

**THE DYNAMICS OF AN EMERGING OUTCOMES-BASED
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH IN A SECOND LANGUAGE
ENGLISH CLASSROOM**

THESIS

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
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By

VIVIAN WESTPHAL

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum 2005 and outcomes-based education was introduced to South African educators in 1996 by the Minister of Education, Prof. S.M.E. Bengu as an alternative to the racially divided education system prior to the first democratic elections of 1995. The new curriculum was designed to transform the education system into a more equitable system by focussing on creating learners who would become creative thinkers, independent, productive workers and responsible, non-racial citizens. Learners would take a greater role in their own education and teachers would take on new roles as facilitators in the learning process. The new approach was introduced into grade 1 in 1998 and grade 2 in 1999.

By using a modified ethnographic approach, this research project studies how one teacher has begun to think about *Curriculum 2005* and implement an OBE approach to ESL teaching in a grade 2 classroom. It also focuses on gaining insights into how the teacher has attempted to make sense of the new curriculum in terms of her current practice and the training she has received in OBE.

The ethnographic approach of the thesis has allowed the researcher to draw on many forms of data providing a holistic view. Tentative findings show that the teacher is experiencing difficulty in “unpacking” the underlying principles of OBE in terms of her current methods of teaching ESL. She continues to work from tacit knowledge. Because she has received very little training in OBE, she lacks the tools to become a more reflective practitioner. Despite this, her ESL lessons show a positive communicative approach to language teaching by focusing on stories, rhymes and songs as comprehensible input for the learners. The findings of this thesis tentatively suggest that unless teachers are given more adequate training and learning support materials, their classroom practices will remain relatively unchanged.

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PHILLIPIANS 4: 8-9

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things...and the God of peace will be with you.

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REFERENCING TECHNIQUES

The following referencing techniques have been used :

- T1/11 9:3:99 refers to the transcript 1 of 11 dated 9 March 1999
- I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99 refers to interview 1 with Mrs. C dated 14 June 1999
- FN3/13 10:3:99 refers to fieldnote 3 of 13 dated 10 March 1999 etc.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
ANC	African National Congress
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CO'S	Critical outcomes
DO	District Office
DOE	Department of Education (National)
ECDE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GED	Gauteng Education Department
GICD	Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development
GNU	Government of National Unity
INSET	In service Training
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LLC	Language, Literacy and Communication learning area
OBE	Outcomes Bases Education
PEI	Presidents Education Initiative

RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SA	Subject Advisor
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SO'S	Specific outcomes
TPR	Total Physical Response

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

In 1996, Professor S.M.E. Bengu, South Africa's Minister of Education, announced that the National Department of Education would be implementing a new learner-centered curriculum entitled *Curriculum 2005*. In an open letter to educators, Professor Bengu (1997:1) says, "I am aware that introducing the new curriculum will require considerable commitment from all participants in the learning process. It will demand of you, the educators, a different way of working, and it will demand of learners a different way of learning."

Educators are at the chalk-face of curriculum implementation. It is crucial therefore that the experiences of educators beginning to implement *Curriculum 2005* be recorded in order to understand and interpret the dynamics of implementation of the new curriculum. Often there is a mismatch of the "blueprint" of the written curriculum and the "actual practice" (Janks 1990:242) which curriculum developers overlook. Murray (1998:5-6) states that understanding the curriculum means understanding what actually happens in the classroom as well as the broader context of the curriculum.

In addition, Cornbleth (1990:5-6) proposes that the concept of curriculum should include what actually occurs in school classrooms as well as the curriculum as a document or plan. Policy documents alone are therefore inadequate. They do, however, influence what happens in classrooms as teachers interpret and use them. Taylor in the PEI Report (1999:107) suggests that "...while school level actors, and teachers in particular, always reinterpret policy, effectively remaking it, a curriculum framework remains the chief

instrument for aligning the work of the multiple actors who deliver teaching and learning”.

Wedekind *et al.* (1996:421-422) claim that in South Africa there is no tradition of research in curriculum transactions in schools. If the full implications of the implementation of an outcomes-based system of education are to be understood, the classroom process and the actions of ordinary teachers need to be documented in order to deepen and broaden our perceptions. Wedekind *et al.* (1996:421-422) stress that in order to understand the way in which policy is received and mediated in the schools and classrooms by principals, teachers and pupils, far more school-based curriculum research needs to be conducted within African schools. Cornbleth (1990:6) is clear that curriculum, as practice, cannot be understood adequately or changed substantially without attention to its setting or context. Since the classroom, the learners and the educators form a major part of the context of curriculum development, it is here that the failures and successes of the new curriculum will be seen.

Curriculum 2005 was initially intended to be implemented in grade 1 and 7 in 1998 (RSA 1997c:18). Due to fiscal constraints only grade 1 was implemented. In 1999 outcomes-based education (OBE) was extended to include grade 2. In 2000 it is envisaged that OBE will be introduced into grade 3 and 7. It is pertinent that the implementation procedures in the grade 1 and 2 classrooms are documented and studied in order to inform the implementation procedures in further grades.

Luckett (1998:10-12) emphasizes that only two structures have been concentrated on at national level: putting the bureaucratic structures into place and developing curricula i.e. policy documents. The “black box” of the classroom, *viz.* the learning and teaching process have not been addressed. Relatively little is known about how language teachers experience the processes of their daily interaction in the classroom (Burns1994:84-96). Freeman (1990:28) cited in Burns (1994:84-96) suggests that the lack of a coherent model of how language is taught and learned “remains a central shortcoming that

handicaps language teacher education”.

Without such information, language teaching will remain either largely intuitive or prescriptive. If the full implications of the new OBE curriculum, especially the Language, Literacy and Communications learning area, are to be understood by educators and policy makers, it is imperative that the classroom process be documented. It is hoped and intended that the research undertaken for this thesis adds, in a small way, to the understanding of classroom process.

1.2 GOALS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Using a modified ethnographic approach this research project will seek to fulfill the following goals:

- to gain critical insight into a grade 2 English Second Language class where outcomes-based education is being implemented;
- to become familiar with outcomes-based education in classroom procedures and activities in a South African context;
- to gain critical insights into how a grade 2 teacher attempts to make sense of the new curriculum.

1.3 THE POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

The focus and goals of the research developed out of the professional interests of the researcher who is employed in a District Office of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in the Eastern Cape Province. The researcher’s job description incorporates providing INSET and workshops for teachers in the field of Arts and Culture. During discussions and interaction with teachers at the INSET programmes and training workshops, problems and difficulties associated with OBE and the introduction of *Curriculum 2005* were identified. In order for the researcher to develop programmes and workshops relevant to the needs of the teachers in the district, she needed to

become familiar with the problems at school level. Taking into consideration the limited half-thesis format, it was decided it would be best to concentrate on the experiences of one teacher. The experiences of the researcher in the classroom gathering data and the analysis of said data will be of invaluable assistance to the researcher. In the future, the researcher will be better informed while developing programmes and workshops for teachers because the research methodology and the focus of the data analysis concentrated on the important principle of identifying the positive aspects of teaching and learning occurring in classes before suggesting ways of improvement based on OBE pedagogy.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis takes the following format: Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research by giving the educational context. It also outlines the goals of the research. The literature review is undertaken in Chapter 2. This chapter includes a discussion of OBE in general and OBE in South Africa in particular; theories of language acquisition; communicative language teaching and the language policies of South Africa at a national and provincial level. It also sketches research on the process of teacher development. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology adopted in the research. It discusses the principles of ethnography as method and process. Focus is placed on how traditional ethnography has been modified to suit the limitations of this half-thesis format. It also delineates the data collection methods and processes. The chapter concludes by describing the data analysis techniques employed. In chapter 4, the research site and the actors are documented. Data are analysed and the findings presented. The conclusion is contained in Chapter 5, where recommendations and comments are presented based on the data findings. The appendices and the list of references follow.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore and discuss the literature that has underpinned this study. It will seek to clarify theoretical issues that have framed the goals of the research presented in this thesis. In this manner, the discussion of appropriate texts will also attempt to justify the limited scope of the thesis in the light of the extremely broad field in which it places itself: English second language acquisition (SLA) and the development and implementation of a new curriculum in schools in South Africa.

The chapter will begin with an historical and social overview of OBE in general and in *Curriculum 2005* in South Africa in particular. The Language, Literacy and Communication learning area will be highlighted and its position and rationale within *Curriculum 2005* determined. In addition, the process of teacher development will be outlined. A discussion of language policies in South Africa will follow with emphasis falling on policies affecting languages studied and used in schools. Attention will then be given to theories of classroom approaches to language namely Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and its envisaged position and application within an OBE framework. The role of the teacher and learner will be addressed in the issue of SLA and teaching. Finally, the classroom as learning environment will then be discussed.

2.2 THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.2.1 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

After the first democratic elections in 1994, the Government of National Unity (GNU) produced the first White Paper on Education in 1995 (RSA 1995a), outlining

the principles underpinning the educational reform processes envisaged by the new, non-racial government. The White Paper (RSA 1995a: Chapter 1 No.1) reflected ideologies found in the newly to be enacted Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996a). Provisions 29(1)(9a,b); 6(1,2), 29(2) and 30 in the Constitution relating to education and language are relevant in the discussion of OBE (RSA 1996a:4, 14-15) because they establish the context of choice and individual responsibility found in *Curriculum 2005*.

The White Paper on Education and Training (RSA 1995a: Chapter 2 No. 4) established a vision of an educational system which has an integrated approach to learning. “An integrated approach implies a view of learning which rejects a rigid division between ‘academic’ and ‘applied’, ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’, ‘head’ and ‘hand’” (RSA 1995a: Chapter 2 No. 4).

The White Paper (RSA 1995a: Chapter 2 No.4) justifies its position of an “integrated approach” to education by placing education and training in the framework of global expansion and the role seen for South Africa through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), later superseded by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR). This position is discussed in *Curriculum 2005: Implementing OBE (4) Philosophy*, an information booklet for educators as follows:

... post-apartheid South Africa has noted that society is changing rapidly. Countries are increasingly inter-connected: ideas, trends, and work processes are communicated across the world rapidly. The advances in communication have created what has been called a global village...

(RSA undated d:9)

The White Paper sees the importance of education in this global vision as:

... Successful modern economies and societies require the elimination of artificial hierarchies, in social organisation, in the organisation and management of work, and in the way in which learning is organised and certified...

(RSA 1995a: Chapter 2 No.5)

The change in focus by the GNU, necessitated rethinking the education system and education policies pre-1994. These policies were seen as an “elite” system which needed to be converted into a more “open system” (Kraak 1998:7) which would lead to an integrated approach to education and a more equitable position for South Africa in a global economy (Kraak 1998:6; RSA 1995a: Chapter 2 No. 5).

This thinking echoes the opinions expressed in the ANC’s (1995:71) *Policy Framework for Education and Training* which was influential in post-apartheid policy making. The Policy states that “the curriculum has been unresponsive to changing labour market needs and has failed to contribute to the development of learners who are prepared for the world of work and for active participation in the process of social and economic development” (ANC 1995:71).

In the White Paper, the principles of life-long education are outlined as:

... an integrated approach to education and training, linked to the development of a new National Qualification Framework (NQF) based on a system of credits for learning outcomes achieved, will encourage creative work on the design of curricula and the recognition of learning attainments wherever education and training are offered.

(RSA 1995a: Chapter 2 No.7)

The *Policy Framework for Education and Training* of the ANC (1995:17) reiterates this stating “by integrating education and training in one system with a credit-based qualifications framework, all citizen’s chances to develop their capacities will be radically increased, whether they are in full-time or part –time study...”

Thirdly, to complement the integrated, globalised approach to education presented by the White Paper (1995a:Chapter 2 No. 5) and the ANC (1995:21), the new education system would have to redress the inequities of the past, prior to 1995. The White Paper (1995a: Chapter 3 No’s.1,3,7,8 & 16) and the ANC Policy Framework (1995) highlight the need for a new education system based on equality for all because “a racially and ethnically based system of governance has been at the heart of apartheid education” (ANC 1995:21).

To summarise, the new curriculum would attempt to redress three basic concerns: racial inequalities in education, insufficient preparation of learners for the global workplace and a desegregated, non-racial approach to curriculum content.

It was against this political and social background that *Curriculum 2005* was developed. In 1998, the new curriculum model was implemented in South African Schools at grade 1 level and was to be progressively introduced into other grades. Grade 2 would be introduced in 1999.

This curriculum was seen to be a radical departure from the old curriculum model and has seemed to receive unqualified support from various progressive educationalists because of its potential to transform education (Skinner 1998:39). The Foundation Phase Policy Document (RSA 1997e:1) produced by the Department of Education views this departure as a “paradigm shift”. The “paradigm shift” is seen as a move away from “... a curriculum [that] perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and has emphasised separateness ...” (RSA 1997e:1), towards a curriculum which encourages critical thinking, nation building and *ubuntu*.

The opinion expressed is that the old curriculum had been based on the principles of Christian National Education and Fundamental Pedagogics (RSA undated d:8; Naicker 1999:74; Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report 1999:132). The new curriculum was then designed specifically to eradicate the deficits of the old curriculum as envisaged by the new National Department of Education. These deficits were seen as a content based curriculum; an examinations driven promotion system; a heavy reliance on textbooks and syllabi and a heavy dependence on the teacher as purveyor of knowledge in the classroom.

This “old” system was criticised as producing learners and job seekers who were not completely prepared for the work environment (Pretorius 1998:vii-ix; RSA 1995a). The “old system” was condemned as being too concerned with rote-learning, passive learning and where too much emphasis was placed on content rather than on competencies. The

“old” curricula and syllabi, which affected 17 education departments prior to 1994, had been seen to perpetuate an education system reflecting the racist ideas and ethos of the apartheid government (Wedekind *et al* 1996:419).

Although South Africa’s education system had always been racially segregated, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 made racial segregation its guiding philosophy. Nelson Mandela (1994:155) described the implementation of the act as follows: “It was intellectual *baasskap*, a way of institutionalising inferiority”. Naicker (1999:21) suggests that “education was one of the apparatuses used by the apartheid state to ensure that apartheid continued in South Africa. Implicit in a racist education system is racist values. Strong social and ideological interests guided Bantu Education. The knowledge imposed on schools was selected and organised with a view to ensuring white domination”.

Curriculum 2005 claims to present an alternative educational system to redress the inequities of the past, which seeks to promote racial equity in schools, encourage critical thinking in learners and promote creative, learner-centred education in the classrooms. These ideas are reflected in *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century* (RSA 1977e:2) which says “critical thinking, rational thought and deeper understanding – central principles of the new education system – will soon begin to break down class, race and gender stereotypes”.

Skinner is highly sceptical of this thinking and argues that

For the first time therefore it would seem that the prevailing social system calls for educational techniques able to provide ... the means for their own internal critique and thus to create a society able [to] transcend, and not only to perpetuate itself. But if, as seems more probable, these critical skills are applied only to the current issues of knowledge (“what will be the most efficient strategy for corporate survival?”) and not to their underlying assumptions (“what is the nature of corporate thinking and do we like it?”) then education will again be supportive of existing systems, and without the benefit of any critique beyond itself.

(Skinner 1998:38).

In other words, the question remains whether *Curriculum 2005* can reconcile the two

potentially conflicting viewpoints expressed in the goals of OBE. The first of which looks to encourage and develop a globally competitive, free-market economy while the second purports to develop, transform and redress a society torn apart by its history. There is a definite tension between the ideas of rationalism and efficiency of globalisation, South Africa's place as a free-market society and the issues of redress, transformation and equity contained in the new curriculum framework (Skinner 1998; Kraak 1998).

2.2.2 PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Curriculum 2005 purports to reflect a system of education based on learners at different levels of study achieving pre-determined outcomes. This is understood as OBE. The approach to learning therefore focuses on what the learner learns i.e. the observable outcome. An outcome is defined as “a high-quality demonstration of observable or internal integrated learning processes that occurs at the culminating point of a set of varied learning experiences” (source unknown:1) and by Spady (1994a:18) as “outcomes are high-quality, culminating demonstrations of significant learning in contexts. *Demonstration* is the key word; an outcome is not a score or grade, but the end product of a clearly defined process that students carry out”. The danger inherent in this is that teaching that blindly focuses on outcomes can easily slide into behaviourism if there is not widespread INSET for teachers and subject advisors (Probyn 1995:2). Jansen (1999a:150) argues that the instrumentalist views of knowledge that the new curriculum espouses places a question mark behind the value of OBE in democratic school systems. He further states that “there is a fundamental contradiction in insisting that students use knowledge creatively only to inform them that the desired learning outcomes are already specified” (Jansen 1999a:150).

One of the most important characteristics of OBE is that it is concerned with “establishing the conditions and opportunities within the system that enable and encourage all students to achieve those essential outcomes” (Spady 1994b:2).

W.G. Spady is perhaps the best known advocate of OBE. His work on OBE has

been highly influential in determining the shape of *Curriculum 2005* and OBE in the South African context. *Curriculum 2005* reflects and interprets the four basic premises of OBE as suggested by Spady (1994b:9):

- All learners can perform successfully, but not at the same pace
- Each successful learning experience is a stepping stone to more success
- Schools are pivotal in creating the conditions for success at school, and
- Educators expect all learners to perform optimally.

(Source: Spady, W.G. (1994b:9))

The 5 Key Principles of the new curriculum in *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st century* (RSA:1997c:12), based on Spady's premises, endeavour to create conditions that lead to success for learners:

- Integration of education and training
- All learners will succeed. Time will no longer control the learning process. This means that not all learners will succeed at the same time. Instead, learners will be able to develop at their own pace
- Learners will be expected to show what they have learnt in different ways. There will no longer be exams. Outcomes will be assessed in other ways and on an on-going basis.
- Assessment is an integral part of the whole system. Learners will not get marks for just remembering content. Different aspects of the learners' ability, such as their creativity and critical thinking will also be assessed.
- Learners will know what they are learning and why. They will be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. This will help to motivate them because they will see the value of the programme.

(Source: RSA 1997c:12)

However, Jansen (1999b:207) states that many teachers interviewed about OBE have not grasped OBE in Spadyean terms i.e. the principle of success for all learners or

‘culminating demonstrations’ (Jansen 1999b:207). He suggests that the teachers “referred to OBE in terms common to most progressive pedagogy everywhere, rather than the mastery learning underpinnings of the Spadyean version” (Jansen 1999b:207).

Curriculum 2005 is based on the form of OBE known as “*Transformational OBE*”. Transformational OBE “... represents the highest evolution of the OBE concept and contrasts sharply with both the prevailing educational system and with Traditional OBE” (Spady & Marshall 1991:70). Transformational OBE incorporates four basic principles: clarity of focus on outcomes of significance, design down from ultimate outcomes; emphasise high expectation of all to succeed and provide expanded opportunity and support for leaning success. These four principles underscore the critical and specific outcomes of *Curriculum 2005*, which ultimately allow for learners to demonstrate learning. However, Schwarz and Cavener (1994:335 cited in Vakalisa 1998:232) argue that “the emphasis on standardisation and accountability, on a paradigm not necessarily selected by them, keeps teachers voiceless, yet responsible for the results.”

The Foundation Phase Policy document (RSA 1997e) describes the view of transformational OBE within the confines of *Curriculum 2005* in the following manner:

...South Africa has embarked on transformational OBE. This involves the most radical form of an integrated curriculum. There are several forms of integration. This most radical form implies that not only are we integrating across disciplines into Learning Areas but we are integrating across all 8 Learning Areas in all educational activities... The outcome of this form of integration will be a profound transferability of knowledge in real life.

(RSA 1997e:29)

Curriculum 2005 identifies 7 critical cross-field outcomes. The Foundation Phase Document (RSA 1997e:13) describes these outcomes as “the broad, generic cross-curricular outcomes which underpin the Constitution and which are adopted by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)”.

These outcomes will ensure that learners gain the skills, knowledge and values that will “allow them to contribute to their own success as well as to the success of their family, community and the nation as a whole” (RSA 1997e:13). The 7 cross-field outcomes strive to sever connections to any behaviourist tendencies of OBE. Learners will:

- Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made
 - Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation, community
 - Organise and manage oneself and one’s activities responsibly and effectively
 - Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information
 - Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation
 - Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.
- (Source: RSA 1997e:13)**

These 7 critical cross-field outcomes will be relevant to the 8 learning areas identified by the new curriculum:

- 1) Language, Literacy and communication (LLC)
 - 2) Technology
 - 3) Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences
 - 4) Natural Sciences
 - 5) Arts and Culture
 - 6) Economics and management Science
 - 7) Life Orientation.
 - 8) Human and Social Sciences
- (Source: RSA 1997c:14)**

However, the Foundation Phase policy document for grades R – 3, focuses on 3 learning

areas (RSA 1997e), namely:

- Language, Literary and Communication (LLC)
- Numeracy
- Life skills

(Source RSA 1997e:19)

Each of these three learning areas have their own Specific Outcomes (SOs) derived from the learning area. These SOs refer to what learners “are able to do at the end of a learning experience. This includes skills, knowledge and values which inform the demonstration of the achievement of an outcome or a set of outcomes” (RSA 1997e:19). In each learning area, the SOs will describe what learners will be able to do “at all levels of learning. The differentiation between different phases of learning would be addressed by different levels of complexity in the processes the learners engage in and in the kinds of evidence through which learners demonstrate outcomes” (RSA 1997e:19).

The Foundation Phase Policy document (RSA 1997e:20) identifies the child as the “primary point of departure” in designing *phase organisers* around which outcomes can be achieved. The phase organisers relating to the Foundation Phase are personal development, health and safety, environment, society, the learner as entrepreneur and communication in our lives.

