(ii) (a) Peggy (b) Comfort (c) She was ⁽³⁾jealousy,

(iii) (a) Comfort (b) Miss Hunter (c) When she was ⁽³⁾asked about her relatives.

(iv) (a) Miss Hunter (b) Comfort (c) When Comfort mentioned later that she had Granny & Grandad ⁽³⁾

(v) (a) Peggy (b) Comfort (c) Jealousy ⁽³⁾

 $(3 \times 5 = 15)$

C

(i) Her eyes were deep black and her hair was thick and springy round her head and she had so nice little ears and tiny gold earrings. (5)

(ii) (a) Sue fitted Comfort's green dress and said green is an unlucky colour.

- (c) She said Comfort's ear rings were not real gold
 (d) Complained that Comfort was spiteful.
 (e) Threatened her about Annabel's coming back to his bed. (5)

(iii)

- (i) Seaside Court
 (ii) Childrens Act Section II, 1980
 (iii) Peggy
 (iv) Aunt Phyllis
 (v) Uncle Dick (5)

(iv)

Margaret was beautiful. Hair like silver sand which hung round her shoulder in a shining curtain and eyes as blue and innocent as two angel from the best of all she always smiling, laughing. (5)

- (v) (i) lilies
 (ii) tulips
 (iii) Daffodils (5)

Total = 60 MARKS

ENGLISH MEMO STD 8 TEST D

SECTION A : COMPREHENSION - Composition = (16 MARKS)

2

- (A) SORT → TYPE
- (B) WELL KNOWN → FAMOUS
- (C) TUBE - PAIR
- (D) VERY TALL NARROW BUILDING → TOWER
- (E) PERSON WHO PAINTS PICTURES → ARTIST
(2 × 5 = 10) (10)

3

- 1 (C) A FAMOUS PAINTER
- 2 (C) SO RPH
- 3 (C)
- 4 (C) PEOPLE

(8)

- 5 (i) FLIGHT - The guest took a ten-o'clock flight.
- (ii) TO FLY - He wants to fly to Durban this evening.
- (iii) FLYING - The aeroplane is flying in a windy weather.
- (iv) FLIES - The aeroplane flies early this morning.
- (v) FLEW - Yesterday it flew in the cloudy weather.
- (vi) FLOWN - It has flown.

(12)

TOTAL = 46

SECTION B : LANGUAGE

(i) MEDDLE =

2 (ii) ORE =

(iii) MARK =

(iv) SORT =

(v) FOWL = (2 × 5 = 10)

(18)

2

(a) SMALL =

(b) UGLY =

(c) ENOUGH =

(d) MUCH =

(e) SOME = ALL THEIR

3/

(1337)

- 3.1 SANDILE ASKED IF G had seen his brother
 3.2 NOMISA ASKES IF TAPHO must have an operation.
 3.3 LINDA SAYS That Langs is milking the cow
 3.4 SULELO SAYS THAT SHE has been reading that book
 3.5 He commanded him to stop.

(TOTAL = 30 MARKS)

10

SECTION C: LITERATURE: COMFORT HERSELF.

1. EPIA
2. Mami's Teround
3. Winnie
4. Indian trader
5. Bodice top and flair-skirt
6. (A) Air conditional → having means =
- (B) Bicycleful → owning Bicycle
- (C) carful → owning a car
- (d) missus → someone who is married / having serv.
- (E) Pikkin → little child
- (F) WANWANGERI → WHERE comfort's Granny live

(TOTAL 24 MARKS)

24

[GRAND TOTAL = 100 MARKS]

USED BY TEACHERS RESEARCHED IN THE STUDY

ENGLISH & AFRIKAANS DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS.