Emphasis is placed on an expanded view of literacy to encompass language, cultural, critical, visual, media, numerical and computer literacy. However, language literacy is defined within the confines of improving the learners’ listening, speaking, reading and writing skills with the “over-arching goal of language development ... affective communication” (RSA 1997e:22).

The Foundation Phase rationale for literacy (RSA 1997e:22) suggests that language is “not an end in itself, but a means to act in the world in order to establish relationships, to

interact with others, to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge and to obtain and convey ideas and information”.

There are 7 identified SOs for the Foundation Phase learning area “Literacy”:

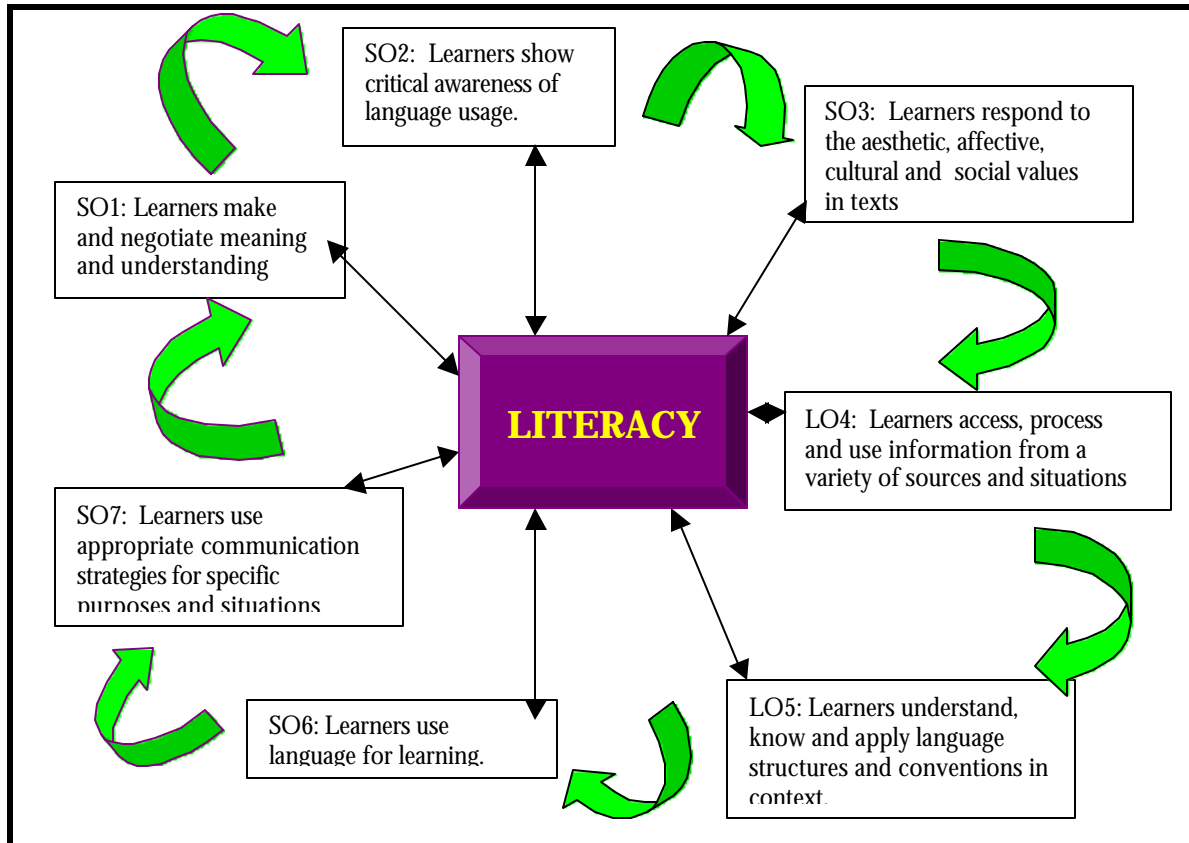


FIGURE 1 Diagrammatic representation of the 7 Specific Outcomes and their interactive nature for the Literacy learning area in the Foundation Phase. (Source: RSA 1997e:20-24)

The rationale for LLC, described in the Foundation Phase Policy Document (RSA 1997e:LLC2), argues that language and language learning “empowers” people to achieve certain goals which in turn will allow them to *inter alia* interact and participate socially, politically, economically, culturally and spiritually. It also enables learners to communicate in different contexts by using a range of registers and language varieties, and negotiate meaning and understanding.

2.2.3 CRITIQUES OF OBE

The “transferability of knowledge in real life” proposed in the new curriculum (RSA 1997e:29) remains a point of contention amongst some educationalists (Jansen 1999:148). With the introduction of the new outcomes-based curriculum model into South African schools in 1998, a debate has ensued about the success of *Curriculum 2005* and whether it is a viable model to redress education in post-apartheid South Africa. Jansen (1998b;1999a) has been very vocal as to why OBE will not succeed in South African schools. He suggests that the language about, around and associated with OBE is too complex. He argues that ordinary teachers will have difficulty in reconciling the new terminology without extensive in-service training. He states that there is little or no evidence to suggest that an OBE system will help raise the productivity of South Africa. He also writes that under-resourced classrooms, under-staffed schools, under-trained teachers will not allow for the easy implementation of OBE. He strongly debates the possibility that the technical focus of OBE will solve and prevent racism or sexism, or even contribute to developing a critical thinking citizen. He further argues that the instrumentalist view of knowledge that OBE advocates cannot foster creative learning. He criticises the system of assessment in OBE by saying that assessment “changes only moderately with an outcomes-based programme”(1998b; 1999:152). Lastly, he reasons that the management of OBE and its complex administrative procedures in schools will place heavy pressures on teachers and make it nigh impossible to perform successfully especially in the climate of teacher re-deployment and “right-sizing”. Christie (1999:281) suggests that “... policy frameworks have given almost no attention to the context of implementation and how the new vision could be put in place in the profoundly unequal school contexts that apartheid left behind”. Moreover, she suggests that the policies are “generally lacking in detail and specificity [and] ... no attempt at strategic planning or analysis of points of engagement to transform what actually exists” (Christie 1999:281). She cautions that “changing established patterns and dynamics in schools cannot simply be mandated by policy directives” (Christie 1999:288).

2.2.3 RESEARCH INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OBE

2.2.4.1 PRINCIPLES OF CHANGE OUTLINED IN CURRICULUM 2005

While it is suggested that the old curriculum was based on the principles of CNE, Fundamental Pedagogics and on a performance model of curriculum, *Curriculum 2005* is seen to be based on the progressive competence model of curriculum which is learner-centred. This “new progressive movement” (Taylor in the PEI 1999:109) has a clear opinion of the type of learners and learning that should be a product of South African schools.

TABLE 1 Differences between the “old and “new” approaches (Source: RSA 1997c:6-7)

<u>OLD</u>	<u>NEW</u>
Passive learners	Active learners
Exam-driven	Learners are assessed on an on-going basis
Rote –learning	Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action
Syllabus is content-based and broken down into subjects	An integration of knowledge; learning relevant and connected to real-life situations
Textbooks/worksheet-bound and teacher centred	Learner centred; teacher is facilitator; teacher constantly uses group work and teamwork to consolidate the new approach
Sees syllabus as rigid and non-negotiable	Learning programmes seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes
Teachers responsible for learning; motivation dependent on the personality of the teacher	Learners take responsibility for their learning; pupils motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth
Emphasis on what the teacher hopes to achieve	Emphasis on outcomes – what the learner becomes and understands
Content placed into rigid time-frames	Flexible time-frames allow learners to work at their own pace
Curriculum development process not open to public comment	Comment and input from the wider community is encouraged

2.2.4.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT DURING CURRICULUM CHANGE

Table 1, section 2.2.4.1 above, taken from an introduction to OBE intended for teachers, reflects a gross simplification of the nature of teaching and the process of change in South African classrooms. The distinction and shift between the disposal of “old” and attaining of “new” methods and attitudes is very difficult to monitor and to achieve in classrooms because classrooms consist of individual teachers and learners. Teachers especially, have inherited different sets of social practices from the apartheid era and new practices in education will always be grafted onto old ones. Van der Akker (1988:50) argues that “teachers [are] in a process of learning new roles and unlearning old one. Changes are required in teaching behaviour as well as in beliefs, attitudes and understanding”. Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report acknowledge that:

...positive attitudes towards *Curriculum 2005* – even where they are supported by materials – have not yet been accompanied by the development of the skills required to foster active learning, promote meaningful engagement with concepts, or integrate the various learning areas with each other or with everyday knowledge.

(Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report 1999:157)

Curriculum 2005 makes reference to teachers having to make a “paradigm shift” (RSA1997e:1 discussed in section 2.2.1). Ironically, informing teachers of this shift of perspective to a more learner-centred approach to teaching has been undertaken by very “old-fashioned” methods. The workshops provided by various role-players, in particular, the provincial departments of education, have tended to be very teacher-centred. Probyn (1999:2) suggests they have been “underpinned by a behaviourist, technicist means-end view of teacher development” which is “to provide limited training, appropriate materials and a paradigm shift will take place”. The assumption has been made that afterwards teachers will implement OBE in their classes without problems or without questions. Research has shown that this “top-down” approach to teacher development has not been successful (Van den Akker 1988:54; Craig 1990:52; Guskey 1995:119). Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1995:597) state that “the know-how necessary to make ...

practice a reality cannot be pre-packaged or conveyed by means of traditional top-down “teacher training” strategies”.

The prevalent literature on curriculum innovation and teacher development (Sikes 1995; Fullan 1982, Beeby 1986 cited in Probyn (1999)) suggests that teacher development in the face of curriculum innovation challenges the premises of teaching and the way in which teachers think about education and classroom strategies. Guskey (1995:114-131) states “learning to be proficient at something new or finding meaning in a new way of doing things is difficult and sometimes painful”.

Curriculum 2005, makes the basic assumption that everything associated with the old curriculum, including teachers’ practices and beliefs are unsuited to promoting the new philosophies and practices of the new curriculum (see Table 1 section 2.2.4.1 above). This deficit view of teaching and teachers undermines their confidence and minimises their stake in any new approach being advocated. Craig (1990:52) suggests that “poorly trained and motivated teacher are not effective agents of reform ... they generally lack the flexibility and the self-confidence needed to master and to apply radically innovative techniques or materials”. In addition, Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1995:597) state that the success of teacher development programmes lies in teachers managing to accomplish “the serious and difficult tasks of *learning* the skills and perspectives assumed by new visions of practice and *unlearning* the practices and beliefs about students and instruction that have dominated their professional lives to date”.

Guskey (1995:118) suggests that change should be seen as an individual and organisational process. It should focus on the teachers’ needs, fears and concerns as well on the manner in which curriculum change is introduced to teachers on an organisational level. Teacher development and training provided should have the following characteristics: an enabling environment must be created for professional development. It should be seen as a process and not as an event, requiring continued follow-up, pressure and support to reduce anxiety and encourage those teachers whose “self-impetus for change is not great” (Probyn 1999:3). Teacher change should also be seen as slow and incremental building on what is positive, rather than suggest immediate,

observable change as is stated in policy documents on *Curriculum 2005* and OBE.

2.2.4.2 IMPLEMENTING CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Christie (1999:283) suggests that the “top down” approach towards INSET training by national and provincial departments of education have been ineffective and insubstantial partly due to their hasty and poorly planned introduction. She describes the introduction of the new curriculum as “emergency” training on the part of the government which has resulted in inadequately trained teachers. She stresses that the INSET for teachers has been minimal and insufficient and that teachers have not been involved with the new curriculum. Potenza & Monyokolo (1999:236) agree. They further state that “unless teachers are properly trained and supported and unless they develop a sense of ownership of the process, the implementation of the new curriculum will simply not be realised”.

2.2.4.4 IMPLEMENTING CHANGE IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

There is said to be a distinct lack of a culture of teaching and learning resultant from the inequities of the apartheid education system in South African schools. The furore surrounding the matric results of 1999 in the electronic and print media demonstrated this commonly held belief. It is however, not a recent development. The transformational component of *Curriculum 2005* (section 2.2.1) has sought to address the problem. As early as 1997, the Eastern Cape Province has tried to implement management policies which would redress the situation. In 1997 the “Classroom Transformation Campaign” was initiated by the MEC of Education, Nosimo Balindlela. The campaign sought to restore order to the classrooms as well as introduce the philosophies and pedagogy of *Curriculum 2005*. However, the most important aspect to consider about the campaign, is the assumption that was made about how change occurs. Change was seen as the instantaneous result of the introduction of the new curriculum and its presentation in document form to the teachers and education managers. No consideration was given to the cultural focus of change in schools, and how to develop teachers’ perceptions and understandings about the philosophical foundations of the new curriculum over a long period of time (Guskey 1995:118). Ironically, cultural transformation forms a large

portion of the envisaged benefits of *Curriculum 2005*. Since 1997, transformation through teacher training has taken the form of 1, 3 or 5 day training workshops for teachers implementing OBE in grades 1,2 and 7.

The Eastern Cape Department of Education has provided teachers in the Foundation Phase with INSET workshops and schools with official National Policy documents. Where workshops have been held, the “cascade method” of instruction has been inadequate. Potenza & Monyokolo (1999:329) describe the “cascade” method of instruction as a weak model for INSET. They give the following reasons to support their claim based on the MIET evaluation of ‘cascade’ workshops which took place in the Benoni/Brakpan area. Firstly, teachers who received “cascade” training did not have the time to report back to the staff members at their schools; secondly, principals and school management did not provide sufficient support to these teachers; thirdly, teachers who were trained in the ‘cascade’ method demonstrated poor quality feedback sessions with their colleagues; fourthly and finally the assessment component of the training session was seen to be very weak and this caused teachers and trainers to feel confused and anxious.

2.3 LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY

In July 1997 the National Department of Education of South Africa determined a Language in Education Policy (LiEP). The LiEP (RSA 1997a:4-5) incorporates the following aims: to promote full participation in society and the economy through equitable and meaningful access to education; to pursue the language policy most supportive of general conceptual growth amongst learners, and ... to establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education; to promote and develop all the official languages; to support the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners or used by communities in South Africa; to counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home languages and languages of learning and teaching; and to redress the problems of previously disadvantaged languages.

This policy document was informed by the tenets of the Constitution (RSA 1996a) (see section 2.2.1); the South African Schools Act of 1996 (RSA 1996b) and the ANC's Policy Framework for Education and Training (1995). All three documents emphasise three basic principles: firstly, all 11 official languages have equal status and importance; secondly, learners and parents may choose the language of learning in schools where practicable and thirdly, a programme of additive multilingualism must be introduced into schools. Luckett (1995:75) defines additive bilingualism as "the gaining of competence in a second language while the first language is maintained". The LiEP characterises multilingualism as the promotion of two or more languages (RSA 1997a:3). The multilingualism policy also discourages languages being introduced at the expense of another. The primary language of the learner must be consciously maintained.

These three principles endorse the view in the LiEP (RSA 1997a:2) which promotes cultural diversity as a national asset and multilingualism as a distinctive trait of being South African. The LiEP also seeks to diminish the legacy of the language in education policy in South Africa prior to the first democratic election in 1994 which was "fraught with tensions, contradictions, sensitivities and racial discrimination" (LiEP 1997:2).

The LiEP discusses two approaches to multilingual education (LiEP 1997:3). Firstly, it presents the arguments in favour of teaching through one medium (the home language) and learning additional languages(s) as subjects to the benefit of the learners cognitive development. Secondly, it describes the benefits of structured bilingual education (as seen in dual medium schools). However, the LiEP does not take a definite stance on methodology for acquiring additive bilingualism, but states that the underlying principle of the policy is to maintain home languages while providing for the acquisition of additional languages. This is in keeping with the provisions in the Constitution (RSA 1996a:29.2) which allows individuals to choose their medium of instruction and language of learning. Ultimately, the power for determining the language of learning, the language of instruction and additional languages as subjects rests with the elected governing bodies of schools (South African Schools Act 1996b:8).

The LiEP (1997:5) stipulates that schools will adopt the following pattern when

introducing languages: all learners will study at least one approved language as a subject in grades 1 and 2; from grade 3 onwards, learners shall study their language of learning and teaching and at least one additional approved language.

2.4 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to note the emphasis placed on the communicative value of language in the LiEP. The state's language goals in school education are seen as "the protection, promotion, fulfilment and extension of the individual's language rights and means of communication [emphasis mine] in education ..." and "The facilitation of national and international communication [emphasis mine] through promotion of bi- or multilingualism..." (RSA 1997a:2). This emphasis on communication is given greater prominence in the learning area dealing with languages in *Curriculum 2005*, which is called "Language, Literacy and Communication". In both documents I feel that there is a focus on communication as the goal of language learning suggesting continued use of communicative language teaching (CLT) methods advocated by the Interim Core Syllabi for English Second Language. The Interim Core Syllabus states that the syllabus "... is concerned with English as a means of communication in our multi-lingual society..." and "the approach recommended in this syllabus is based on the principles informing communicative language teaching" (RSA 1995b:1).

The Foundation Phase Policy Document (RSA 1997e:LLC1) focuses on languages and multilingualism by expressing the opinion that multilingualism is a resource which allows learners to advance their primary language, culture and literacies. Stress is also placed on the importance of multilingualism as a tool in understanding and appreciating a shared South African culture as well as an instrument in developing multi-cultural perspectives in South Africa and international situations.

There is no distinction made in the Policy document between main and additional languages. The language outcomes expressed in the document are "aimed at an 'ideal

language user' in that they relate to all languages and all levels of language learning" (RSA 1997e:LLC6). The interpretation of the Policy Document and the SOs of the LLC learning area therefore lies with the teacher. This is proving to be very problematic for teachers who are unfamiliar with the terminology and are often bogged down in the rhetoric of the document. Taylor & Vinjevoold in the PEI Report (1999:158) cite a study carried out for the Gauteng Education and Training council in 1999. The study reveals opinions expressed by some teachers revealing a "deep confusion amongst teachers as to exactly what they should be teaching" (Taylor & Vinjevoold in the PEI Report 1999:158). Language Progress Maps, such as the draft document produced by the GDE (1998), attempt to clarify the distinction between main and additional languages. A clear delineation can be seen in the description of learners' levels of achievement and the progression of knowledge, understanding, skills and values that are necessary for the purposes of teaching and learning. As such, the document can be seen as a valuable tool for teachers in understanding the LLC learning area.

The Foundation Phase policy document emphasises the importance of language as a means "to acting in the world in order to establish relationships, to engage with others in reciprocal exchange, to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge, to obtain and convey ideas and information" (RSA 1997e:LLC1). It is this view of competence in language and the use of language in learning and teaching that establishes the link between OBE and CLT. However, how teachers perceive OBE and CLT in the South African context remains a question that must be answered. Although the Foundation Phase Policy document (RSA 1997e) and the Interim Core Syllabus (1995b) clearly set out the theoretical bases of CLT and OBE, classroom practice tends to reflect an interpretation and adjustment of the principles. Teachers adjust the theory to suit their own objectives in the light of who their learners are, the situations in which they find themselves in classrooms and schools and the amount of pedagogical knowledge they have.

2.4.2 THE IDEAL CLT/OBE CLASSROOM

In a second language classroom practising CLT, the focus is on what you do with the

language and not on the information carried by the language as in classrooms where the language is used to teach subject matter. Tarone & Yule (1994:71) suggest that the emphasis in these second language classrooms may focus occasionally on language itself but “the emphasis is on using the language rather than on talking about it”.

The teacher concentrates on developing a more facilitative presence in L2 classes, providing opportunities for language learning and encouraging learners to use the language for various purposes. Learners’ success is assessed as to how they can accomplish tasks in the second language rather than on their accuracy. Tarone & Yule (1994:71) suggest that in communicative interactions, “the learner will be exposed to a wide variety of vocabulary and structures”. They do however caution that no two language classrooms are alike. The conditions for learning differ in the physical environment of the classroom, how old the learners are and how motivated they are and especially in the time set aside for learning the second language. Classrooms based on an OBE approach to teaching use a similar process by selecting and clustering outcomes to satisfy the individual learner within a specific learning context which might be a main, additional or foreign language learning situation. Nevertheless, all CLT and OBE classrooms have one similarity, they both strive to reproduce natural acquisition contexts for the learners.

Tarone and Yule (1992:72-73) characterise a CLT classroom as having the following characteristics: limited error correction; simplified input which is comprehensible through the use of props, gestures; limited learning time; limited contact with proficient or native speakers. CLT classrooms use the classroom as an environment in which to introduce a variety of discourse types such as stories, role-playing, newspapers, television and radio broadcasts. There is a significant lack of pressure on learners to be highly accurate when speaking, rather they are required to understand what they are saying and when they are speaking. Maley (1986:88-89) describes the broad qualities of CLT as concentrating on the use and appropriacy of the language being learnt; a focus on fluency rather than accuracy in communicative tasks; attention being placed on interaction and negotiation by learners; an appreciation of the learners’ capabilities in

learning the language and a recognition of the variation in language usage. To summarise, CLT generally emphasises simplified input in the target language. Language acquisition is achieved through exposure and interaction. This focus contrasts with the additive multilingualism policy advocated in *Curriculum 2005*, which places greater emphasis on the use of the home language and code switching.

OBE classrooms demonstrate similar characteristics. OBE classrooms focus on the learner who will be able to access and use different sources of information. Learners will be allowed to achieve specific outcomes at their own pace i.e. learner centred. Learners will be encouraged to interrogate information and use appropriate language skills in context. In OBE classrooms skills development through task-based learning is emphasised rather than rote learning and pure repetition. OBE classrooms place great importance on group work and interaction between learners in achieving specific outcomes. Learners are also encouraged to use prior knowledge and are given credit for variations in their personal histories.

2.4.3 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

A definitive feature of the CLT classroom is “modified input”. Tyrone & Yule (1992:73) see this as the teacher speaking to learners at a level of language they can understand and to which they can respond. The teacher concentrates on developing the learners’ ability to think, feel and express themselves in the target language in a variety of contexts. The idea of communicative competence incorporated in CLT “refers to both knowledge and skill in using this knowledge when interacting in actual communication” (Canale 1983:5).

Communicative competence is defined by Maley (1986:87-88) as “made up of four major strands: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence”. In essence, grammatical competence focuses on the internalising of the language code while socio-linguistic competence describes the ability to speak and understand language in specific situations. Discourse competence is concerned about the way in which speakers of the language combine meaning and acceptable texts in different genres and finally, strategic competence is associated with the verbal and non-verbal

strategies employed by the learners to facilitate communication.

The specific outcomes of the LLC learning area of the new curriculum highlight what learners should know about language and how they should use language as they work their way through the Foundation Phase. The Draft *Progress Map for Grades 1 – 9* from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE 1998:4), has isolated 4 strands in the LLC SOs concentrating on:

1. texts (various texts and how learners use them), [SO1, SO3, SO4]
2. contextual understanding (situational and socio-cultural situations in which learners use and understand language); [SO1,SO2,SO3,SO4,SO5,SO7]
3. linguistic structures and features and strategies (the grammar of speech and writing), [SO1,SO5] and
4. strategies (techniques used by learners to use and interpret language effectively) [SO1, SO4, SO6, SO7].

(Source: GDE 1998:9)

It is in the progress maps that a clear distinction between main and additional language learning can be seen. The four strands discussed above weave together the speaking and listening; reading and viewing and writing skills in which learners need to become competent in a language. It can be seen from the four strands that language skills focussed on in *contextual understanding* and *strategies* form the bulk of the SOs. These SOs highlight a communicative approach to language teaching for the teacher. Although the Eastern Cape Province has no similar document in use in schools for teachers, the Gauteng document highlights the thoughts behind the LLC SOs on which all provinces are focussing. In addition to this concept map, the GDE has produced a training manual for teachers entitled ‘*Lets connect ... A Communicative Approach to Outcomes Based Language Teaching*’ (GDE 1999). In this INSET training manual, the principles of a communicative methodology are seen within the boundaries of purposeful activities, real situations, choices for learners and means by which learners can bridge information gaps.

The specific outcomes of the LLC learning area are “unpacked” to illustrate “... the purpose of teaching language ... in order to help learners communicate effectively in different contexts ... integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge and ... use language to obtain and convey ideas and information” (GDE 1999:27). The implications for OBE and communicative teaching are seen in the emphasis on “purposeful language use in a meaningful context” (GDE 1999:37).

2.4.4 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND LEARNER IN OBE

How then are teachers’ and learners’ roles seen in the focus on language by *Curriculum 2005* with its emphasis on communication? As stated in *Curriculum 2005* (RSA 1997c:28), teachers’ roles will change. It can be argued that the changes will not be dramatic, as the syllabus for CLT introduced in the mid-80’s has been practised for over 10 years. However, anecdotal evidence together with recent research (Alfers 1988; Ndlovu 1993 both cited in Murray 1998a:6) suggests a CLT syllabus was never effectively implemented in schools.

The new curriculum favours a learner-centred approach to classroom teaching. The teacher is seen as a facilitator i.e. the teacher will help learners discover knowledge themselves by providing appropriate learning contexts and stimuli. This change in the role of teachers will encourage a similar change in the learner. Learners will take responsibility for the pace of their own learning as well as the range of information sought. In the language classroom in particular learners and teachers will be encouraged to use a wide range of materials and texts from real-life situations rather than being dependent on a single textbook, although textbooks should not be abandoned altogether. Learners and teachers will enter into a partnership where the learner will be given tasks to better his/her communication and language skills rather than simple rote learning or memorisation exercises. The focus on authentic texts and skills is said to encourage a holistic approach to language learning. The four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking will be concentrated on not as separate entities but as reliant on each other to make a comprehensible whole for the learner. This integrated approach to language

learning will seek to encourage interaction between learner and teacher, learner and learner, learner and text.

From this, it is seen that the underlying principles of CLT and OBE are similar: both emphasise an active, skills based approach to learning, a concentration on the learner rather than the teacher, and a focus on the learners' position in a wider context than the classroom. The final question remains as to how CLT methodology and OBE are to be purposefully implemented in classrooms.

2.5 THE CLASSROOM AS LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION

It is agreed that the classroom provides an opportunity for language learning or acquisition to take place for L2 learners, however, what characteristics found in the classroom are instrumental in this process are hotly debated (Ellis 1985; Van Lier 1988; Ellis 1992; Cazden 1988; Krashen 1982; Malamah-Thomas 1987). Richards & Lockhart (1994:107) suggest that “teaching is an activity which is embedded within a set of culturally bound assumptions about teachers, teaching, and learners. These assumptions reflect what the teacher’s responsibility is believed to be, how learning is understood, and how students are expected to interact in the classroom”. Given this, the classroom takes on a distinct cultural milieu of its own influenced in part by the teacher, the learners and the curriculum.

Furthermore, Tarone & Yule (1989:36) write that classroom teachers are “faced with actual individuals in a real place in real time, and they may find some discrepancies between the curriculum which has been given to them and the needs of their particular learners” which allows them to negotiate and interpret the curriculum to attempt to meet the needs of their learners.

The assumption writes Ellis (1985:143;1992:37), is that the most successful L2 classroom will show environmental conditions which are to be found in naturalistic acquisition,

and that the interaction, which occurs in the classroom, can be seen as a major variable in SLA. The implications of this are that the classrooms in which learners are exposed to a L2 must have features that support and promote SLA in learners both physically and emotionally.

2.5.2 OBE AND SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Theories of SLA and learning differ in the value they place on input and interaction within second language classroom environments (Ellis 1992; Krashen 1982; van Lier 1988). The characteristics of teacher-pupil interaction which lead to learning have been widely debated with two major schools of thought emerging: firstly, there is the naturalistic viewpoint (Krashen 1982; Long (1983) cited in Ellis 1985:157) that classroom practice should imitate as widely as possible a natural language acquisition environment. Secondly, there is the viewpoint that language teaching should contain a measure of formal language teaching. Ellis argues that an

... acquisition-rich classroom ... is best characterised as one which provides both those experiences associated with communicating in natural discourse and those experiences derived from cognitive activities designed to raise the learner's consciousness about the formal properties of the L2 and their function in language use.

(Ellis 1992:49).

2.5.2.1 COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

It has been theorised (Krashen 1982:20-21; Long (1983) cited in Ellis 1992:12) that for an L2 speaker to make considerable inroads into acquiring a second language, the "input" that the second language learner has to have must be "comprehensible". Krashen's *Input Hypothesis* argues that:

... a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage 'i' to stage 'i + 1' is that the acquirer understand input that contains "i + 1", where 'understand' means that the acquirer is focussed on the meaning and not the form of the message...

(Krashen 1982:21).

Acquisition therefore occurs when communication is successful and the learner understands language containing “ $i + 1$ ”. “ $i + 1$ ” can be explained as follows: “ i ” represents the learner’s current stage of language development/acquisition and the “ $+1$ ” is the comprehensible input necessary to take the learner one step further in the acquisition process without overwhelming him/her. We see that Krashen emphasises that the focus of input must be on the message and not on the form. Ellis (1992:19) argues that

“... ‘comprehensible input’ is not really the result of the *separate* contributions of the native speaker and the learner but of their *joint* endeavours”. Only when “input” becomes internalised i.e. part of the learner’s language arsenal to be used in a variety of contexts does SLA take place. How this happens in classrooms is still highly debated. Krashen (1982:31) further hypothesises that socio-affective factors, the “affective filter”, such as anxiety, motivation, self-confidence influence SLA. Lightbown & Spada (1993:27) describe the affective filter as an “imaginary barrier which prevents learners from using input which is available in the environment”. It is therefore the affective filter which determines how much is or is not acquired by the learner depending on various motives, needs, attitudes and emotional states expressed by the learner (Lightbown & Spada 1993:27). When the filter is lowered (i.e. the learner is more relaxed or motivated), the learner is more likely to acquire language.

Ellis (1992:28) writes that SLA literature suggests two ways in which input may influence L2 learners: firstly, the input that is the end product of negotiating a shared topic i.e. modelled syntactic forms and secondly, the development of “incorporation strategy”, which provides the L2 learner with linguistic units of different sizes which may be used in different sentences as “building blocks” to construct new syntactic patterns. Krashen (1985:65-66) proposes that optimal input, which is comprehensible, can be stimulated by teachers through simplified speech, comprehension checks, non-linguistic cues and extra-linguistic support through visual stimuli. In addition to this viewpoint, Allwright & Bailey (1991:140) suggest that optimal input “...is just slightly more advanced than the learner’s current level of ... development”. Cazden (1988:107) relates this to the idea of scaffolding, an idea central to the cognitive development theories of

Bruner and Vygotsky where learners are drawn along the zone of proximal development as they acquire language. Krashen (1985:66-67) also emphasises the importance of topics that are familiar, interesting and relevant to the learner and provided in sufficient quantity to facilitate acquisition. Input, therefore, is anything, verbal or written, which stimulates SLA.

Swain (1985 cited in Ellis 1992:45) proposes the *Comprehensible Output Hypothesis* to extend Krashen's *Comprehensible Input Hypothesis*. She argues that producing comprehensible output gives the learners the opportunity to test their language proficiency. She further suggests that "pushed language use" (Swain 1985 cited in Ellis 1992: 45) is the ideal kind of output learners should produce. Translating this into classroom activities means that learners must be given the opportunity to use the L2 and be placed in situations to receive further comprehensible input in return as a result of this usage. Although Krashen (1985:60) does not place emphasis on output he acknowledges that it does have an "indirect role to play in encouraging acquisition". He suggests that the major impact "output" has on SLA is that the more the learner speaks the more he will be spoken to, thereby acquiring additional input. Conversation partners, he argues, modify their speech to suit the level of comprehension of the L2 learner. He also links conversation to error correction, which leads to SLA. Classroom talk between teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil could therefore be seen as valuable comprehensible input in SLA. Furthermore, Krashen (1985:77) suggests that it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide tools to the learner to make them "conversationally competent". Ways in which to start conversations and keep them going are necessary techniques which L2 learners need to know to gain comprehensible input during conversations. These techniques can be directly taught. Krashen (1985:71-72) and Allwright & Bailey (1992:144) suggest that some learners prefer adhering to a strategy of remaining silent in the classroom. This Krashen & Terrell (1982:35) call the "Silent Period". Allwright & Bailey (1992:145) advise that attempting to get learners to participate verbally before they are ready can be "counter-productive". OBE focuses on this problem by allowing learners to develop at their own pace. As suggested by Allwright & Bailey:

...these issues point to the importance of the teacher's decision-making in setting up activities and participant structures that will provide opportunities for the learners to interact and negotiate for meaning, with one another and the teacher, in the target language.

Allwright & Bailey (1992:149)

Ellis cautions that:

... we should not necessarily expect the characteristics of interaction to be determined solely by the need to achieve comprehensible input. They can also be the result of personality.

Ellis (1992:27)

However, the nature of this thesis, constrained by format, precludes the discussion of learner profiles.

To conclude, comprehensible input can be seen as the amount of language learners are able to understand and use in the classroom, and eventually use outside the classroom in real life situations. Nevertheless, it is the teacher in planning and executing lessons and learning programmes who will determine the amount of language (spoken, written and heard) that the learner receives in the classroom.

2.5.2.2 INTERACTION IN ESL CLASSROOMS

One of the most important questions asked about SLA is the nature of the relationship between interaction, input and acquisition. How does interaction and/or input lead to learner acquisition in the study of a new language? This pedagogical question is important in unpacking classroom methodology for OBE language classrooms. OBE classrooms, as suggested previously, encourage teachers to centre learning activities and tasks around the learners in an environment that relies heavily on natural or real situations. Consequently, both the learner and the teacher (as the facilitator) are seen as important elements in the learning process, they interact with each other to foster learning.

Malamah-Thomas (1987:6-7) defines classroom interaction as the teacher and learner reciprocally acting and reacting with each other. The teacher and the learner modify their reactions according to the actions of each other when they become personally involved while communicating. Accordingly, there is a continual readjustment of behaviour in the classroom influenced by each of the actors. Because interaction is a two-way process, classrooms have the potential to either hinder or help learning. Misunderstandings, misinterpretations of motives or lack of communication skills can make or mar a lesson. This is extremely important in understanding the classroom as a structured environment. The way in which teachers plan and present lessons within this structured environment with its rules and patterns of behaviour determines to a large extent what is learnt and how it is learnt. In an ESL classroom the learning that ought to take place is the jointly constructed discourse between the learner and his/her interlocutors (Ellis 1985:127). In addition to the importance of reciprocal interaction in the classroom, the type of language that is used and generated between the teacher and the learners is significant. In a L2 classroom, it is assumed that the learner is at a disadvantage because of his/her limited knowledge of the L2. The L2 teacher within the context of the structured classroom with its planned lesson content is responsible for providing opportunities for the L2 learner to develop language competencies. The type of language used in the classroom, how it is presented to the learner and how the language is used by the learner in and out of the classroom needs to be understood.

Krashen (1985:58-59) contends that the type of language used in the classroom needs to provide “comprehensible input” for optimum SLA, while Long (1983) cited in Ellis (1992:17) counter proposes that acquisition is augmented if learners have the chance to negotiate their way through and around problems they find in communicating in a new language. Learner negotiation is aided by comprehensible input. Allwright & Bailey (1992:123) characterise interaction as the person-to-person asking of questions, indicating confusion or requesting lexical items to be repeated or re-phrased. This system of “negotiated interaction” (Allwright & Bailey 1992:123) shows the L2 learner’s attempts to understand and use the L2 through comprehensible input.

Krashen's *Input Hypothesis* and Long's *Interactional Hypothesis* have generated much discussion. They nevertheless, provides a platform for discussion on the type of interaction between teachers and learners in classrooms that could lead to classrooms being sources of language for L2 learners. Ellis (1992:39-47) suggests a few factors that could lead to an "acquisition-rich" classroom, these are: simplified input; interactional modifications, teachers' questions, topic control, learners' participation; and use of the L1. Additionally, Allwright & Bailey (1992:124-129) add turn-taking. How these characteristics are manifest in classrooms based on OBE depend largely on the training and motivation of the teacher.

2.5.3 TEACHER TALK AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Teacher talk in the classroom can be seen as a form of input. It should not however, be seen as synonymous with "teacher-tell" methodology prevalent in rote-learning and memorisation. Edwards & Westgate (1994:40) claim that communication in the classroom "...is firmly centred on the teacher". It is the teacher who decides when to talk, what topics will be discussed and who evaluates and manages the talk of nominated learners. How the teacher responds to and understands the needs of the learners will determine what type of talking and in turn interaction that occurs in classrooms.

Wong-Fillmore (1985:19-20) argues that teacher talk is an important resource in the classroom as it serves as the linguistic input for the learners while Allwright & Bailey (1992:139) see teacher talk as "... one of the major ways that teachers convey information to learner and ... controlling learner behaviour". Ellis (1985:146) describes teacher-pupil talk occurring on a "one-to-many basis", where learners may differ considerably in their levels of competence in the L2. The common denominator in the definitions above is that teacher talk allows L2 learners to hear the language spoken.

More often than not, teachers can adjust their speech to suit the ability of their learners. Krashen (1985:64) proposes that teacher speech is characterised by it being of a slower

rate and clearer articulated than normal speech; that teachers use high frequency vocabulary, less slang and less idiomatic language and that there is syntactic simplification and shorter sentences. In this way teacher talk is made comprehensible for the learners. It is suggested (Ellis 1985:145; 1992:23; Allwright & Bailey 1992:139) that teacher talk is often simplified to address the needs of learners and is aimed at their level of development. Henzl (1979) cited in Ellis (1992:20) has shown that teachers' formal speech adjustments are sensitive to the general level of proficiency of the students being taught. Long (1983) cited in Ellis (1992:23) has identified 6 interactional features used by teachers at different times during classroom activities to ensure that the language being used by the teacher is understood by the learner: confirmation checks; comprehension checks; clarification checks; self-repetitions; other repetitions and expansions. In addition, Wong-Fillmore (1985:33-43) in a longitudinal study in American classrooms identified the following characteristics of teacher talk, which she claims enhances language learning in successful language classrooms. These characteristics are briefly listed below but will form a major basis for the discussion and analysis of data in Chapter 4: emphasis on communication and comprehension; grammaticality and appropriateness of the language used; repeated use of patterns and routine; repetition; richness of language and the tailoring of questions to suit the appropriate needs of the learner.

In addition to the level of language used by the teacher, the way in which a teacher handles tasks given to pupils also influences the interaction patterns in the classroom and whether the language is comprehensible. Cazden (1988:29-30), Edwards & Westgate (1994:125) claim that the most frequent interaction sequence in L2 classrooms follow the pattern of teacher initiation of topic (I); child's response (R); and teacher's evaluation (E). Cazden writes that:

... the classroom speech event in which this IRE pattern is most obvious is the teacher-led lesson, or recitation, in which the teacher controls both the development of a topic (and what counts as relevant to it) and who gets a turn to talk

(Cazden 1988:30).

Edwards & Westgate (1994:125) write that the frequency of IRE units in the classroom, with the emphasis on the teacher's role in the first and third move, is the distinctive characteristic of classrooms in general.

Teachers' questions as a way in which talk is generated in the classroom may also have highly influential implications for L2 acquisition. Because questions from teachers require responses from pupils, they act as interaction initiators. Learners' answers also provide the teacher with information that can help teachers in adjusting their speech during class time. Two distinct types of questions are used by teachers namely, display and referential question. Display questions tend to focus on predetermined answers while referential questions are used to find out information and broaden topics under discussion, extending learners' discourse capabilities. Allwright & Bailey (1992:141) suggest that teachers tend to ask more display than referential questions as well as use more comprehension checks when talking to learners in the classroom. They argue that this is because talk in classroom follows a different structure than talk in natural environments because of its instructional nature.

To complement simplified teacher talk as comprehensible input in a L2 class, Total Physical Response (TPR) can be introduced. Lightbown & Spada (1994:89-90) describe TPR as a methodology extremely useful for beginner learners as it helps develop basic comprehension and communicative performances. TPR involves learners responding to commands and instructions in the L2. They show that they understand what is being said by completing the action. Lightbown & Spada (1994:90) emphasise that the vocabulary and structures in the commands and instructions are carefully graded to allow learners to build on what was learnt before. TPR's efficacy for beginner learners is important as it helps to build up a knowledge of the target language, without learners having to say a word until they are ready. This decreases any anxiety learners might be feeling when asked to respond in the L2.

Ellis (1985:151) concludes that at the end, it is the style of teaching that is important in

classroom settings: whether it is teacher- or learner-centred, because learner-centred teaching can lead to interaction similar to those found in contexts outside of the classroom.

2.5.4 FACTORS DETERMINING LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN THE CLASSROOM

The level at which a learner engages in practising the L2 in and out of classrooms determines, more often than not, the rate of L2 acquisition. Wong-Fillmore (1985:19) suggests that the L2 classroom may be the only “regular exposure” that some L2 learners have to the language. Even if they don’t hear fellow learners speaking English, they have access to the teacher’s command of the language. Edwards & Westgate (1994:40) voice a concern that classrooms provide very limited options for pupils because of the large amount of discourse time taken up by the teacher. They contend that learner participation in class requires learners to listen at length and judge when to bid properly for the right to speak. Learners have to acquire the skill to accept whatever the teacher says to them in the form of control, evaluation or modification of what they have contributed. The implications of these observations is clear: teachers need to be aware of the importance of their role sources of input for the language being learnt and therefore they need to design and implement lessons focussed on giving learners ample opportunity of listening to the L2 and practising it in real situations. However, the role of the teacher in providing comprehensible input in classrooms is complemented by the role of the learners.

Seliger (1977) cited in Ellis (1985:160 + 257) and Allwright & Bailey (1991:130) identifies two types of learners, those who are “high input generators” and those who are “low input generators”. This former will actively seek out opportunities in and out of the classroom to engage L1, other L2 learners or the teacher in conversation while the latter is more reticent in the company of L1 speakers. Teachers need to become aware of these characteristics and compensate for them in the classroom. In addition learners displaying HIGs and LIGs ought to generate situations in the classroom that will encourage

optimum L2 acquisition.

Faerch & Kasper (1980) cited in Ellis (1992:25), distinguish two patterns of behaviour in learners during communication tasks. These they termed “reduction” and “achievement” behaviour. Reduction behaviour is characterised as the learner “... missing a turn by keeping silent, opting out of the task by the use of ‘no’ or ‘I don’t know’, etc., topic switching or imitating” (Faerch & Kasper 1980 cited in Ellis (1992:25)). Achievement behaviour, on the other hand, is described as “... using the first language, miming, requesting assistance, or guessing what response the teacher wanted” (Faerch & Kasper 1980 cited in Ellis (1992:25)). It is argued that reduction behaviour would be far more distinguishable in the early stages of language acquisition than achievement behaviour. This concept is particularly important when concentrating on learners beginning to acquire a L2. These affective learner characteristics may to some extent determine the role of learners in the classroom.