Std 6,7 & 8

ESSAY ----- TOTAL= 50 Marks

Language	10	
Spelling	10	
Punctuation	10	
Content	20	

LETTER TOTAL= 50 Marks

Address	5	
Salutation	3	
Body	40	
Conclusion	2	

Std 9 70 Marks (ESSAY)

Language	10	
Spelling	10	
Punctuation	10	
Content	40	

LETTER : (30 Marks)

Address	5	
Salutation	3	
Body	20	
Conclusion	2	

MARKING GRID APPLIED UNDER CA to L2 TESTING

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Composition	70-56 ^c	55-49 ^c	48-42 ^c	41-35 ^c	34-28 ^c	27-21 ^c	20-14 ^c	13-0 ^c
Letters	30-24 ^L	23-21 ^L	20-18 ^L	17-15 ^L	14-12 ^L	11-9 ^L	8-6 ^L	5-0 ^L
CONTENT	20-16 8-7	15-14 7-6	13-12 5	11-10 4	9-8 4-3	7-6 3-2	5-4 2	3-0 1-0
Depth; substance; knowledge	impressive	meaty <i>Substantive</i>	some substance	adequate	insubstantial	thin	shallow	empty
Interest; originality; insight <i>True or false?</i>	riveting <i>focused</i>	stimulating <i>accurate</i>	interesting <i>sound</i>	a glimmer <i>acceptable</i>	predictable <i>loose</i>	trite <i>flat</i>	dull <i>confused</i>	void <i>wrong</i>
ORGANISATION	16-13 7-6	12-11 5	10 5-4	9-8 4-3	7-6 3	5 3-2	4-3 2-1	2-0 1-0
Coherence; fluency	impressive obvious	clear & fluent	quite coherent	some lapses	some confusion	confusing	pretty meaningless	→
Cohesion	obvious	present	some markers	few markers	no markers	no markers	no markers	wrong markers
Structure; organisation	intelligent	well organised	main ideas stand out	signs of sequencing	loosely organised	disorganised	incoherent	too little to organise
Paragraphing -introduction & conclusion -topics -unity	skillful striking	good	sensible	some control	unhelpful	faulty; illogical	→	→
VOCABULARY	16-13 7-6	12-11 5	10 5-4	9-8 4-3	7-6 3	5 2	4-3 2-1	2-0 1-0
Range; depth; aptness; sophistication	exceptional	very good	good	average	weak	poor	dismal	nothing there
Register	spot on	appropriate	acceptable	some lapses	inappropriate	unacceptable	no idea at all	→
Word form	faultless	minor lapse/s	few errors	some errors	poor control	even worse	mangled	→
LANGUAGE USE	18-15 8-7	14-13 6	12-11 5	10-9 5	8 4-3	7-6 3	5-4 2	3-0 2-0
Sentence structure	variety used effectively	variety used well	some complex, used well	simple, used well; no complex/faulty complex	several errors	major errors	no idea	→
Errors	virtually error free	few serious errors	some errors but meaning clear	several errors but meaning O.K.	frequent errors; meaning affected	dominated by errors; meaning obscured	errors render it meaningless	→

- Each piece of writing is given four marks - one each for content, organisation, vocabulary and language use, with maximums of 20, 16, 16 and 18 respectively for the composition and 8, 7, 7 and 8 for the letter or other task.
- It is not possible to pay full attention to both content and expression at the same time. Each piece of writing must therefore be read twice holistically and quite rapidly both times.
- After the first reading give marks for content and organisation and after the second reading for vocabulary and language use. Write these marks top right on the first page of each section and transfer the total to the front cover.
- Marker responses to key features of writing under all four headings should be shown in red using symbols in common use such as a tick for approval, a question mark for puzzlement and L for an error of language and so on.

substance

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF MARKED SCRIPT

36
50

25-02-97

English Test
Question 1

- Q
- a) To a nine year old boy
 - b) Ear to ear
 - c) & Everybody would die.
 - ii) To be afraid
 - d) rumour