Curriculum 2005 places the responsibility of developing “good learners” on the teacher. *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st century* (RSA1997c:28) describes this responsibility as “teachers and trainers are encouraged to find ways of providing conditions of success in the classroom ... they will use a variety of methods of instruction to help each learner to learn. Every learner will be assisted in succeeding but at his/her own pace”. *Curriculum 2005* places emphasis on developing learners who are self-reliant; critical and are able to solve problems. Although “learners will be trained to take responsibility for their own learning” (RSA 1997c:29), teachers are intended to play a prominent role as facilitators in encouraging learners to develop these characteristics (RSA 1997c:29).

2.5.5 OBE AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES

With the implementation of *Curriculum 2005* and the procuring of resources for classroom use, materials development has been firmly placed within the job description of the teacher. Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:178) however states that recent

research shows little evidence of individual teachers developing original materials for the classroom. Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:179) suggests that teachers lack the necessary skills to develop suitable materials because they have not received adequate training. Christie (1999:283) states that the procedures for designing learning programmes in the new curriculum are extremely complex. The Foundation Phase Policy Document (RSA 1997e:27) has a few curt words and phrases to encourage teachers in a new classroom approach to designing materials. Under the heading “Guidelines for identifying *On Site* [taken to mean the classroom in this context] Resource Materials”, teachers are advised that activities should include real objects and real life situations and that they should become the *facilitator* of learning. With regard to materials to be used in the new approach, teachers are told that materials should be usable in a variety of situations; suitable for use in rural and urban situations; multilingual situations durable, affordable, colourful (where possible), user friendly, flexible (to accommodate changes) and anti-bias. With regards to the type of material to be used in the classroom, teachers are advised to use “inexpensive pupil books if necessary but no textbooks, a range of resource provided in context with the learning programme and readers and storybooks in the vernacular should be seen as a priority” (RSA 1997e:27). To a teacher untrained in the jargon of OBE, these guidelines are hopelessly inadequate. Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:167) informs that research undertaken shows that textbooks have a lot to offer learners, especially in rural areas, in the form of guided support. In addition to poorly trained teachers, many schools found in rural areas or townships do not have electricity or the access to Photostatting machines. Producing original resource material and making copious copies for the classroom is therefore impossible in certain situations. A good textbook written to place emphasis on learner centred activities will be of great benefit in an under-resourced classroom. Potenza and Monyokolo (1999:243) suggest that the answer is not in doing away with textbooks but in improving the quality of them and the way in which they are used in the classroom. Furthermore they advocate that for the new curriculum to be successfully implemented, every learner should be given a textbook for every learning programme which they will study. In addition, under-resourced schools have little or no access to a variety of readers and storybooks.

According to the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa) (*Daily Dispatch* 1999:9), it is estimated that there was an increase of a million learners between 1995 and 1998 countrywide and that the need for books had increased accordingly. Idasa notes that there is a national average decline of 14% per pupil on books and stationery. Given these statistics, teachers who are trained to use textbooks to foster a communicative approach to language teaching will be given a useful tool in interpreting the curriculum. Christie (1999:282) notes that “for under-resourced communities and schools, these policies [*Curriculum 2005* and OBE] may produce the opposite effect, acting as extra burdens rather than opportunities for improvement”.

Krashen (1999:1) states that “the education reform that South Africa is currently undergoing places heavy emphasis on experience-rich, print-rich, skills-oriented curriculum ...”. He further argues that the outcomes described by *Curriculum 2005* can not be attained with methodologies that are not based on books or resources.

Another point of contradiction in the criteria listed above and the principles of OBE is the emphasis on materials being suitable for rural and urban situations. OBE explicitly makes known that each learner is to be guided along the learning path in an individual manner, suitable to the learner in context. Teachers faced with these contradictions will find it difficult to implement OBE sensibly and confidently in classrooms.

The GDE training manual has the following advice for teachers implementing OBE in language classrooms:

...Learners should be given opportunities to talk and discuss their ideas in a friendly and non-threatening environment. The less criticism learners experience, the more they will be prepared to try to speak a new language. By interacting learners will develop the communication skills of listening, turn taking, persuading, asking for clarification and so on. It will also help build the confidence of shy children and help to build a positive attitude to language learning if they are allowed to practice the new language in a supportive classroom. Learners should be encouraged

to become pro-active and critical learners rather than passive recipients of information.

(GDE 1999:37).

Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:175) caution that “where learning material and facilities are inadequate, the teaching approach is inevitably teacher-centred”. Where learning support materials and textbooks are available there is an increased number of activities noted in lessons.

2.5.6 CONCLUSION

To summarise, this literature review has tried to provide a theoretical context for the research undertaken in this thesis. Firstly, it endeavours to provide the historical, philosophical and pedagogical background of *Curriculum 2005* and OBE. Secondly, it strives to focus on ESL teaching, as it is envisaged through the new LiEP and *Curriculum 2005*. Thirdly, because of the strong focus on the communicative aspect of languages in the new curriculum, and the similarities to CLT already being practised in schools, a discussion on how the two pedagogies might inform ESL teaching through OBE methodologies is undertaken. Focus is then placed on the teacher, the learner and the classroom in an endeavour to uncover optimal conditions for the successful implementation of an OBE/CLT informed approach to ESL in classrooms.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will attempt to describe as fully as possible the concept of an ethnographic research method and its application in a grade 2 English second language classroom.

One of the major benefits of using an ethnographic approach in classroom research is its openness to the *emic* nature of research and the value it places on the participant's perspectives on the research process and the research topic. In addition, an ethnographic methodology utilises the *etic* perspective of the researcher as a reflective tool in the interpretation and understanding of the research data gathered.

Watson-Gegeo (1988:576) explains that an ethnographer's goal is to provide a description and "an interpretive-explanatory account" of what people do in a setting such as a classroom, the outcome of their interactions, and the way they understand what they are doing. I hope that through the methodology of ethnography I am able, through one teacher's perspective, to shed light on the successes and problems encountered when introducing a new curriculum model into language classrooms within a culturally specific environment.

After explaining ethnography as methodology and process, I will then describe the manner in which I gathered data, after which I will discuss the methods used to analyse, discuss and interpret the data.

3.2 DEFINING AN ETHNOGRAPHY

3.2.1 GETTING THE TERMINOLOGY RIGHT

Greater sensitivity to the complexity of the language classroom process has resulted in making direct observation a key component of classroom research (Gaies 1983:213). The major influence such research has, is that it allows for the investigation of aspects of classroom language learning which more conventional external observation cannot reach. Gaies (1983: 213) writes that these approaches are known by a variety of headings, among which are anthropological, qualitative and mentalistic research. Chaudron (1986:709) states that the qualitative paradigm involves naturalistic, uncontrolled, subjective and process-oriented observation. It is into this paradigm of inquiry that ethnography is placed. Ethnography states Wilcox (1982:457) has been developed and utilised within the discipline of anthropology while Johnson (1992:134) sees cultural anthropology as the “mother discipline of ethnography”. Spindler (1982:2) suggests that although “ethnography is the field arm of anthropology”, it does not belong exclusively to the anthropologist. He argues that ethnography can be a great sensitising experience and methodological tool for educators.

Nunan (1992:55) states that ethnography involves the study of the culture/characteristics of a group in real-world rather than artificially created settings and Watson-Gegeo (1988:576) defines ethnography as the study of people’s behaviour in naturally occurring, ongoing settings, with a focus on the cultural interpretations of behaviour. Heath (1982:34) suggests that ethnographers attempt to learn the conceptual framework of members of the society and to organise materials on the basis of boundaries understood by those being observed instead of using a predetermined system of categories established before the observation. Long (1980:24) writes that the ethnographer’s goal is to obtain a holistic view of the phenomena studied.

Part of the strength of ethnography depends on its interactive-adaptive nature as pointed out by Heath (1982:44). A basic assumption about ethnographic inquiry is that it is possible to see and understand the insider’s view of reality (Johnson 1992:142). Watson-

Gegeo (1988:579) and Hymes (1982:25) write that each situation investigated by an ethnographer must be understood from the perspective of the participants in that situation, this being referred to as the *emic-etic* principal of analysis. Van Lier (1988:17) cites Brend (1974:3) who defines the *emic* and *etic* standpoints as “alternate ways of viewing the same reality”. The *etic* standpoint being the view from outside, *either* random in its selectivity or with a set of presuppositions that have only a chance relationship to the scene being described. The *emic* standpoint is the inner view that observes only the features of the scene that are deemed significant by internal criteria.

Wilcox (1982:458) sees ethnography as first and foremost “a descriptive endeavor in which the researcher attempts to accurately describe and interpret the nature of social discourse among a group of people”. She further states that “the practice of ethnography enables one to discover the cultural knowledge possessed by people as natives (members of groups or communities), as well as the ways in which this cultural knowledge is used in social interaction”.

Hymes (1982:24) emphasises the point that it is important that the methods used in an ethnography are dialectical or of an interactive-adaptive nature. Therefore, an essential characteristic of ethnography for Hymes (1982:24) is that it is open-ended and subject to self-correction during the process of inquiry.

To summarise, ethnography’s qualitative perspective on data collection and analysis places it firmly within the boundaries of the interpretative paradigm of research methodology (Conole 1998:19; 22). Ethnography places value on the context of the research and emphasises a holistic approach to data collection. The ethnographic goal is to provide a description and interpretive-explanatory account of the research. Ethnographic inquiry places value on the individual as both informant and expert. Ethnographers see each situational context as unique. The role of theory is vital in developing the process of ethnographic inquiry.

3.2.2 ETHNOGRAPHY AND CLASSROOM RESEARCH

Van Lier (1988:26) proposes that classroom research is probably the one

branch of SLA research which informs the teacher directly. He continues by suggesting that the widening gap between the researcher and the teacher can only be bridged by efforts to make research relevant to practice.

Allwright (1983:191) sees classroom-centred research as research that treats the language classroom not just as “the *setting* for investigation” but ... as “the *object* of investigation”. Gaies (1983:205) writes that classroom process research is based on the priority of observing a L2 classroom activity directly and is aimed primarily at identifying the many factors which determine the L2 instructional experience. Long points out that:

...the investigation of classroom language learning may be defined as research on second language learning and teaching, all or part of whose data are derived from the observation or measurement of the classroom performance of teachers and students.

(Long 1980:3)

Long (1980:3) and Gaies (1983:205) divide the methodology of classroom investigation into two broad categories: interaction analysis (following a structured approach using categories and coding systems) and forms of anthropological observation (following an unstructured but highly systematic approach of observation). Allwright and Bailey (1991:36) define the two categories as theory-driven or data-driven. These two approaches do not have to be seen as opposing camps, but can be viewed as complementary ways of seeing that can lead to a greater understanding of the nature of SLA and teaching. This Allwright and Bailey (1991:44) see as a “process-product” approach to research. Bailey (1990) cited in Allwright and Bailey (1991:45) argues that this approach is not only possible but also valuable in educational research. Ethnographic research falls into the latter category.

Watson-Gegeo (1988:586-7) sees the value of ethnographic research in schools having a three-pronged effect: firstly, ethnographic research can record and determine the features of good teacher/learner associations. Secondly, ethnographic research can heed the fact that schemata are culturally based. Thirdly, ethnographic research can determine

“institutional and societal pressures that affect educational innovations in ways unanticipated by those who have developed them”. In this study, it is important to bear the third point in mind. Wilcox (1982:469) sees ethnography as an important tool in evaluating and assessing change in classrooms and schools. Wilcox argues that schools and classrooms have seen significant change and are the fulcrums of continuing change. She continues by saying that it is the classroom that is often the focus and bears the brunt of educational change. She believes that ethnographic research can contribute greatly to the understanding of the process of change in classrooms. Because as she sees it, ethnographic research raises important questions about whether changes are actually implemented in day-to-day operating procedures, whether classroom interaction is different after reform measures and most importantly whether the consequences of the reform measures are the intended consequences. These thoughts impact on the focus of this research project: how has the implementation of OBE in a grade 2 classroom impacted on the teacher and the learners. Le Compte & Goetz (1988:585) endorse this view as an option to a “top-down” approach that, based on pre-existing models, “may obscure important characteristics of previously unstudied settings”. Johnson concludes:

...that second language research in formal contexts has traditionally relied on too few approaches, too few ways of knowing and understanding. The great contribution of ethnographic approaches is their attention to context. The growing use of ethnography is exciting not only because it offers grounded insights not usually available through approaches of the hypothetico-deductive type, but also because it opens new ways for both teachers and students to be more involved in constructing knowledge that will ultimately improve practice.

(Johnson 1992:159)

3.3 GATHERING DATA: THE FIELDWORK

3.3.1 THE RIGHT SCHOOL AT THE RIGHT TIME

For this research project there were a number of factors which influenced my choice of school and teacher. Firstly, I had to select a school which offered English as a second language. Secondly, the school (and in particular, the teacher) had to be introducing OBE for the first time in grade 2. Thirdly, the teacher and the school had to be

receptive to the idea that I would be spending considerable time in the classroom and would be recording everything very thoroughly. The teacher and the school would have to understand that this data would be presented publicly in my thesis. Finally, the teacher would have to consent to being interviewed about a wide range of topics varying from her educational qualifications to her experience in a grade 2 classroom teaching English.

Initially I approached the school I had identified through the school principal. The school principal, hereafter Principal A, and I had had dealings through the District Office¹ before regarding culture and art workshops, and I felt confident that he understood and valued my integrity. After two meetings (December 1998 and January 1999) with the principal, in which we talked in detail about my research proposal and OBE, he agreed to approach his grade 2 teachers. Unfortunately, at this particular school, the teachers in grade 2 were reluctant to have me in their classrooms. Fortunately, the principal was very interested in the research project and told me that his wife taught grade 2 in another school in the town. He suggested that she might be open to working with me. I made an appointment with the principal of the second school. During the meeting with principal B, we spoke in detail about my research project and the implications for his school and the teacher in grade 2. I emphasised that my role in the classroom would be one of non-participant observer and that I would at no stage be involved in evaluating or appraising the teacher, the pupils or the school. I left him with a copy of my research proposal to peruse. Two days later I telephoned him to find out whether he would consent to me approaching the teacher in grade 2. Principal B gave me his approval and seemed enthusiastic about the project. Later that day, I made an appointment to see the teacher, hereafter named Mrs. C. The first meeting between Mrs. C and I took place in the school's staffroom. She was extremely nervous and particularly tired as the meeting took place immediately after the school's annual Athletics Day.

¹ The management organogram of the Eastern Cape Province allows for the Province to be divided into 6 regions. Each region is then divided into districts. Each district is controlled by the District Manager who administers with a clerical staff, Education Development Officers and other professional staff such as Subject Advisors.

Mrs. C and I spoke about the research project. I gave her a copy of my research proposal. I assured her as I had Principal B that at no time would I be evaluating her or the pupils or the school. I further ensured her that she, the pupils and the school would remain anonymous when my research was written up. She questioned me about what I would be doing in the classroom. I explained to her that I would be observing and tape- recording the lessons together with making notes. I explained that at no time would I want to take part in her lessons or preparation of lessons. I discussed with her that I would like to be seated at the back of the classroom during the lessons and that I would need access to an electricity plug point. She confirmed that she had a plug point in her classroom.

I also told her that I would make available to her the transcripts of every taped lesson so that she could verify the transcripts and make amendments, give explanations or edit the transcript. I told her, that in fact, I would appreciate as much input from her as possible. I also explained that I would want to interview her several times and would need to look at her class records to gather some statistics.

I suggested that I would like to visit her classroom 3 times a week over the period of the first term giving in total 15 viewed and recorded lessons. She agreed to this and we set a date for the first observation. However, the following day, Mrs. C telephoned me to say that she had given considerable thought to the process and would like to suggest an amendment. She felt that I would not be exposed to an authentic classroom situation if my visits were broken up into only three visits a week. She felt that I would experience a far better understanding of her methods if I came to her class every day for three weeks. She explained that her English lessons at this grade only lasted for 20 minutes and that I would get a better overall picture if I spent more continuous time in the classroom. I was extremely pleased with this suggestion and accepted her offer. We agreed that I would arrive at 8h00 every morning and leave when the English lesson was over. I immediately wrote to Principal B and Mrs. C confirming my promises and requests to them. The times I would arrive and depart would also change to suit circumstances.

After the first observation, I felt that I had disrupted the class by arriving after the learners and the teacher had already begun the day. After consultation with Mrs. C it

was decided that I would arrive earlier the next day and be already seated, my equipment already set up when she and the pupils entered the classroom.

The new arrangement was most successful. Other than giving me time to settle into my position at the back of the classroom, it also gave me the opportunity of placing the English lesson within the context of classroom management tasks such as attendance registers, daily prayers and the general chit-chat between learners and teacher.

As the children arrived this morning they found me in the classroom before them. They glanced shyly at me sideways from beneath their eyelashes. The general chores of the day began. Chairs were removed from the desks. I notice that the class spoke predominantly in Afrikaans including the two isiXhosa learners. The teacher speaks Afrikaans to the learners at this stage. The daily prayer and chorus were in Afrikaans. The teacher was more animated when speaking Afrikaans. Her voice was louder, she smiled a lot. The children used large hand gestures singing the “Samson Song”. The children filed up in single file onto the carpet. The Bible story was in Afrikaans and I noticed the children were quieter, there was hardly any movement from then. Could this be because they understood the story better in their mother tongue? Is this why they were so restless during the English story? The school secretary entered and spoke to Mrs. C. They then asked me whether I knew the exact time of the OBE workshop to be presented at the district office that afternoon. I gave them the required information. I felt slightly strange to be breaking the mould of the “invisible researcher” who doesn’t say anything.

(FN 4/13 11:3:99)

3.3.2 THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

When I visited the research site to gather the data, I positioned myself at the back of the classroom in the left-hand corner facing the front of the classroom and the area of activity. As the plug point was in the front of the classroom, I plugged in the tape recorder and switched it on before going to my seat. This technical drama always elicited much interest in the pupils. An excerpt from the transcript of the second day illustrates the point:

Mrs. C: [begins singing] First the flower is tall, then he grows so tall, I like flowers big and small and glad God made them all. [Repeats song X5].

[Learners sit on mat in front of the classroom]

Mrs. C: [counts rows] 1,2,3,4,5,6, [then louder and more slowly] ONE,

TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX. [Sings again]. First the flower is tall then he grows so tall, I like flowers big and small and glad God made them all. Wat is jou probleem Tom? [What is your problem Tom?]

Tom replies [faint, indistinct, cannot be heard]

Mrs. C: Put [it] in your school bag. [Sings again]. First the flower is small ... x1)

Mrs. C: Don't touch that. Leave it like this. [Referring to the tape recorder]. Next time you will go and sit there [pointing to the back of the classroom] if you don't learn what not to touch.

(T1/13 9:3:99)

It is always in the interests of a “thick description” to capture a lot of detail (Carspecken 1996:46) in order to validate the researcher’s statements. As part of my data collection methods I wrote fieldnotes and kept a field journal and recorded anything and everything of interest. I asked to be positioned at the back of the classroom because I felt that I would be the least obtrusive from this point. I also believed that from this position I would be able to make notes and draw sketches without disturbing the flow of the lesson or the concentration of the children. I was determined to cause as little disruption as possible in order to get as true a picture of the English lessons as possible. On the first day, I made a simple sketch of the classroom indicating my position in the classroom and other interesting features. This diagram is reproduced below in its rough form.

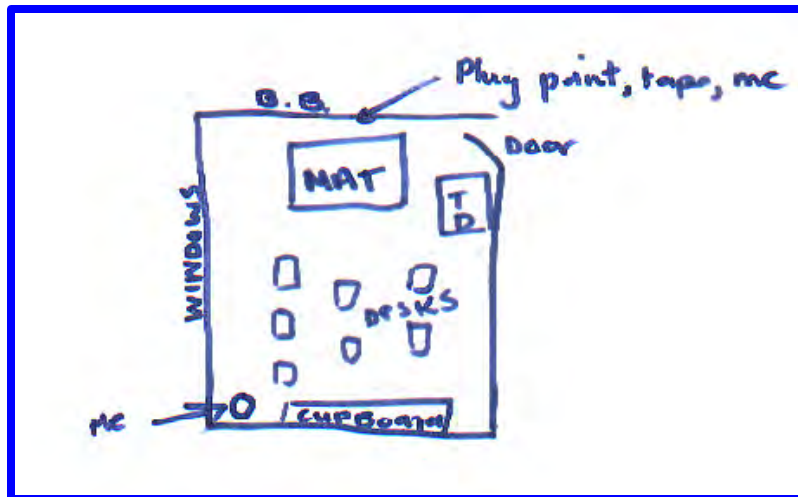


FIGURE 2 Diagrammatic representation of researcher’s position in the classroom (FN1/13 9:3:99) (not to scale).

I followed the following process from the third morning while collecting data: I arrived at the school while Mrs. C and the rest of the staff were in the staffroom for the daily meeting with the principal. I would walk up to the classroom. If the classroom was unlocked I would enter or if locked, I would ask one of the learners to fetch the key for me. I would set up my tape. Then I would seat myself at the back of the classroom. I would then scan the classroom for any additions to the physical aspect of the classroom e.g. had the teacher added any new posters to the walls; had the teacher added any new writing tasks/exercises on the chalkboard or changed any of the “word” posters used during the lessons. I would then record my initial feelings and observations into my field journal in as detailed a manner as possible. I would switch on the tape recorder when the teacher began her English lesson, but would note in detail the class rituals which occurred beforehand e.g. daily prayers, notices, classroom management. The following extract from my field journal illustrates this procedure:

As I walked in from the parking lot today I felt lots and lots of eyes watching me. I was early. It was a hot summer morning and the sun shone brightly. I hoped that the classroom did not get as hot as it did yesterday. I had a small escort of grade 2 learners behind me as I walked to Mrs. C’s classroom. The classroom was locked. One of the grade 2 learners asked me in Afrikaans if she must fetch the key. I replied that she must. I

stood outside the classroom, which overlooked the playground. There was a lot of activity as the children played. Some played “touches”, another group skipped. Many just stood around talking. The grade 2 learners milled around the classroom door and the veranda. They seem anxious to talk to me but most are very shy. I suppose that is because of me being a white stranger as well as being English speaking. I still have the faint impression that I am still being regarded as an “inspector” for whom they must be on their best behaviour. At last, the young girl returns with the key. ... I think they are inquisitive as to what I am going to be doing in the classroom on my own before the teacher arrives. I set about setting up my equipment. At that stage I was paranoid about the tape not working. I checked it twice. I have not switched it on permanently as I don’t want to waste tape recording time. I moved to my chair at the back of the classroom where I began to make notes in my field diary for typing into my computer later on in the day. I decided to open the windows in the classroom. Yesterday, in the extreme heat they had remained closed and the classroom had been unbearable hot. I returned to my chair. I notice that the classroom walls are covered in posters and I study them. I noticed that there are posters relating to the parts of the body in Afrikaans (these reflect the work going on in English about the body parts) as well as posters relating to the weather. The writing on the board had changed as well. There was a new prayer on the board in Afrikaans as well as a new writing piece. The teacher’s handwriting is meticulous. I have always admired primary school teachers’ handwriting. There are also sums on the board. Just after 8h00 the teacher enters the classroom, followed by a noisy class of grade 2s.

(FN3/13 10:3:99)

During my classroom observations I firstly recorded verbatim the English lessons on tape which were afterwards transcribed; secondly, I made field notes which included descriptions of events, small anecdotes which would not be picked up by the tape recorder such as hand gestures and facial expressions. My field notes would later be typed into my computer to become my field journal. I would also use my field notes to pinpoint issues I would like to follow up on and also as a means in which I could express my own thoughts on what was happening in the classroom.

3.3.3 DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

An ethnographic study relies on a number of sources to provide a complete a picture as possible of the research being undertaken. The ethnographer never relies on only one means of gathering information. Rather, “a variety of techniques are used in combination over a lengthy time period so that the information obtained in different ways and from

different sources can be compared” (Johnson 1992:146). The sources I used for this research project were: lesson transcripts; field notes and field journal; interviews with the teacher; official documentation from the Department of Education, Eastern Cape Province; school records as well as transcripts and notes received at an OBE workshop for grade 2 teachers held by the Foundation Phase Subject Advisor of the District Office. These varied sources of data collection would in essence, provide “the background tapestry – busily detailed, seemingly chaotic; however, upon closer look, revealing patterns and with repeated scrutiny, revealing yet other patterns” (Heath 1982: 44). Watson-Gegeo (1988:583) writes that historically, ethnographers have been methodologically very eclectic, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods where appropriate. Ethnographic methods of data collection suggests Watson-Gegeo (1988:585) “offers an approach for systematically documenting teaching-learning interactions in rich, contextualized detail with the aim of developing grounded theory”.

3.3.4. OBSERVING, RECORDING AND WRITING UP

As stated before, sensitivity to the complex process of the language classroom has culminated in making direct observation a key characteristic of classroom research (Gaies 1983:213). The great benefits such research has is that it affords classroom research into language learning greater leeway than conventional or “scientific” quantitative research. This enables the researcher to discover aspects of the classroom learning and teaching process that might have gone unnoticed and undocumented.

3.3.4.1 OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES: PARTICIPANT VS. NON-PARTICIPANT ROLES FOR THE RESEARCHER

Lynch (1998:121) describes two types of observation: participant and non-participant. He suggests that true non-participant observation is only attainable if the one who observes is behind a one-way mirror. Citing Spradley (1980) Lynch (1986:121) defines participant observation as occurring on a continuum. At the one end of the scale is *passive participant observation*, in which the observer does not actively participate in the classroom interactions and does not have a role to play other than observer. This is also

generally referred to as *non-participant observation*. In non-participant observation, the observer does not take part in the activities being studied or pretend to be a participant in them (Long 1980:24). At the other end of the scale is the complete participant observer which means that the ethnographer both observes and participates in the cultural setting under investigation. The researcher establishes a role within the setting and gathers data from an insider's point of view. Between the two opposite poles fall the two categories of *active participant observer* and *moderate participant observation*. Johnson (1992:143) sees participant observation as the ethnographic researcher's primary data-collection technique. Long (1980:24) observes that the non-participant observer will have the option of supplementing this form of data collection through the use of a variety of other techniques such as interviews, questionnaires and official documents. Lynch (1986:121) cautions that the complete participant observer may be overly influenced by prior knowledge and understanding of the setting and fail to observe aspects that do not conform to that understanding. Wolfson (1986:691) argues that when one observes without intervening, then there is no real way of controlling for one variable or another. Wolfson (1986:690) further suggests that because ethnographic field work is not limited to the study of groups foreign to the researcher the researcher is often not distinguishable from the group being studied and can observe everyday behaviour without causing self-consciousness on the part of those being observed.

In this research project, I decided that I would use the technique of traditional non-participation observation or passive participation observation. This decision was made chiefly because I wanted to observe the teacher in action in the classroom without jeopardising the "natural" environment of the classroom with my own ideas and practices. I also felt that this technique would give me the best opportunity of gathering data that reflected the teacher's perspective on second language teaching. I would also be able to retain a certain amount of objectivity necessary when the data was analysed.

3.3.4.2 INTERVIEWS: STRUCTURED VS. UNSTRUCTURED

Johnson (1992:144) defines the role of interviews in ethnographic research by citing Wolcott (1988:194) who says "I include as an interview activity anything that the

fieldworker does that intrudes upon the natural setting and is done with the conscious intent of obtaining particular information directly from one's subjects". Carspecken (1996:154) describes the data generated from interviews with the subject as "dialogical data". Data is obtained through intense conversations between the researcher and the researched that are rarely natural because interviews are often conducted to get extra information from subjects on matters relating to patterns of interaction seen by the researcher. Johnson (1992:145) sees the process of interviewing as "recursive" working in tandem with data gathering in the field and the analysis of that data.

Lynch (1986:125) describes two types of interviews: *structured and unstructured*. He further differentiates three types of qualitative interviews formats based on Patton (1980, 1987): the informal conversational interview, the standardised open-ended interview and the interview guide. The *informal conversational interview* follows the pattern of the interviewer engaging the subject in natural conversation in which the topics and questions generated during the interview arise spontaneously. This type of interview strategy places a high value on discovering and appreciating the perspective of the subject. Spindler & Spindler cited in Johnson (1992):145 reinforce this idea of conducting an interview:

...since the informant (any person being interviewed) is one who knows and who has the emic, native cultural knowledge the ethnographic interviewer must not predetermine responses by kinds of questions asked. The management of the interview must be carried out so as to promote the unfolding of emic cultural knowledge in its most heuristic, natural form. This form will often be influenced by emotionally laden preoccupations that must be allowed expression.

(Spindler & Spindler 1987 cited in Johnson (1992:145))

The benefits of this type of interview is that it:

- 1) Greatly increases the amount of relevant information the researcher elicits from the interviewee;
- 2) Unpredicted topics may develop to the benefit of the researcher;
- 3) Provides an in-depth understanding from the subject's point of view.

The *standard open-ended interview* follows a rigid, structured format. The researcher predetermines questions and so is the order in which they will be asked. This type of interview format is not generally used by researchers using an ethnographic methodology as its rigidity is not conducive to generating spontaneity between researcher and researched.

Falling in between the two formats described above is *the interview guide*. This format allows the researcher to formulate questions in advance but allows the researcher leeway during the interview in the way in which the questions will be asked and the order in which they will be presented to the subject.

Carspecken (1996:155) conceptualises the qualitative interview in three ways: the types of questions asked, the interview responses and data analysis conducted after the interview. He sees the “ideal qualitative interview” as being semi-structured. The interview format should allow for maximum flexibility. This definition by Carspecken (1996:156) dovetails nicely with Lynch’s “interview guide” format for interviews.

Both Carspecken (1996:156) and Lynch (1986:132) discuss the types of questions used in interviews and the rationale behind the questions.

Lynch (1986:132) suggests the types of questions asked by the interviewer are critical to achieving the aim of gathering naturalistic interview data from the participants’ perspective in their own words and uses Patton’s (1987) set of question types as an example as to how to organise an interview:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour/experience questions• Opinion/value questions• Feeling questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge questions• Sensory questions• Demographic/background questions
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Carspecken's interview protocol is illustrated below:

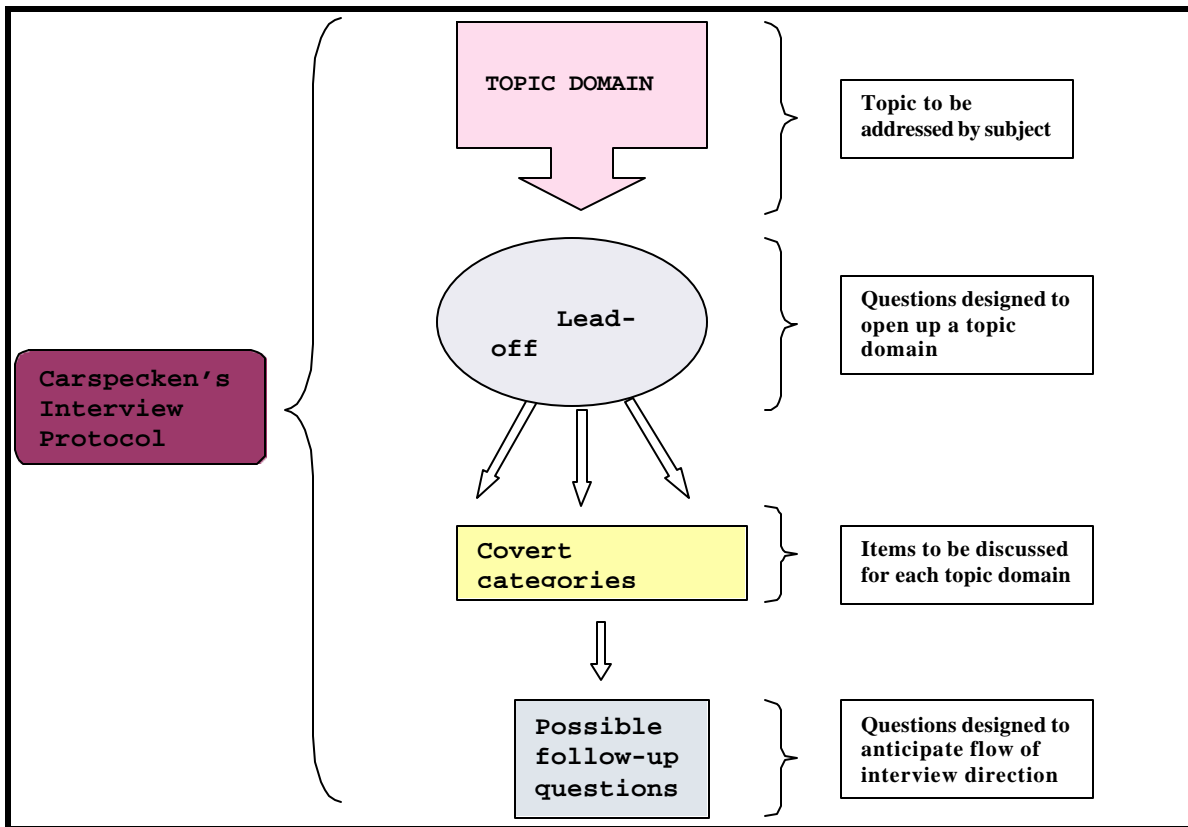


FIGURE 3 Diagrammatic representation of Carspecken's Interview protocol (Source: Carspecken, P.F. 1996:157-158)

Lynch (1986:133) advocates tape-recording an interview to interact more attentively with the subject. Explicit permission must be obtained from the subject to record the conversation. Carspecken (1996:158) and Lynch (1986:133) advise that good interviewer responses to the subject will generate a positive atmosphere during the interview conducive to soliciting genuine, open responses from the subject. Carspecken (1996:154) suggests that this phenomena occurs because often people are not listened to as intently as the researcher listens to them, they are not taken as seriously as the researcher takes them and they are not supported in the exploration of their feelings and life as much as a skilled researcher will support them.

Carspecken creates a typology of interviewer responses influenced by Kagan (1980,1984) Kagan and Kagan(1991) and Kagan and Schneider(1987) which he suggests the interviewer use during the interviewing process.

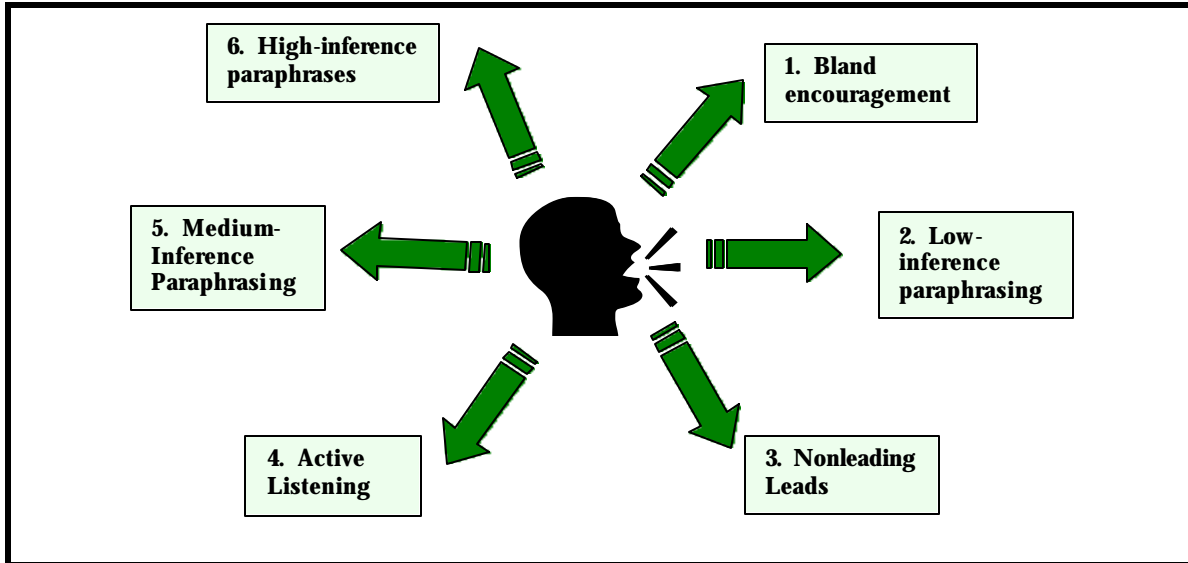


FIGURE 4 Carspecken’s typology of interviewer responses (Source: Carspecken, P.F. (1996:159-160))

Johnson (1992:145) raises the question “What makes an interview ethnographic?” The *emic* goals of the interview rather than the interview technique make it ethnographic. If the goal of the interview is to gain personal knowledge from the interviewee and the “key informant” (Johnson 1992:144) gives the interviewer “native, cultural knowledge” (Spindler & Spindler (1987) cited in Johnson (1992:145)) then the interview is ethnographic in nature.

During the interviews I conducted with Mrs. C I followed the interview guide format. This allowed me not to compromise the ethnographic perspective of the study. Allowing Mrs. C to be able to fully explain herself during the interviews gave me the opportunity of setting the boundaries of the interview. Carspecken’s Interview Protocol (1996:157-158) was useful in determining the range and tempos of the questions during the interviews. I interviewed Mrs. C. three times. I however was not able to interview her immediately after the observation time in her classroom but had to wait some months

as she recuperated from a hysterectomy. I am confident however, that this distance between interviews and classroom observation gave Mrs. C and I a better perspective as well as more time to reflect on issues. By this stage, I had already transcribed all classroom recordings and had asked her to review and comment on them. Each interview lasted 45 minutes and was tape-recorded. I interviewed Mrs. C in her home hoping that it would make her more comfortable. The tapes did not prove to be of good quality and transcription was very difficult.

Although Mrs. C was my “key informant” (Johnson 1992:144), I also interviewed the principal of the school twice. These interviews were informal interviews and were not recorded. I made hand notes and was able to get down some good quotes. I decided not to record the interview as I intended only to ask him about historical data, basic school enrolment policy and the medium of instruction of the school.

Throughout the interviews I conducted, I tried to put into practice Carspecken’s interviewer responses (see Figure 4 above), but conceded defeat. I found it difficult to concentrate on taking notes, listening to the subject and trying to be the perfect interviewer. I decided to trust my instincts and experience as a teacher during the interviews to make the subject feel at ease.

3.3.4.3 FIELD NOTES AND FIELD/JOURNAL

According to Long (1980:22) ethnographers try and describe all aspects of whatever they experience in the greatest possible detail. Long continues by saying:

... this they [ethnographers] accomplish principally by making extensive written notes, usually recording their observations as soon as possible *after* involvement in the day’s activities in order to avoid compromising their own participant role.

(Long 1980:22).

Wilcox agrees and states that the

...observation process in school ethnography has been characterized by the recording of extensive descriptive detail ...to capture in concrete detail ... everyday life in classrooms and schools, often

recording longhand detailed running descriptions of interaction.

(Wilcox 1982:460)

During the observation period in Mrs. C's classroom I took field notes. I wrote down events, movements, facial expressions, gestures made by either Mrs. C or the learners of grade 2, which would not be captured by the tape recorder or the photographs, I had taken. The field notes also illustrated the time span of each section of the lesson recorded. I would also make notes to myself regarding further investigations after certain events had occurred and I would also use the field notes to write down feelings and thoughts about the lesson or the data collection process. These field notes would later be typed into my computer and become my field journal. During the analysis of the data I used my field notes to remind me of issues and also as a source of comparison or validation.

3.3.4.4 OTHER METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

In addition to the classroom observation, field notes/journal and interviews I collected other forms of data. Mrs. C allowed me access to her mark schedules, her lesson plans and notes, her classroom attendance register as well as her teaching aids which included the textbooks she used, the flannel board pictures, vocabulary posters and flashcards. These I carefully used to collect statistical data on the learners in grade 2. They also gave me great insight into how Mrs. C prepared her lesson and gave me the opportunity of placing her lessons within the boundaries of the Foundation Phase Document .

I also accessed all the documentation produced by the Eastern Cape Department of Education on the Foundation Phase. These included the Foundation Phase Policy document, materials produced for grade 1 and grade 2 learners as well as the teacher guides, the assessment policy for the Foundation Phase as well as all circulars, pamphlets and directives from the District Office with regards to implementing OBE in the Foundation Phase.

In addition to the material documentation, I attended the only workshop Mrs. C attended on OBE in 1999 for grade 2. This experience was documented through field notes and I collected the handout produced at the workshop. This workshop was extremely important in my understanding some of the frustrations and problems Mrs. C had with the official training of teachers in grade 2.

3.4 GROUNDED THEORY

Ethnographic methods of data collection suggests Watson-Gegeo (1988:585) offer an approach for systematically documenting teaching-learning interactions in rich, contextualised detail with the aim of developing grounded theory. Watson-Gegeo (1988:583) and Allwright & Bailey (1991:36) define grounded theory as theory rooted in and generated from data and arrived at through a cautious, methodical process of reasoning. Johnson (1992:141) sees the goal of many ethnographers as developing theory through the course of the research. This recursive approach to data analysis often allows the data analysis and fieldwork to inform each other and the research becomes more focused. The patterns and relationships discovered during this recursive process leads to the development of grounded theory (Johnson 1992:148). Johnson (1992:148) cites Saville-Troike (1988:25) who describes grounded theory as “the descriptive model which results from such analysis and is then used to generate theoretical propositions that account for the data”. The theory then provides hypotheses to be tested against additional data collection and analysis. Wolfson (1986:693) states that one of the enormous advantages of an ethnographic approach is that the hypotheses come out of the process of collecting and analysing the data. After looking at a particular speech setting, event, or act and gathering as much data about it as possible, one looks to see what the patterns and rules of interaction are. Lynch (1986:142) sees the heart of grounded theory as the way in which the researcher works back and forth between the data revising as new patterns emerge that suggest better ways of labelling the data.

It is my belief that the many varied methods of data collection and analysis used in this research project has allowed for the development of theory grounded in context.

3.5 THE RIGOROUS DISCIPLINE OF ETHNOGRAPHY

3.5.1 TRIANGULATION

Because of the multiple sources of data collection, the major criticism levelled at ethnography by proponents of quantitative research concerns the reliability and validity of such research. Most of these criticisms stem from the fact that ethnographies are based on the detailed description and analysis of a particular context or situation (Nunan 1992:58). Triangulation is seen as the putting together of information from different data sources and/or data collected through different research methods, such as participant-observation, interviewing, network mapping, and surveys is an important strategy for arriving at valid (or “dependable”) findings in ethnographic work (Fielding & Fielding (1986); Diesing (1971) cited in Watson-Gegeo (1988:584)). Johnson (1992:146) endorses the value of triangulation as it “reduces observer or interviewer bias and enhances the validity and reliability (accuracy) of the information. Watson-Gegeo (1988:584) sees triangulation as the putting together of information from different data sources and/or data collected through different research methods. Watson-Gegeo (1988:584) views triangulation as an important strategy for arriving at valid (or “dependable”) findings in ethnographic work. Johnson (1992:146) reinforces this view by stating that a variety of techniques are used in combination over a lengthy time period so that information obtained in different ways and from different sources can be compared. She concludes that in this way researchers are able to *triangulate*, to bring together all the information that pertains to a research question. Wilcox (1982:46) suggests that if different kinds of data are gathered, this might be seen as increasing the validity and reliability of the study undertaken. Van Lier (1988:13) argues that because triangulation is the inspection of different kinds of data, different methods, and a variety of research tools, the research cannot be easily classified and pigeon-holed, since it is often eclectic. Denzin (1970:472) cited in van Lier (1988) writes that the greater the triangulation, the greater the confidence in the observed findings. Wolfson (1986:689) warns that if the data collected are inadequate, there is always the danger that the theory and conclusions drawn from them could be unreliable and misleading. Allwright

(1983:193) refers to triangulation as “multiple viewpoints that are necessary to understand what goes on in classrooms”. This combination of observation and introspection allows the researcher to understand classroom language learning without relying on or confirming personal prejudices.