Question 2

- 1. Margaret ✓
- 2. Mrs Mace ✓
- 3. Ruby ✓
- 4. her footsteps ✓
- 5. Bell place ✓
- 6. Graham ✓
- 7. Because they were phoned for booking a room and the owner of the house said "ye they can find it but ^{when they are there} she talked at Comfort and say "No there is people in the room sorry."
- 8. 11 years old ✓
- 9. Ruby ✓
- 10. Mente ✓
- 11. i) Comfort Margaret
 - b) eyes = pele brown ✓ blue ✓
 - ii) hairs = short & black ✓ Gold & long ✓
 - iii) colour = black ✓ white ✓
- 12. The Death of Margaret ✓
- 13. A Social Worker ✓
- 14. Inyaside court ✓
- 15. 11 1 1 ✓

S

SAMPLE OF MARKED SCRIPT

16. Carmen ✓
17. Peggy ✓
18. Because she didn't cry ✓
19. From her words "There is no use for cry" ✓
20. Because Margaret didn't encourage the relationship.
21. i. Because it won't let Margaret back to life
ii. You will be headache ✓
22. ~~Est~~ Coufa
23. Harrogate ✓
24. by bus ✓
25. Miss Harker
26. It was international school
27. Kwatey-Jones ✓

Question 3

1. Is John at home today? ✓
2. Isn't it cold now? ✓
3. Are there some cakes in the tin? ✓
4. Enjoys Pat working in the garden? ✓
5. Aren't there any apples left? ✓

SAMPLE OF MARKED SCRIPT

22
/ 50

25 March 1997

Section A
Question 1

348 Takuta Street

Alexandria

6135 ✓

25 March 1997

Dear Thembeke

Thank you for your letter which I received last week.

I spending a few week with my friends. In
sp I Friday I went to the town ^{to buy} ~~which I bought~~
the drinks for my friends and buy finally which
~~spending the~~ ^{we drink with friends} ~~on friends~~ and I went to church
sp on ~~on Thursday~~ ^{Sunday} on Sunday I went to see on
the see I pray the meat and drinking the
drinks on every things. I hope to ^{you} my joy
last week.

7

I saw the week and the last week and I
spend the money for that thing and shop ^{you}
^{very} glad for the week.

Pass ^{my} regards ^{to all} at home.

Your sister
Aoleka. ✓

SAMPLE OF MARKED SCRIPT

Section BQuestion 1

1. There was once a shepherd who left his sheep near the sea. ✓

2. One very hot day he was looking at the sea.

3. He had loaded the boat with a cargo of dates.

4. This caused the waves to swell so much that the boat was in danger of being sunk. ✓

5. For a time all went well, and he enjoyed looking at the beautiful calm smooth sea.

6. Later on he was able to return to his own country. ✓

7. It was a very narrow escape. ✓

Question 2

a. He walked ~~to~~ the street

b. They sat ~~on~~ a rock ✓

c. This ~~is~~ different ~~to~~ that ✓

1. 4. Do this for me. ✓

5. Ethel gave it ~~after~~ me ✓

6. It is made ~~from~~ wood ✓

Section C

A. Comfort running fast because their mother knock by the bus. ✓

1. Mis mace ✓

2. 2. Because Margaret walked the friends ✓

3. Because Margaret walked the friends ✓

4. Peggy. ✓

SAMPLE OF MARKED SCRIPT

21. May 1997.

English Test
Question 1

16

1. ~~is not work~~ ~~board~~ ~~is~~ ~~University~~ ✓
2. Amidt was in the University
3. ✓ The trouble was that Amidt wanted to marry a girl that his father did not like
3. She was sitting by the bamboo bed, tending the fire that warmed her husband.
4. His mother stood up and embraced him.
5. She too was enjoying my dear son you cannot imagine my joy to see you back
6. Yes he was. Still alive ✓
7. He stared at his son for a while as if he could not recognise him.
8. ✓
9. It lasted for a full minute and earl time he can hear Amidt thought he would cough out his hair
10. I am glad I knew you did not do it you own son could not do such a thing. But promise me that you will marry Nkhakago and I shall give you all my last blessing and die.
- ① - 1. That girl was Mary.
2. He was not she. If her father ^{was die} _{real or still}
3. ✓
4. ✓
5. when he told. died. to his son.

sample of marked script

2.