Hymes (1982:29) writes that it is unavoidable that the ethnographer is a variable in the research. He suggests that because subjectivity on the part of the researcher cannot be avoided, the only solution is to acknowledge the subjectivity and to compensate for it as much as possible in the analysis of the data and to allow for it in interpretation of themes found in the analysis.

3.5.2 THE ISSUE OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Le Compte & Goetz (1982:31) reason that the value of any scientific research (despite the methodology used to collect the data) is reliant on the capability of the researcher to show trustworthy findings and “authentic results”. A familiar reproach made about qualitative research (the umbrella term under which ethnography shelters) is that it fails to demonstrate adequately reliability and validity. Perhaps it would be pertinent at this stage to define the terms “reliability” and “validity”.

Reliability refers to the manner in which research projects can be duplicated by others (Le Compte & Goetz 1982:35; Nunan 1992:58; Allwright & Bailey 1991:46). Le Compte & Goetz (1982:3) define reliability in ethnographic research as being “dependent on the resolution of both external and internal design problems”. External reliability deals with the problem of other researchers finding the same phenomena in the same or similar contexts. Internal reliability refers to the way in which external researchers will find equivalent forms of explanations using the same data.

Validity, in contrast, refers to the examination and re-examination of the data collected, the methods of data collection and the conclusions and generalisations drawn from the data (Wolfson 1986:689; Le Compte & Goetz 1982:43; Nunan 1992:62; Allwright &

Bailey 1991:47).

How then does an ethnography suitably demonstrate reliability and validity? Long (1980:21) writes that “the anthropological approach to classroom research is procedurally highly systematic. *What* is observed, ... the data gathered ... is free to vary during the course of the observation as a reflection of the observer’s developing understanding of what he or she is studying”. In experimental research reliability and validity lead to generalisability. However, as Allwright & Bailey (1991:57) write, this is not always the primary focus of naturalistic research. Van Lier (1988:2) sees the analysis of data as “they are” and not to compare them to other data to see how similar they are. The goal therefore of naturalistic inquiry is to understand what happens in the classroom, which is, itself, perceived as an environment with unique possibilities and characteristics. Ethnographers recognise and acknowledge the researcher’s bias in reporting events noted and documented in the classroom/research environment (Long 1980:28).

Le Compte & Goetz (1982:35) argue that comparability and translatability are crucial to the application of ethnographic research. Comparability requires that the ethnographer clearly defines the group under study so distinctly that they “serve as a basis for comparison with other like and unlike groups” (Le Compte & Goetz 1982:35). Translatability, on the other hand, infers that the methodology, analytic categories, observed phenomena are so explicitly described “that comparisons can be conducted confidently”. Le Compte & Goetz (1982:36) continue by stating that if a researcher fails to describe precisely the way in which the research was carried out, problems of reliability might develop. Le Compte & Goetz (1982:37-40) suggest that to strengthen the external reliability of the data collected, researchers ought to pay attention to: researcher status position (see sections 1.3 and 3.7), informant choices, social situations and conditions, analytic constructs and premises and methods of data collection and analysis. Nunan (1992:63) supports this suggestion. Le Compte and Goetz (1982:37-40) advise that to ensure internal reliability low inference descriptors, multiple researcher, participant researcher, peer examination and mechanically recorded data be used.

As I was the only researcher involved in the project, I enlisted the help of Mrs. C to

review and validate my data. As the data collected was mechanically recorded on tapes, the primary data was preserved for perusal. In this manner I have attempted to satisfy the precepts necessary for internal reliability.

I have also tried to ensure the validity and reliability of the data by explicitly depicting the data collection process, choices of methodology, data analysis, the context of the research as well as the participants in the research. In this way I have striven to “present [my] methods so clearly that other researchers can use the original report as an operating manual by which to replicate the study” (Le Compte & Goetz 1982:40; Nunan 1992:60).

3.5.3 A SPECIAL PRECAUTION ABOUT DATA COLLECTION

An interesting and perplexing phenomenon known as “reactivity” (a term commonly used by anthropologists), “the observer’s paradox” (a phrase coined by Labov 1972 cited in Eisenstein 1986:684, Allwright & Bailey 1991:71, Ellis 1985:77) or the Hawthorne Effect can often skew data collected. This phenomenon refers to the altered behaviour of people being observed. Altering their behaviour makes it more difficult for the researcher to claim either internal or external validity. Wolfson cautions:

... when one observes without intervening, then there is no real way of controlling for one variable or another ...

(Wolfson 1986:690)

In order to prevent this effect, I tried to be as open as possible about how I was collecting the data and I made myself available to Mrs. C after each classroom visit for a discussion of the lesson. I believe that this interaction between Mrs. C and I, pre-empted me from being seen as an outsider or as someone intent on finding only fault in the classroom situation. I also believe my constant presence in the classroom over the period of data collection eliminated the problem of me being viewed as an intruder by the learners. Towards the end of the observation period I felt that I had become part of the furniture in the classroom.

3.6 “THICK DESCRIPTION”

Wilcox (1982:458) says that ethnography is “first and foremost a descriptive endeavor in which the researcher attempts accurately to describe and interpret the nature of social discourse among a group of people”. She (Wilcox 1982:458) cites Geertz (1973) who suggests that the ethnographer is aiming at “thick description” i.e. a multi-layered approach to observation in which the research attempts to observe and record as much data as possible in order to generate a lush, detailed description of behaviour in its natural setting. Johnson (1992:149) states that many ethnographers agree that the most important characteristic of ethnography is its concern with cultural interpretation. Cultural interpretation, she argues, involves “thick” description which requires interpreting the meaning that particular social actions and events have for the actors.

I have attempted to generate a “thick” description of events in Mrs. C’s grade 2 classroom based on the definitions given above. By placing emphasis on Mrs. C’s interpretations of the classroom events, by allowing her to voice her opinions about *Curriculum 2005* and by contrasting this personal, subjective data, the observed and recorded classroom activities take on a deeper, more refined meaning.

3.7 ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES

Van Lier (1988:27) writes that a classroom researcher who adheres to the ethnographic principle of respect for context will naturally engage the teacher and the learners as participants of the research, and as a next step is likely to share emerging findings with them. Allwright & Bailey (1991:68) warn that classroom research often generates anxiety in both the teacher and the learners.

I felt that as researcher I had to be particularly careful in this research project. To elaborate, it is necessary to place myself in context. I am employed as an Assistant Chief Education Specialist in the Department of Sport, Art and Culture in the District Office under which Fairview Primary School falls. My primary concern is to provide both educators and learners with learning opportunities in the field of arts and culture, and in

particular, languages. I work closely with the principals of schools and educators in schools through workshops, festivals, competitions and INSET for teachers. I am therefore well known in the district and to the educators in schools. I believe that this has had a dual impact on my role as researcher. Firstly, Principal B and Mrs. C know me as the A.C.E.S. in charge of Arts and Culture in the district. I am therefore associated with management and control. Secondly, Principal B and Mrs. C have come to know me as a learner/researcher and on a more personal level. This dichotomous relationship is fraught with ethical implications and I have had to seriously consider my role in the research. From the outset, I attempted to make it explicit to Principal B and Mrs. C that as researcher, my presence in the school has nothing to do with my role as A.C.E.S. However, I am not naïve enough to believe that my role as A.C.E.S. has not impacted on the way in which Mrs. C and Principal B have received me in the school.

In order to create a less threatening view of myself as the researcher I followed the important rule of gaining “entry into the field” (Allwright and Bailey 1991:69) by seeking permission from all participants in the focus of my research. I was conscious of obtaining “voluntary participation” (Allwright & Bailey 1991:69). At the first school I had approached, the teachers had not been willing to become voluntary participants and rejected my request to do research in their classrooms. This, I believe, could have stemmed from the issues I have discussed above about my role in the District Office.

Before beginning my classroom data collection I met with Principal B and Mrs. C outlining my position as researcher. This position was also communicated to them as letters confirming the meetings. These letters formed the basis of the principle of “informed consent” (Dane1990:40) necessary in conducting the research. Confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed when the data was written up. I also submitted a letter to the parents of the learners in the grade 2 class offering them the same information and guarantees. I clearly stated that I would be willing to stop the research process at any time or exclude any learner from being observed if necessary. At all times I attempted to practice “ethical balance” (Dane 1990:38). I felt that through these steps I had secured both the confidence and permission of Principal B and Mrs. C as well as the parents of

the learners. In addition, as part of my methodology I reported back to Mrs. C as often as possible. I shared with her the transcripts of each lesson, the transcripts of all interviews and allowed her to peruse my typed up field journal. I encouraged her to make corrections and challenge my perspective as to what was happening in her classroom. I believe that this process encouraged trust between her as the key informant of my research and myself as the researcher. While writing up the research and during the data analysis process, I shared with her all my findings and opened them up to discussion with her. I believe that this process lowered the risk of either diminishing the self-esteem of Mrs. C or causing her undue anxiety.

3.8 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

3.8.1 INTRODUCTION

To define and present one teacher's understanding of OBE and the relevant strategies employed in a L2 classroom, it was necessary to employ methods of data analysis which would allow the teacher's voice to be heard as well as describe the interaction dynamics of the classroom. The shift in paradigm associated with OBE is that of the classroom becoming learner centred, showing learner driven education with the teacher as facilitator as opposed to the omnipotent presence of the teacher as knowledge giver. It was under this premise that the methods of data analysis were chosen to investigate the degree to which this paradigm shift had occurred or was occurring in a grade 2 classroom implementing OBE for the first time. An ethnographic approach allowed this shift to be recorded in as natural an environment and manner as possible. Van Lier (1988:xvi) succinctly puts it as follows "ethnographic classroom research directly illustrates classroom methodology and is therefore of immediate relevance to classroom teachers".

Wilcox (1982:471) writes that "the nature of the change, including all of its anticipated and unanticipated consequences, must be fully understood in order to evaluate its educational significance. What is it that children are learning in this new situation?"

To understand this, "ethnographers have also looked outside the walls of the classroom to

the process of change as it is instituted in schools and school districts, and to the relationship between in-classroom events and those taking place in the vicinity of the classroom” (Wilcox 1982:472). Van Lier (1985:69) echoes this statement by saying “crucial to ethnographic research is an orientation to the social context of classroom interaction...”

Approaches to data analysis are wide and varied and depend to a large extent on the types of data gathered and the underlying premises upon which the data is based. Data analysis can either be qualitative or quantitative in approach. However, these techniques are not mutually exclusive. This has been seen as the continuing debate between the efficacy of interpretive versus experimental research in classrooms. An ethnographic, qualitative approach suggests van Lier (1988:38) may bring the researcher closer to understanding why interaction occurs the way it does and the effects of the changes in the patterns of interaction can be.

Van Lier (1985) and Long (1980:3) place classroom research in SLA into two very distinct categories: descriptions based on field notes and observation and coding and interaction analysis based on predetermined checklists of categories. Van Lier (1988:38) further suggests and advocates that examining classroom interactions as they occur naturally through observation, description and analysis is central to classroom research.

Lynch proposes the following steps to approach the analysis and interpretation of data collected through observation or a naturalistic design:

- 1) Develop a thematic framework through focussing on the most important ... questions to be answered;
- 2) Organise the data into a system which reflects the content of the data collected;
- 3) Code the data into themes and patters that are beginning to emerge;
- 4) Reduce the data by grouping and re-grouping similar patterns and themes;
- 5) Interpret the data and formulate conclusions pertinent to the research.

(Source: Lynch, B.K. 1986:107 & 139-146)

For this thesis, I have based my data analysis on two approaches that I believe will remain true to an ethnographic approach. They are loosely based on the processes discussed above by Van Lier (1985:38) and Lynch (1986:107 & 139-146). Both approaches allow for the analysis of data to be recursive and in this way allowing patterns of interaction to emerge naturally from the data itself rather than from a set of predetermined theories. These two methods are described below.

3.8.2 THE 'KEY INCIDENT APPROACH'

This approach (Wilcox 1982:462) involves identifying a key incident noted in field notes and linking it to other incidents found in other data. This means the researcher constructs a narrative which allows others to see the “generic in the particular” (Erickson 1977 cited in Wilcox 1982:462). This type of analysis depends largely on the intense collection of written and recorded data in classrooms. The extensive descriptions in these data allow for the research to focus on certain incidents which have occurred in the classroom. These incidents are analysed in detail and are linked to other classroom phenomena and theoretical constructs. This approach allows the researcher to pull together inter-linking threads from the different kinds of data gathered from different sources such as interviews, lesson transcriptions, and field notes. Van Lier (1988:16) says that the ethnographer is “always on the lookout for patterns and regularities, and ... for underlying patterns that connect”. This immersion in the data allows the researcher to develop a matrix of classroom interaction patterns between teacher and learner, learner and learner, learner and curriculum, teacher and curriculum and learner and L2 acquisition. These matrixes writes Long (1980:21) are free to vary and change during the observation period as the researcher gains deeper insight into the research context. Long (1980:27) and Nunan (1992:55) agree that ethnographic research is hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing.

Van Lier (1985:65) summarises 6 procedural stages for the analysis of video-taped data from Erickson and Shultz (1981:153) which I have modified and adopted to be applicable to audio-taped data:

- Stage 1: Global viewing: taking sparse notes to index the tape and note transitions between occasions of interest. This can be seen as field notes and or field journals.
- Stage 2: Choice of specific occasions of interest for more detailed analysis. Allwright & Bailey (1992:152) describe this as “coding” the data.
- Stage 3: Specification of differences in the transitions or junctures, with attention paid to non-verbal contextualisation cues.
- Stage 4/5: Construction of a model showing the principles of social organisation underlying the surface form of communication behaviour in interaction.
- Stage 6: Establishing the generalizability of the structures analysed. This stage however, poses some problems if following an ethnographic approach, as this approach sees each situation as unique. The findings may not be generalizable, but they may be useful in understanding similar situations.

(Source: Erickson and Shultz (1981:153) cited in Van Lier 1985:65)

Van Lier (1985:79) further suggests that if an ethnographic approach is followed in classroom research, the presupposition is that anything that occurs may be relevant to understanding. He suggests three steps to data analysis:

- Access to the classroom;
- Producing a detailed transcription
- Analysis of the data.

(Source: Van Lier 1985:79)

During this three-step process, the researcher will notice repeated actions, foci, participation patterns and topics in the classroom. It is these themes that the researcher focuses on rather than on pre-determined research questions. Ireland and Russell (1978) cited in Walker (1985:139), describe pattern analysis as “... a technique for looking at what happens in classrooms”. The patterns are written in descriptive terms to avoid using interpretative language which assumes knowledge of thoughts and intentions on

behalf of the actors being observed. The interpretations of the patterns that emerge reveal deeper meanings and connections between the actors and their contexts.

3.8.3 STIMULATED RECALL

In addition to the “key incident approach” to data analysis, I have utilised an approach to analysis described by Nunan (1992:94) as “stimulated recall”. This is a technique whereby after the researcher has transcribed a lesson, the teacher is asked to comment on and give her/his interpretation of what happened during the lesson. This technique, argues Nunan (1992:96), “provides insights into aspects of teaching which would be difficult to obtain in any other way”. It also empowers the teacher and allows the teacher’s voice to be heard in the collection and analysis of data in and about the classroom. This technique is useful in collaborating patterns of interaction already discovered by the researcher and in exposing patterns of interaction that have escaped the notice of the researcher.

This research is based on an ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis, and I have chosen these two processes to form the basis of my data analysis methods. In this way I hope to remain faithful to the ethnographic principles of *emic* and holistic inquiry.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I begin by placing the research project (the site of data collection and the actors) in context. Johnson (1992:134) suggests that for ethnography, cultural context is crucial. She defines cultural context as the school or “classroom culture” or the cultural context extending into the home, community and wider society. Johnson (1992:134) and Watson-Gegeo (1988:577) concur that ethnography is holistic, i.e. that any aspect of a culture or behaviour has to be described and explained in relation to the whole system of which it is part. Van Lier (1988:16) argues that because ethnography is based on the principles of holistic and *emic* inquiry, these principles require constant attention to the context of actions and to the viewpoints of the participants themselves, as a group and as individuals.

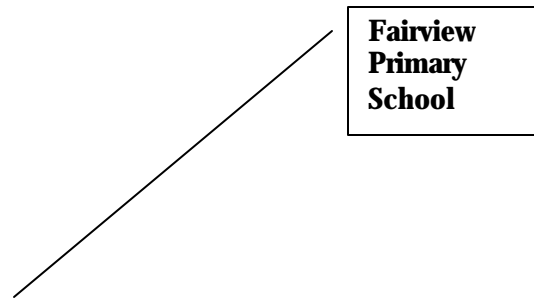
In order to generate this holistic framework I will give descriptions of the school, the classroom, the teacher and the pupils and the OBE training workshop for grade 2 teachers I attended with Mrs. C. In the second part of the chapter, I will describe and analyse the data collected from classroom observations, interviews with the teacher, field notes and the OBE workshop, with a view to illustrating the major themes that emerged. The analysis of the data focused firstly on identifying opportunities present in lessons for language acquisition and learning and secondly, looked at the lesson in terms of how it corresponded to OBE principles. Thirdly, evidence was sought to describe and illustrate the teacher’s reflective practices, marking the transition from one curriculum to the next.

4.2 THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

4.2.1 THE SCHOOL

The school is located in one of the two previously demarcated “coloured” townships of a small Eastern Cape Province town. Since the first democratic elections in South

Africa in 1994, the township is now a suburb of the town. The suburb is situated some distance outside the town.



(Photo: V. Westphal)

FIGURE 5 View of the school in relation to its surroundings

The legacy of the apartheid era is visible as soon as one enters the suburb. There is an eclectic mix of shanty dwellings, tiny houses and some affluent mansions that line the pot-holed roads. Travelling into the suburb before school starts gives one a good impression of the community at large as it prepares itself for the work or school day. The school itself is located in a side street off the main road. To the left, front and back of the school are houses, but the right of the school faces open veld which leads to the Fairview River and onwards to the highway. The access road to the school is tarred. The school was built in 1979 as a response to the growing numbers of pupils in the only other primary school for “coloured” learners situated in the other “coloured” township of the town. It originally catered for learners from sub A to standard 9. Due to parental pressure, a senior secondary school was built in the township in 1984, and the two schools were officially split.

The school is secured behind a high wire fence. As one enters the gate there is a large cement parking lot with neatly painted parking bays. There is a semblance of a garden in front of the main doorway, with scraggly petunias blossoming, a few rose bushes and daylilies in bloom and two large shrubs. However, it seems as if the weeds are winning the battle for control of the tiny enclosed lawn. The school is painted cream with sections of red face-brick and has a red corrugated iron roof. The school seems to be in good condition. The entrance hall to the school has potted plants (the ubiquitous delicious monster) and a display cabinet full of trophies and silver cups. Government posters adorn the walls. The principal's office and the secretary's office are to the left. Principal B's office is tidy and ordered. The secretary is very helpful and efficient. When asked to supply necessary statistics about school enrolment she does so quickly. The school has access to a telephone and facsimile machine as well as an intercom system. There is a well-equipped duplicating room containing a roneo machine, a Photostatting machine as well as a manual duplicator. In another room close to the principal's office there is

(Photo: V Westphal)

FIGURE 6 The front aspect of Fairveiw Primary School

a modern computer and printer. The school is adequately equipped with classroom furniture, albeit old. The school is physically divided into three sections: the main administrative block, with the principal's office, secretary's office, staffroom, storerooms, kitchen etc. The two classroom blocks are linked to the administrative block by undercover walkways. The classroom blocks are double storied, with the classroom doors opening directly onto the covered verandas upstairs and on the ground floor. This arrangement cannot be too comfortable during rainy weather or extreme hot or cold conditions which are prevalent in the area. The areas between the three blocks are cemented and are used as the assembly area and as the playground. Between the two classroom blocks to the left of the walkway and at the far end of the cement playground are the ablution facilities. I notice the facilities immediately on the first day of observation:

I report to the secretary's office who says I am expected and that I can go straight up to the classroom. I walk through the foyer and down the walkway. I pass the learners' loos and an extraordinarily strong smell of stale urine greets me. I wonder how the learners can use the loos and play in such close proximity to them. I climb the stairs to the classroom. As I near, I hear the teacher calming the class and imploring them to be quiet. I get to the classroom and knock. (FN 1/13 3:3:99)

Next to the ablution facilities is a set of 4 open taps from which children drink water. There are a few painted tyres that act as "jungle-gyms" and sandpits for the younger learners. The school has a uniform that is adhered to by most of the pupils. On numerous occasions, I saw learners without school shoes, or in "civvies".

The school has a total population of 1109 learners (577 boys and 532 girls) and 33 teachers including the principal and the deputy-principal. The administrative staff consists of one secretary, and there is a contingent of 3 cleaners. The principal feeder area of the school is the suburb in which it is found but there are pupils who come from the surrounding villages.