Question 2.

1. When Amadi was asked to return home he was studying at the University
2. When he arrived home his mother was waiting for him
3. When his mother released him he was bound down to touch his father
4. Which When he said he had not married the foreign girl his father was smiling with relief
5. When he died he was talking to his son.

Question 3.

1. Amadis father was recalling him
2. The old man ^{is} ~~is~~ ^{loved} ~~loving~~ University students.
3. The girl ~~is~~ ^{is} marrying a rich man
4. Her mother was cooked a food
5. Tom ~~correcting~~ ^{read} the test book

Section B

1. Geraldine Kaye.
 2. Comfort Jones
 3. Bell place
 4. Mrs. Mac
 5. Madame Monte
- B10 because Larry is not possible

①. 4

00/ET 42(i)

CLASS : ...^SA.....
SUBJECT: ENGLISH.

		<u>MARK SCHEDULE</u>												
QUATER :			1	2	3	4	5	6						
DATE	:	.....											
TOTAL	:	.....											
PASS MARK	:	.....											
1.	NOMARWANI	B	a	49	71		50	140						
2.	NOMARWANI	N	29	53	45		41	169						
3.	PLAATJIE	L	a	37	57		43	109						
4.	QUZA	M	23	22	a		41	110						
5.	RAFANI	Z	9	35	36		31	92						
6.	SAM	M	22	24	46		40	177						
7.	SIFUNDA	N	33	51	54		49	159						
8.	SIKO	T	17	28	60		44	131						
9.	SKABE	M	37	54	65		48	164						
10.	SOMNTU	M	29	67	66		43	134						
11.	SOMYAU	S	a	17	36		30	96						
12.	SONANZI	N	a	57	56		46	150						
13.	STURMAN	N	30	a	66		30	146						
*14.	TOKWE	S	a	a	a		a	a						
15.	TYHOLWENI	N	11	63	64		50	149						
16.	WITBOOI	S	a	62	51		40	153						
17.	WINDVOEL	N	a	32	50		50	118						
18.	XUNDBUHU	S	24	38	65		40	142						
19.	YOSANA	N	a	42	a		45	104						
20.	ZANEMPI	Z	6	44	54		45	127						
21.	ZOZI	L	a	40	59		44	160						
22.														
23.														
24.														
25.														
26.														
27.														
28.														
29.														
30.														
TOTAL MARKS	.....		559	197	2050		2100	6830						
NUMBER OF PUPILS	.....		51	51	51		48	48						
AVERAGE MARK	.....		10.96	38.6	40		43.75	42.29						
AVERAGE %	.....		5.48	38.6	40		43.75	47						

APPENDIX HRHODES UNIVERSITY - ARTS FACULTYRESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENT (ELT)RESEARCHER - J. SSEMAKALUQUESTIONNAIRE/SCHEDULE FOR GRADE TEN ENGLISH LANGUAGETEACHERS**SECTION I.**

Part of the M.A. course in English Language Teaching (ELT) offered by Rhodes University (Grahamstown) requires that students conduct a mini-research project in an area of their choice. The classroom practitioner's uncertainties regarding practical issues in communicative language testing have inspired me to focus my research on: "a case study of the implementation of the Communicative Approach to testing, in language progress tests in one secondary school in the Alexandria circuit of the Eastern Cape Department of Education." It is hoped that the findings of the study will be of at least some modest benefit, not only in lowering the anxieties of teachers but also providing a practical guide to facilitators and subject advisers in planning appropriate empowerment or development courses for their teachers. Your co-operation in completing this questionnaire is highly appreciated and your contribution invaluable.

SECTION II.**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. You don't need to write your name on the questionnaire; the information provided will be used anonymously and strictly confidentially.
2. Please answer all questions.
3. Please write your answers in the spaces provided.

SECTION III

SECTION III A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Sex.....
2. Highest qualification in English: (e.g. S.T.D.,P.T.D.,P.T.C.,English I, II, III, Practical English, Special English etc.)
3. Number of years of teaching experience:
4. Number of years of experience in teaching English:
5. Fill in information about your teaching subjects and load

subjects offered	grade groups	total no. of pupils	weekly load

6. What other standard have you taught English in the past?:.....

SECTION III B - TEACHING MATERIALS

Please fill in only where applicable. Leave blank where not applicable.

What prescribed and reference books do you use to teaching the following components of English? (Give titles only).

1. Grammar:

- (i)
-
- (ii)
-
- (iii)
-

APPENDIX H

other materials:

.....
.....
.....

2. Novels and/or Plays:

(i)

.....

(ii)

.....

(iii)

.....

other materials:

.....
.....
.....

3. Poetry:

(i)

.....

(ii)

.....

(iii)

.....

other materials:

.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX I.RHODES UNIVERSITY - ARTS FACULTYM.A. (E.L.T.) RESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENTRESEARCHER J. SSEMAKALYLIST OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS EXAMINED ANALYZED IN THIS STUDY

1. The Interim Core Syllabus - English Second Language: Higher, Standard and Lower Grade. Implemented January 1996.
2. The Guideline Document for Communicative Language Teaching: Teachers' Guide.

APPENDIX J.RHODES UNIVERSITY - ARTS FACULTYM.A (E.L.T.) RESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENTRESEARCHER J. SSEMAKALUINTERVIEW GUIDE SCHEDULE WITH SUBJECT ADVISER - ENGLISH.

The following questions will serve only serve as a guide schedule. The questions will remain as open-ended as possible and the order in which they will be asked will be determined by field circumstances.

1. Would you please like to provide me with information about your academic qualifications?
2. Would you also volunteer information about your professional qualifications?
3. How long have you served as a subject adviser - English?
4. In what capacity or capacities did you serve before you became a subject adviser?
5. What do you consider to be the most important factor which influenced your appointment as a subject adviser?
6. What formal procedures are followed in the appointment of a subject adviser?
7. What is the job description of the subject adviser?
8. How did you get yourself acquainted with the demands of your new appointment?
9. How many schools fall under your supervision?
10. How long does it take you to cover all the schools under your service area?
11. What language areas have you focused on in your programmes in the last few or so years?
12. What classes have you been mainly concerned with?
13. What is the attitude of your teachers with relation to the Communicative Approach to testing?
14. What other facilitator programs are servicing your area?
15. To what extent is your work as a subject adviser related to that of other facilitator programs?

APPENDIX J.RHODES UNIVERSITY - ARTS FACULTYM.A (E.L.T.) RESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENTRESEARCHER J. SSEMAKALUINTERVIEW GUIDE SCHEDULE WITH SUBJECT ADVISER - ENGLISH.

The following questions will serve only serve as a guide schedule. The questions will remain as open-ended as possible and the order in which they will be asked will be determined by field circumstances.

1. Would you please like to provide me with information about your academic qualifications?
2. Would you also volunteer information about your professional qualifications?
3. How long have you served as a subject adviser - English?
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12. What classes have you been mainly concerned with?
13. What is the attitude of your teachers with relation to the Communicative Approach to testing?
14. What other facilitator programs are servicing your area?
15. To what extent is your work as a subject adviser related to that of other facilitator programs?

APPENDIX J.RHODES UNIVERSITY - ARTS FACULTY
M.A (E.L.T.) RESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENTRESEARCHER J. SSEMAKALUINTERVIEW GUIDE SCHEDULE WITH SUBJECT ADVISER - ENGLISH.