The school is co-educational and caters for learners from grade 1 to grade 7. Each grade is divided into 4 classes: 3 Afrikaans medium classes and 1 English medium

class. The school is officially dual medium i.e. English and Afrikaans. The learners are allocated to classes depending on their home language or at the request of parents. The Language in Education Policy (RSA 1997a:8) acknowledges the right of parents and the school's Governing Body to determine the languages taught and spoken at schools (see section 2.3).

Although one of the classes is reserved for learners whose home language is English, Principal B informed me during the second interview, that this was not always the case. Many pupils at the school are isiXhosa speaking and their parents opt to place them in the English medium classroom. The pupil/teacher ratio is 1:40 at the primary school. The school acts as a feeder school for the co-educational senior secondary school in the suburb.

(Photo: V. Westphal)

FIGURE 7 A view of the playground and the grade 2 classroom

Few learners make the cultural and social leap of attending the ex-model C schools in the town.

They find it very difficult ...they don't get easily accepted

(I2: Principal B)

Ideally, with the introduction of *Curriculum 2005* the opportunities for learners to change schools becomes less difficult. *Curriculum 2005* advocates a strong focus on appreciating the cultures, languages and practices of disparate groups within South Africa. The Foundation Phase Policy document (RSA 1997e:1) outlines one of the goals of *Curriculum 2005* as the principle of transformation (see section 2.2.1):

... In the past the curriculum has perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and has emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood. It is therefore imperative that the curriculum be restructured to reflect the values and principles of our new democratic society.

(RSA 1997e:1)

Furthermore, the NQF and the focus on attainable outcomes (see section 2.2.2) assures that although learners may not be subjected to similar content in classrooms, they all focus on the same specific and critical outcomes. Theoretically, this new approach to curriculum allows for the easy transfer from one school to another and from one learning environment to another. However, the efficacy of the transformational component of *Curriculum 2005* has been questioned (Kraak 1998; Skinner 1998; Jansen 1999a). Principal B's comment suitable illustrates the reality in South African schools.

4.2.2 MRS C's CLASSROOM

Mrs. C's classroom is on the second floor of the second block of classrooms. It is situated in the corner and to the left of the stairwell. It is light and airy although the windows are not always opened to allow a breeze. The classroom is well equipped. It has a chalkboard and a teacher's supply cupboard in the front. Under the chalkboard are a series of posters illustrating various English words e.g. a big crocodile/ a small crocodile.

The windows form one wall. Underneath the windows are waist high cupboards. On top of these cupboards is a display of library books, a mathematics model illustrating shapes and sizes, a flip-chart illustrating road safety rules and regulations as well as a sink with running water. There are some pot-plants. Opposite the windows is a pin-board. On the pin-board are posters of the body and the weather in Afrikaans.

The school studied in this research project is clearly a well-resourced school, with a great deal of working infrastructure. Although class sizes are large, there is a compatible staffing component. To observe *Curriculum 2005* in action in this school has proved to be invaluable. It can be argued that if a teacher/or teachers find it difficult to implement *Curriculum 2005* with its emphasis on resources and skills in this school, how much more difficult will teachers in poorly resourced schools make the transition. These complex issues have been described in section 2.5.5.

The teacher's desk is positioned behind the door under the pin-board. At the back of the classroom are large cupboards and bookshelves filled with learners' exercise books and teaching paraphernalia. Under the chalkboard to the front of the classroom is the activity mat. It is tatty and threadbare and is found rolled up every morning, presumably left by the cleaning staff when they clean the classroom. Part of the class ritual when lessons begin is to unroll and position the carpet.

The teacher sits on a learner's chair placed in the middle of the mat directly against the chalkboard. The learner's chairs and desks are minuscule. Despite this, each learner has access to a chair and desk. The teacher's rationale for this arrangement is to facilitate group work and to create a positive, relaxed environment for interaction. Section 2.5.2.2 discusses the importance of language learning situations designed to enhance interaction. Lightbown & Spada (1993:71) agree that "in communicative interactions, the learner will be exposed to a wide variety of vocabulary and structures".

Children are grouped around the desks facing each other. Although the classroom is

small, the teacher has arranged the desks to allow group work. At the back of each learner's chair is a "chair-bag" containing a lever arch file and an A4 softcover jotter together with other bits and pieces of personal completed work e.g. coloured-in drawings. I often witnessed a learner paging through their file. The files contained the learners' completed work:

Today as yesterday, D refuses to sit on the mat. Mrs. C allows her to remain at her desk. D takes out her file from her chair-bag and pages through it. She is making considerable effort to gain the teacher's attention but to no avail. She also tries to make eye contact with me. Eventually, she decides to join the rest of the class on the mat.

(FN10/1323:3:99)

I can see that Mrs. C has made a deliberate attempt to make her classroom a pleasant place. The pot-plants, posters, class library, Bible verses on the pin-board illustrate this point.

Throughout my observation period in the classroom the focus of classroom activity was on the activity mat. In essence, the atmosphere created by the closeness of the teacher to learners while narrating the story, leading choruses or guiding role-plays became conducive to L2 acquisition. Krashen (undated:2) illustrates the value of library corners to L2 acquisition. Library corners that contain pillows, easy chairs and carpets provide a good reading environment for learners because of their special atmosphere. Although not necessarily a "library corner", English on the activity mat seemed to fulfil the same function in Mrs. C's classroom. The mere fact that the learners were away from their tables made English lessons special.

The children were guided onto the activity mat to listen to the story and it was on the activity mat, towards the door, that the role-play situations took place. When the children stood up to recite poems or sing choruses they stood on the mat. This activity space was very crowded as it had to accommodate all of the pupils. Often, pupils fidgeted, pinched and plucked at each other during the lesson when placed on the mat because they had very little personal space.

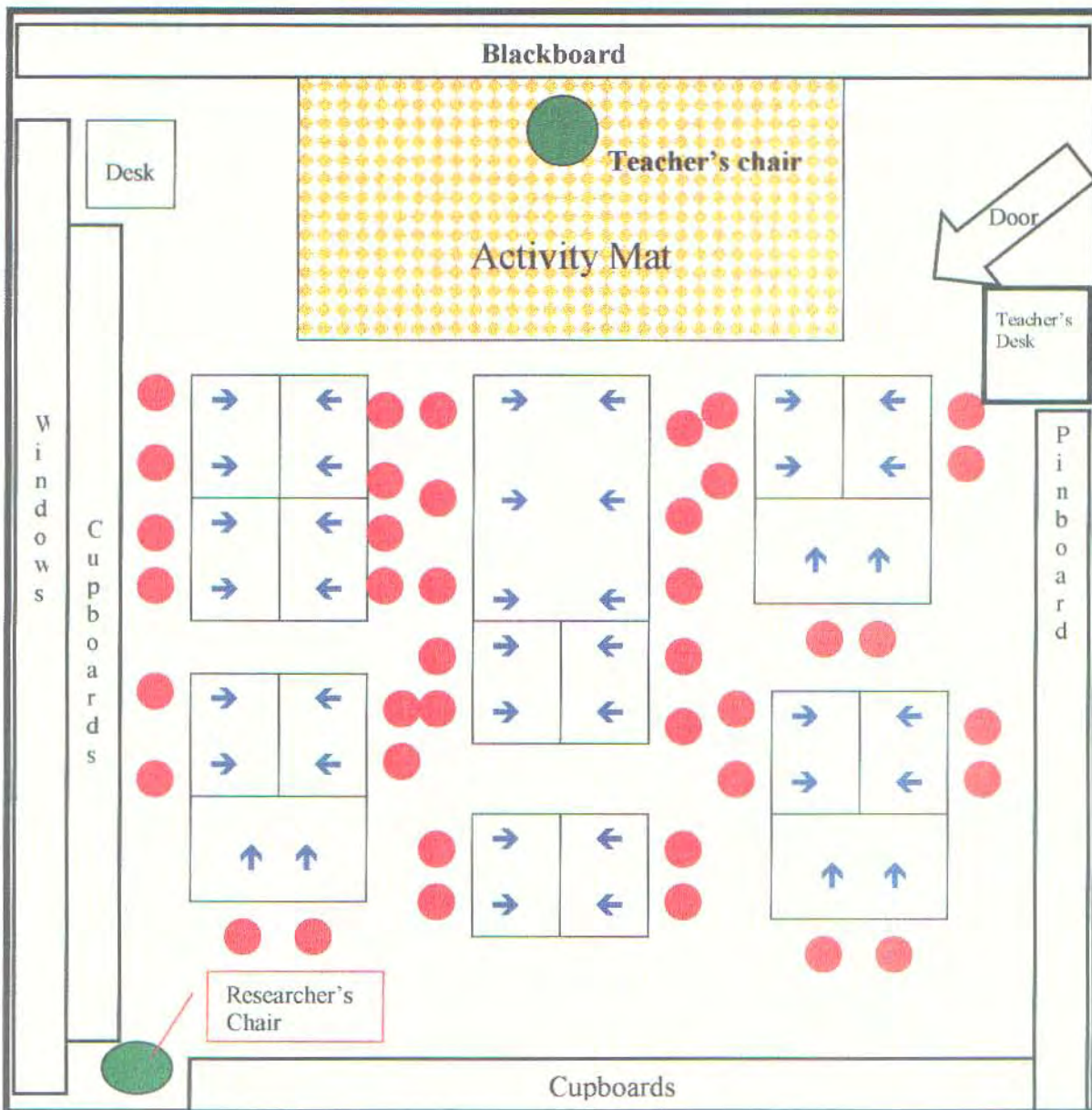
(Photo: V. Westphal)

FIGURE 8 On the activity mat in the grade 2 classroom

The only movement that occurred during my observation period was firstly, the free movement of learners about the classroom before formal lessons and during classroom management time. Secondly, the children were “marched” quite methodically onto the mat for the English lesson and they were “marched” back to their desks after the lesson.

Although the photographs taken to illustrate and add to the narrative of this thesis allow the learners to be physically identified, their names have been kept anonymous. The photographs were taken with the permission of the parents and the teacher. In addition, the context and purpose of the photographs in the thesis are merely illustrative and have not been used to pinpoint any individual learner’s behaviour or have not been used for evaluations of the learners or the teacher.

The following diagram is a representation of the classroom and the two main areas: the activities mat and the learner’s desks.



KEY

→ Directions pupils face

● Pupils

FIGURE 9 Diagrammatic representation of classroom layout (not to scale)

4.2.3 THE LEARNERS OF GRADE 2

There were 40 learners in the grade 2 class while data was being collected. Of the 40 learners, 10 are repeating grade 2. Attendance at school by the learners is steady. During the period of observation, 8/03/1999 – 26/03/1999, 6 girls and 9 boys were absent on various days for not longer than a three day period. The class is co-educational and the ages of the learners varied. The statistical data pertaining to the learners is illustrated below:

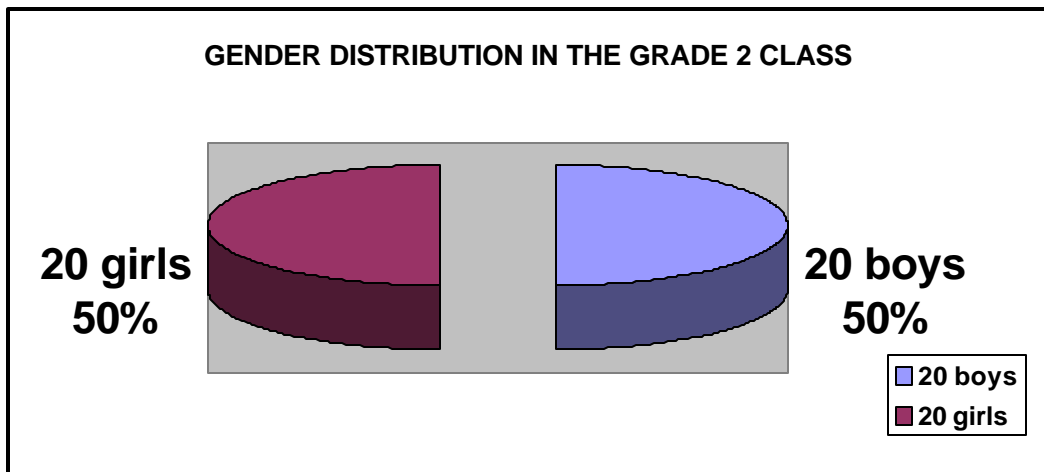


FIGURE 10 Gender distribution percentages

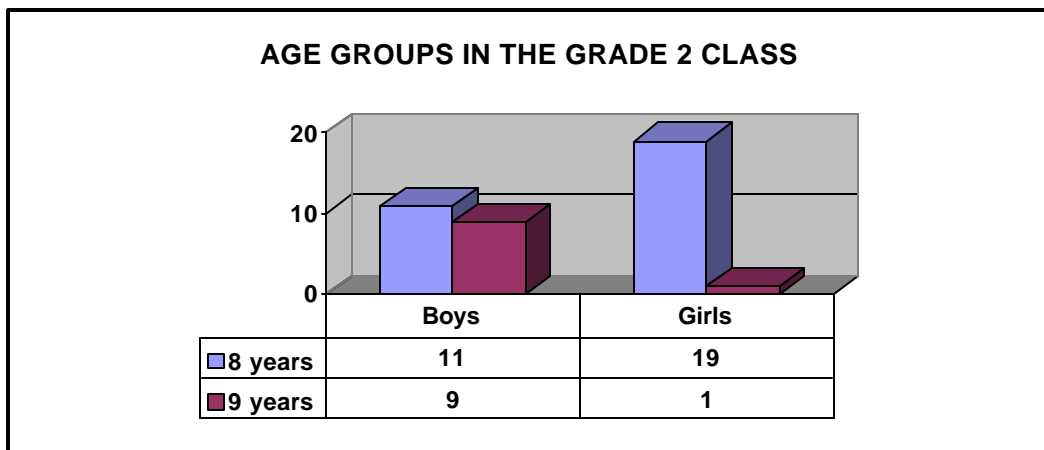


FIGURE 11 Age groups of learners in grade 2

The learners all come from the suburb in which the school is found. In the school records, the official language of learners in Mrs. C's classroom is Afrikaans with the exception of two learners: one learner's home language is isiXhosa while the other learner has a bilingual (isiXhosa and Afrikaans) background. The Language Policy in Education document (RSA 1997a:3) describes the dual medium English/Afrikaans language model as an example of existing additive bilingualism in South Africa (see section 2.3).

Interviewer: When the children come into grade 2 this is the first time they are actually learning to speak English formally?

Mrs. C: Yes, ...

Interviewer: Um, out of the classroom, are all the children 2nd language English speakers, or do some of them speak English at home?

Mrs. C: No, none of them speak English at home. (I1 Mrs. C: 24:6:99)

When questioned about her strict personal use of English in the classroom during her English lessons to the learners Mrs. C answered:

Mrs. C: I think because the teacher must be a good model for the child and I think that will be the best thing so that if they speak Afrikaans then you just correct them in English. (I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Although the medium of instruction in the classroom in other learning areas of the Foundation Phase in this particular grade 2 class is Afrikaans, the learners showed a keen interest in communicating in English in a non-controlled environment or situation. Specific incidents recorded in my field journal support this statement:

I arrived earlier than usual today. Some children are loitering outside the classroom. Two greet me, "Good morning *Mr* Westphal" they say. I am very pleased and ignore the wrong gender reference. (FN4/13 11:3:99)

This morning two grade 2 learners whom I recognised as F and G met

me. They walk in silence behind me. One clutches my blouse at the back while the other holds onto my briefcase with me. It was quite uncomfortable for me to fit my long strides to their footsteps without all of us falling down into a large heap. At the classroom door I was approached by another girl who shyly extended a thin hand and said: “I want to give you *this*” and dropped a grubby, wax-wrapped peppermint sweet into my hand. I replied “Thank-you” touched by this unexpected gesture of generosity. She distinctly emphasised the word “*this*” echoing a previous English lesson. I wondered whether she had created the opportunity of talking to me using the sweet as an excuse to practice English?

(FN5/13 12:3:99)

Today while the teacher and learners enter the classroom, the exuberant D waves to me and shouts, “Morning”. She is severely reprimanded by another girl behind her in English, “Don’t say ‘morning’, say “Good morning Miss Westphal”. I chuckle to myself as the learners begin taking the chairs off the tables.

(FN 12/13 25:3:99)

(Photo: V. Westphal)

FIGURE 12 Learners in grade 2 at their desks

4.2.4 MRS C., THE TEACHER

Mrs. C. was born and educated in Queenstown. After completing her Junior Certificate (standard 8), she attended the Rand College of Education in Johannesburg.

...If I had to choose, uh, to go to Kimberley, uh, Port Elizabeth, my parents didn’t have the money to let me – to educate me and uh the Johannesburg College of Education, you just apply for a bursary and then you can study there ...

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

At the Rand College of Education she received her Lower Primary Teacher’s Certificate. Her first teaching post was in King William’s Town. After that she accepted a post in Burgersdorp. In 1979 she returned to her studies and obtained a Lower Primary Teacher’s Certificate, specialising in Kindergarten. She returned to Burgersdorp until her marriage. She then began her present teaching post at Fairview Primary School. She has

been teaching for 24 years, 21 years in Junior Primary Education. However, this is the first year she is teaching English as a subject. The reason for this being that it is school policy since the introduction of *Curriculum 2005* to move the teacher with the grade 1 class until the Foundation Phase cycle is completed. An additional language is only added to learning programmes from grade 2 or 3 (see section 2.3). This however has created certain problems in the eyes of Mrs. C, especially in reflecting on problems and successes that need to be concentrated on in the future.

Mrs. C: ... This is my first time [in grade 2] now next year I will be able to ... they say this year is my learning period, next year I thought, you think what will you do in the future ...
(12 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

Mrs. C's home language is Afrikaans. I asked her where she learned to speak English and she modestly replied "I just picked it up". She is married to a primary school principal and has two children. Mrs. C cannot speak isiXhosa. This raised some interesting questions in relation to code-switching in the classroom to aid L2 learners in acquiring the L2. As there is only 1 isiXhosa speaking learner in the class whose Afrikaans is presumable fairly fluent as it is the medium of instruction in the class (see section 3.3.1 FN 4/15 11:3:99), code-switching in this context would refer to Mrs. C's ability to switch from Afrikaans to English and English to Afrikaans during English lessons and other learning programmes.

Mrs. C commented in the following way about her approach to teaching English:

Interviewer: OK. As a teacher in the classroom, how do you see your role? What importance do you place on yourself in the classroom?

Mrs. C: You need to be a good model for the child.

Interviewer: In what way?

Mrs. C: Because your English, you must try your utmost to help them to speak English.
(13 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Interviewer: Do you believe in code-switching?

Mrs. C: ... if a person thinks it is ok, then ... to explain to somebody, then they will think it is the best for them and the learners, uh ... you can't think about yourself, you must think about the learner.

Interviewer: ... you never did. Can you tell me why?

Mrs. C: ... because uh ... I thought maybe it is the best to do it that way ... Sometimes during the day [during other learning programmes] they will ask, "What do you call that in English?" and I will tell them, but I'm ... I try to help them with only the English, but I do explain to them in Afrikaans when it's Afrikaans. (I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

As a teacher, Mrs. C is worried about the pupil/teacher ratio in the classes at her school.

Mrs. C: ... so I was used to big numbers, but now with the small children it's not so nice...

Yes, I think it's too big [class size] and I hope the Department will see to that in the future... (I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

She is concerned about the school policy of moving teachers with their classes until they finish the Foundation Phase.

Mrs. C: ... sometimes they don't know about the grade 1 class ... they specialise in grade 1, grade 2 or grade 3, but sometimes it has ... There are other problems too, so I think if you are going to better it ... it would be better if you could spend two to three years because now you know it this year and you see roughly what you can do next year because if its only for one year you don't uh cannot improve under the stress it puts you in, but if you can be in the class two to three years then you will know because experience you will have experience, you will experience some difficulties or something in the classroom.

Interviewer: You are teaching grade 2s this year. You were the grade 1 teacher last year and next year you will be the grade 3 teacher as well. Is this school policy that you, that the teacher follows the class?

Mrs. C: The principal asked us to do that but I think I'll ask him if I can stay back for another year.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

She is frustrated by the lack of physical resources allocated to the school by the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDE).

Interviewer: The department was supposed to give teachers and pupils workbooks in grade 1 and grade 2 for the different learning programmes. Did your school ever get those books?

Mrs. C: Yes, the day when I had to give those books out, do you know we only received 8 books ... and there are 40 children, and the other one has 38 and the other 37 and for all those children we just received 8 reading books

Interviewer: Is this for grade 2?

Mrs. C: Yes and the same applies to the grade 1 they only received 8, and some of the grade 1s there are 42 children in each class and nothing came for the English classes only for the Afrikaans classes. It was only the mathematics. It's a problem because we had to use one book for our writing because the HOD who is in charge of books, he just told us there is no books and that we must just use that book.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C is interested in swapping information with other teachers; visiting and observing other classes and pooling ideas and team teaching but is realistic about achieving any of these aims due to the many extra-curricula and time constraints placed on teachers by the present system.

Mrs. C: ... they [teachers] can learn from each other, because you know what, our inspector those days, she usually invite us to go and visit with somebody else's methods and you see sometimes not the whole lesson, but you see there is things to learn from somebody else ...

... yes, we sit, but most of the time the others they are split, some must go for netball, the other problem is that we don't have ... we don't always have enough time we only have maybe only one ... the other times some of them are not there and we don't uh ask them to come together because if one is not going to be there the other one will feel why did they go without me ...