The following questions will serve only serve as a guide schedule. The questions will remain as open-ended as possible and the order in which they will be asked will be determined by field circumstances.

1. Would you please like to provide me with information about your academic qualifications?
2. Would you also volunteer information about your professional qualifications?
3. How long have you served as a subject adviser - English?
4. In what capacity or capacities did you serve before you became a subject adviser?
5. What do you consider to be the most important factor which influenced your appointment as a subject adviser?
6. What formal procedures are followed in the appointment of a subject adviser?
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12. What classes have you been mainly concerned with?
13. What is the attitude of your teachers with relation to the Communicative Approach to testing?
14. What other facilitator programs are servicing your area?
15. To what extent is your work as a subject adviser related to that of other facilitator programs?

APPENDIX K.RHODES UNIVERSITY - ARTS FACULTYM.A (E.L.T) RESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENTRESEARCHER : J. SSEMAKALUINTERVIEW GUIDE SCHEDULE WITH GRADE TEN TEACHERS

The following questions will serve only as a guide schedule. The questions will remain as open as possible, and the order will be determined by field circumstances. The points enclosed in brackets are for the benefit of the interviewer, to help him where need be, to reformulate questions, formulate probing questions, and maintain the thread of the interview.

1. How do you evaluate your pupils' progress?
2. How regularly do you give a progress test?
3. Do you do any continuous evaluation?
4. If the answer in No.2 is yes - What kinds of continuous evaluation do you use? (e.g. assessment of oral communication, listening, and reading skills; assessment of pair and small group projects/ assignments).
5. How regularly do you do continuous evaluation?
6. Which of the following official Departmental documents have you read:
 - (a) The English Second Language Syllabus implemented in 1996,
 - (b) The Guidelines on the Communicative Language Teaching approach,
 - (c) The Department of Education and Culture Circular No. 57/95 and the guideline document on continuous evaluation.

Do you find each of the above mentioned documents you have read clear and easy to understand? In what ways, if any, do you find them useful in as far as the Communicative Approach to language testing is concerned?

7. After some time working as a language teacher now, how do you feel about the quality of the pre-service training you received in communicative language evaluation?

8. What empowerment in-service programmes on Communicative Language Testing, if any, have you been involved in this year (e.g. subject committee and departmental discussions, in-service courses by subject advisers and/or facilitators?)
9. To what extent, if any, do you think communicative language evaluation issues are addressed by the in-service programmes mentioned in and 7 ?
10. What guidelines do you use in constructing tests for your pupils, (e.g. past papers, the work covered previously, the skills to be tested etc?)
11. How do you find the task of allocating marks to questions?
12. What criteria do you follow in determining the duration of tests?
13. What would you say about the way pupils use the time allocated them in the test?
14. What do you do with the scores of language progress tests?
15. From the point of view of the pupil and the teacher, what is your general opinion about language progress testing?
16. What general comment would you make about the applicability of the CA to language testing to your working conditions?

Out of all the eleven (11) samples of question papers examined in this study, the following were the only essay and short piece of writing topics in which the pupils could deal with language at discourse level.

All of them come from only two question papers: test 2 (app.B), and test 4 (app. B).

The list runs as follows:

Write an essay of about 1 page on one of the following topics.

- (a) Life in the city.
- (b) My favourite sport.
- (c) Fooled by a friend
- (d) The day everything went wrong
- (e) A woman's place is in the kitchen and a man's in the garden. Agree or disagree.
- (f) Write the minutes of a formal meeting which was held at ...Hall on the 29 th August 1996.

SHORT PIECE OF WRITING

- (1) Write a letter to your brother or sister who is spending a few weeks with friends. Give him or her all the home news.
- (2) Write to a friend describing your brother's or sister's birthday.
- (3) Write to the police ,give full details of the accident you have witnessed.

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