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C has a strong definition of how she views her role in the classroom and the qualities of a good teacher:

Mrs. C: ... you must be very interested in children. And you must always try to get resources, to be of value to the child, and I think, that you must have a feeling of being a mother, because if you have that feeling of uh, uh, ... being a mother to a child, you will be a ... you will perform best, but the ult ..., you must ask patience, you must ask patience from the Lord, and he will give it to you, because you are dealing with different kinds of children and sometimes they have problems...

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

4.2.5 OBE TRAINING WORKSHOP

As noted in section 3.3.3 and 3.3.4.4, I was fortunate enough to be able to attend a training workshop for grade 2 teachers early in the year. I therefore had first hand insight into how teachers were being trained by Subject Advisors (SAs). In addition to the observations made by Mrs. C, I noted the following about the workshop that informs this study and complements what Mrs. C has voiced during the interviews. The workshop was attended by Mrs. C, and was the only training she would receive for the implementation of grade 2 in her classroom. The findings are similar and are lent support by Christie (1999:283) who expressed similar sentiments on the in-service training of teachers.

An administrative glitch in the workshop presented on the 11 March 1999 highlighted what I thought to be indicative of the poor quality of the workshop. Although a notice had been up for two weeks prior to the workshop in the foyer of the District Office (DO), it was only very sparsely attended by grade 2 teachers. I believe that this was a result of the inadequate notification of grade 2 teachers. The area covered by the DO is vast. Sometimes teachers have to travel in excess of 50 kilometres to attend meetings or to sort out administrative matters at the DO. Therefore, they do not frequently pay the DO a visit. Placing a notice on the wall of the DO notifying the teachers of a workshop was

grossly inadequate. I could not ascertain whether each school had received written notification. There are 152 primary schools in the district in which I did my research. However, only 18 teachers attended the workshop. The SA did not seem perturbed about the lack of attendance. In my opinion the workshop, generally, was shabbily presented. From the outset, I believe it was doomed to failure. My fieldnotes reflect this point succinctly:

The workshop started off with the usual bureaucratic bungling. The boardroom in the District Office had been double booked and the workshop had to find an alternative venue. It was suggested that the mini-boardroom on the second floor could be used. The teachers who were present were not impressed with the delay and I could hear comments about the usual lack of standard in the preparation for the workshop. The workshop started 45 minutes behind schedule.

(FN OBE w/shop 11:3:99)

During the workshop I noted that the SA only gave definitions of OBE, speaking to posters and “flashcards” of OBE terminology which she had stuck up on the wall. Teachers were not invited to ask questions or to interact with the material. Ironically, in the light of the subject matter of the workshop, the SA displayed all the qualities of an authoritarian teacher who regarded her learners as empty vessels that she had to fill. I recorded only one activity which required teacher participation as follows:

Educators had to divide into groups. Each group was given an envelope with a picture puzzle inside. The picture, when put together, reflected an active, OBE classroom. The group had to co-operatively put the puzzle together. The educators had fun doing this activity. But, after the activity, the facilitator did not give an explanation as to why she had done the activity or how similar activities could be used in grade 2 classrooms. I felt that the point was hopelessly lost on the participants of the workshop.

(FN OBE w/shop 11:3:99)

Towards the end of the teacher-tell presentation by the SA, the teachers attending the workshop became very vocal and blatantly aggressive. Three teachers insisted that they needed help with materials development; another said she needed help with handling

large classes; and yet another said she did not understand all the terminology and asked whether another workshop would be held. The SA could not give them an answer.

By this time, it is after 4 o'clock in the afternoon and the teachers are restless. The facilitator rushes through assessment ... She also makes a brief foray into the field of notional time. All the information comes directly from the Foundation Phase policy document. The meeting ends at 16h30. The teachers are visibly aggressive and are vocal in their dissatisfaction. I overhear one of them say "Dit was a gemors van tyd" [That was a waste of time]. I must agree with her as I felt that the teachers had learnt nothing new. The "workshop" consisted of the worst demonstration of teacher-talk methodology I had ever seen. The educators, I felt, came away with nothing concrete as to how to implement OBE methodology into their classes... What really frustrated me about the workshop was that instead of having materials Photostatted and prepared for the teachers, the facilitator did not see it as her function to supply copies policy documents etc. I felt very angry... After the workshop, I was hot, tired and demoralised. I really felt sympathy for the educators and anger at the ECDE which had thrown teachers in at the deep end without any training at all.

(FN OBE w/shop 11:3:99)

4.3 PATTERNS AND OBSERVATIONS

In the early stages of data analysis, I found it very difficult to identify patterns. What seemed like incredibly monotonous, teacher-led lessons with little variety or innovative ideas, eventually provided a wealth of discussion points. These points were eventually determined by continually interrogating the literature, lesson transcripts and interviews. This dialectical process is seen as an integral part of ethnographic enquiry (Hymes 1982:24) and emphasises the important role theory plays in developing the process of ethnographic inquiry (see section 3.2.1).

In keeping with the holistic characteristic of ethnographic methodology, both the context of the data and the analysis thereof seeks to provide an "interpretive-explanatory account" (Watson-Gegeo 1988:576). As discussed in section 3.2.2 the importance of classroom-based research is seen in a practical way. The consequences and implications

of the manner in which the data was collected, analysed and the eventual findings will play an significant role in the researcher's future planning in relation to goals set within her workplace. Wilcox (1982:469) emphasises the important role that ethnography can play in establishing whether changes in classroom practice reflect the intended consequences of the reform measures of a new curriculum. The following distinct themes/patterns have emerged.

4.3.1 LESSON PLANS AND FORMAT

Mrs. C's English lessons followed a distinct pattern based on the telling of a story and the singing of choruses. Each day, the same pattern was followed with small variations and time allocated to each activity. Wong-Fillmore (1985:29) and Richards & Lockhart (1994:120) argue that experienced teachers consistently design lessons which contain sequences of activities which might at the beginning appear to be unimaginative and routine, but on closer examination generate genuine learning opportunities for learners.

Mrs. C's lesson pattern and the sub-activities (Richards & Lockhart 1994:118) contained therein are illustrated below.

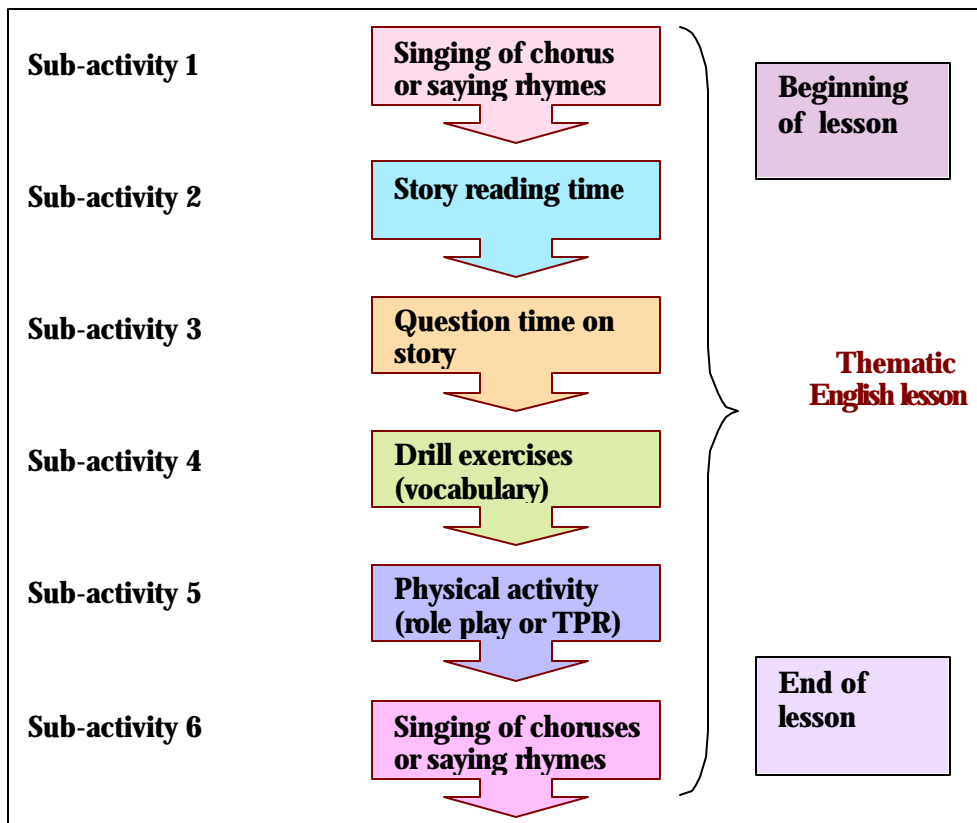


Figure 13 Mrs. C's English lesson pattern

The lesson pattern described above serves to provide a visual cue in interpreting the place and function of the transcripts that illustrate the discussion of various sub-activities which appear later and in section 4.3.3.3.1/2/3.

The following graph reflects the time spent on these activities. Five lessons of the 13 observed (transcripts 3 – 7) have been used as samples to generate the data. Each lesson lasted on average 38.30 minutes.

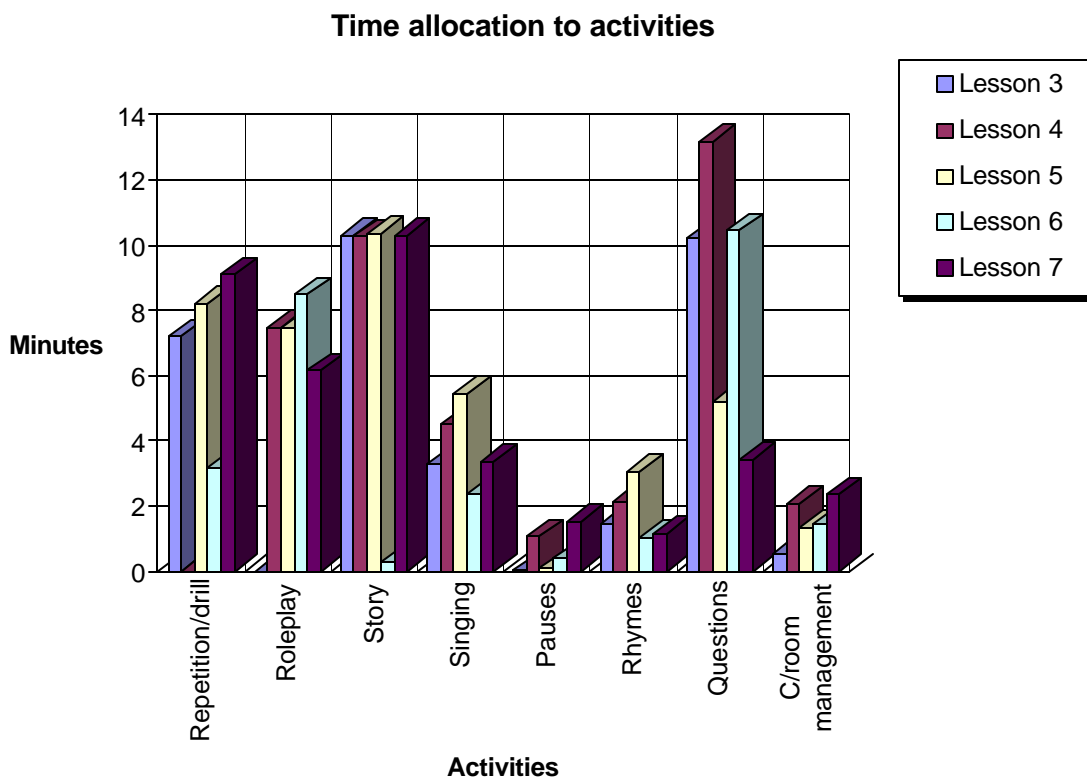


Figure 14 Time allocation to classroom activities in English lessons over a five-lesson period

Wong-Fillmore (1985:29) suggests that this predictable quality of lessons allows learners to be “ahead of the game in figuring out what they are supposed to be learning each day” because it reduced the ambiguity inherent in L2 classes for beginner learners. The learners in Mrs. C’s classroom showed evidence that they understood and were familiar with the lesson pattern. They were familiar with the non-linguistic and the paralinguistic cues used by Mrs. C to illustrate transitions from one sub-activity to another. The most striking illustration of this was at the beginning and end of the English lessons when Mrs. C initiated the chorus singing or recitation of rhymes to indicate to the learners that they needed to file onto and off the activity mat. Learners also knew that the phrase “thank you” accompanied by the teacher clapping her hands, meant that they ought to calm down and be silent.

Following her usual pattern, Mrs. C stands in the front of the class. She begins singing the chorus “First the Flower is small”. Learners join in. She is standing to my left-hand side of the classroom. While she is singing, she gestures with her hand, in the manner of a traffic policeman to the learners who stand up and begin to march onto the activity mat in single file. Learners sitting nearest the windows begin the process. They line up, eight to a row, in single file on the mat. They distance themselves by placing hands on each other’s shoulders and stretching out their arms. All the while Mrs. C is gesticulating and “directing” the traffic flow of the children onto the mat and into lines. Once this is finished the pupils sit down. Mrs. C finishes singing and there is a long pause before she begins reading the story.

(FN13/13 24:3:99)

As described above in FN 13/13 sub-activities were defined by clearly marked transitions. Mrs. C demonstrated a wide repertoire of markers, which were clearly influenced by the learners’ age (see figure 11) and stage of L2 learning and acquisition. The markers provided learners with clear boundaries which allowed the teacher to keep their attention and create order in the classroom. The transition markers identified through the lesson transcripts are: Mrs. C’s use of space (i.e. placing the learners on the activity mat and allowing them to stand when reciting poems), gestures (e.g. pointing to various body parts while singing), silence (just before the story is read), rhymes and songs (to illustrate the beginning and the end of the English lesson). Rhymes, songs and formulaic phrases such as “thank you” and “ok” also served as transitions markers and discipline tools.

When questioned about lesson preparations Mrs. C confirmed her reliance on previous training and the use of resource material from the previous curriculum. (see discussion on classroom resources section 2.5.5 and teacher training section 4.3.4).

Interviewer: When you plan your lessons, do you sit down and say specifically this is what I’m going to do, that’s what I’m going to do? How do you go about designing a lesson for you English lessons?

Mrs. C: I thought because I did with the sub A’s the body parts, the family, the house and then colours, I thought I would do that because with the new approach they will be able to manage it in Afrikaans and English, that’s what I did.

Interviewer: So what you're doing in English in grade 2 is what you did in grade 1 in Afrikaans?

Mrs. C: Yes.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

From this discussion with Mrs. C it is interesting to note that she makes no mention of any "learning outcomes" associated with OBE e.g. skills, knowledge, values and attitudes (RSA 1997e:19) discussed in section 2.2.2. She also makes no mention of how she will be assessing the activities described. She places more of an emphasis on what the children can do and what they already know and how she can build on that knowledge. This is significant in light of the importance placed on comprehensible input and scaffolding techniques in L2 acquisition (section 2.5.2.1) and CLT methodology described by Tyrone and Yule (1992:71-73) in section 2.4.2.

Richards & Lockhart (1994:113) state that the structure of a lesson is in part a teacher's attempt to manage the classroom process and maximise the time that is available to learners for learning. Mrs. C described her way of controlling the pace and sequence of the sub-activities in her lessons.

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you break up your time in your English lessons. You allocated certain time to certain activities. How do you decide how long each activity is going to last?

Mrs. C: Well, if I'm pleased with the children's response then I move to another thing.

Interviewer: Ok, you wait on the learners to give you an indication when to move on. Ok. Can you give me an example?

Mrs. C: Like, if I use the body, "this is my eye", "this is my ear", now if I see that they know "this is my eye", "this is my ear" and they can say, point to their ... the different body parts, then I know I can go to, it's first "this" and "that" and after that they use "these" and "those", so then, they will tell me when to move on, what they are doing, you can't go on if the child can't read properly. If you have speech lists, you can give them another lesson.

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

4.3.2 THE USE OF RHYMES AND CHORUSES AS

COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

One of the most distinctive and enjoyable characteristics of Mrs. C's English lessons was the importance she placed on the recitation of rhymes/poems and singing. This sub-activity together with the sub-activity of story telling and questions on the story, were positive indications of CLT in practice during the English lessons. Intrigued by her use of songs and rhymes in the English lessons, I asked her Mrs. C to explain their use in her lessons.

Mrs. C: The best thing I do when they are a bit noisy is to sing the songs. I saw that when they are singing then all of them join in but if you just let them, they make such a big noise. I like to sing and that's why I try always to get new songs in Afrikaans and English.

Interviewer: Do you teach them songs? At the beginning of each English lesson that I watched you also used the songs and recitations to begin and end your lessons. Can you explain to me why you did that?

Mrs. C: I think just to calm them so that they will be able to pay attention.

Interviewer: Did you choose your songs and recitation to fit the theme, to fit in with what you're doing in English?

Mrs. C – Uh, most of the time. But at this moment I just am using the songs because I did ... didn't find songs that were appropriate, but, uh, that would fit the lesson but I was looking at the books for songs that would maybe help with parts of the body because they did the parts of the body in Afri... in the first year, grade 1.

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

The songs and rhymes had simple, easy to follow tunes and lyrics. The lyrics tended to recycle the vocabulary Mrs. C used in other sub-activities during her lessons. Ellis *et al* (1997:1) write that "the most important aspect of language knowledge in the first year of learning English is to build up a basic English vocabulary". They suggest that the vocabulary be learnt in context. The rhymes and songs were contextualized through the use of physical gestures by the learners to emphasise the content of the rhyme or song. The following extracts illustrate examples of songs used during lessons.

[Teacher and learners begin singing]

**This is my hand and this is my eye,
This is my ear and this is my cheek.
This is my nose and this is my mouth,
This is my chin and this is my neck.
This is my shoulder, this is my arm,
This is my hand and this is my leg.
This is my knee and this is my foot,
This is my body and I love it so.**

While the learners and teacher are singing, they point to the parts of the body

Learner: I love you [to teacher]

Teacher: Yes, and I love you to Rosemarie. Leonard, sit still man.

Learner 2: I love you.

Teacher: Thank you Celeste and I love you too.

[Teacher initiates another song. Learners join in.]

**Head, shoulders, knees and toes
Knees and toes.
Head, shoulder, knees and toes
Knees and toes.
And eyes and ears, and nose and mouth,
Head, shoulder, knees and toes.**

Teacher and learners perform the actions associated with the song.

(T2/13 9:3:99)

While singing, the learners are encouraged to point to the different parts of the body and perform the actions in the well-known second song. Learners seemed comfortable singing and reciting. Many asked to give solo performances which the teacher encouraged. I believe that this was extremely influential in building the learners' confidence in speaking English and allowing learners to practise English in the classroom, even in a small way (see section 2.4.2 where classroom atmosphere and type of tasks set for learners are described in more detail). In addition to confidence building, the songs and rhymes kept the children focused and involved in the lesson. The close proximity to the teacher on the mat encouraged active participation by all learners. Further evidence to suggest that learners created opportunities to speak English (see section 4.2.3 FN 4/13; 5/13 and 12/13) was evident during the song and recitation sub-activity. Learners made bids to be allowed to recite rhymes which collaborated Seliger's notion of HIGs and LIGs and their role in facilitating acquisition as discussed in section 2.5.4. The teacher encouraged these learners by giving them the opportunity to recite as illustrated in the

extract below.

[long pause]

Teacher: "Birthday Candles"

Learners: "Birthday Candles"

[Teacher and learners recite poem together]

Yellow, red, blue, green and white

See the candles shining bright

Puff, puff, puff, puff, puff I blow,

Out the shining flame will go.

Learner 1: I will say it.

Teacher: Sadie, will you say it for us? Stand. Thank you Sivuyile. You say it, say it. Come. "Birthday Candles".

Sadie: Yellow, red, blue, green and white,

See the candles shining bright

Puff, puff, puff, puff, puff I blow,

Out the shining flame will go.

[Learner 2 rises]

Teacher: Leonard wants to say it.

Leonard: Yellow, red, blue, green and white,

See the candles shining bright

Puff, puff, puff, puff, puff I blow,

Out the shining flame will go.

Teacher: Thank you [indicating activity is over]

[class applauds]

(T3/13 11:3:99)

Learners who did not want to perform in front of the class were never forced to do so.

Mrs. C discussed her approach to recitation and rhymes in the following way:

Mrs. C: Yes, I see that they are very fond of speaking it afterwards, they just want to speak English, so I think that if I help them, if I have confidence to speak English, they will, uh ... won't be shy, because some of them are shy to speak English, they are afraid of making mistakes.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C: Yes, I think it's of great importance that they must say things that have repetition, repetition is very good, because in sub A some of them can't speak Afrikaans properly, then we make use of repetition in sub A.

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:9)

Mrs. C: Uh, I first, I first ask the ... those who are good, that is to say not shy. I first ask them and when I see those who are wanting to take part, I encourage them to just tell us, tell me uh about the story ...

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982:31) and Silent Period Hypothesis (Krashen & Terrell 1982:35) as discussed in section 2.5.2.1 provides a theoretical base to understand why many of the learners in Mrs. C's class were reticent in volunteering to recite the poem on their own, but were more than eager to participate in group recitations. Mrs. C intuitively allows "shy" speakers to remain silent and does not force them into reciting.

A subsidiary function of the rhymes and choruses can be seen. They serve as both a disciplinary tool and as markers between sub-activity transitions in lessons. The importance of classroom management tasks in the target language is emphasised by Wong-Fillmore (1985:26-27) as providing comprehensible input for learners.

4.3.2 STORYTELLING

During the fifteen lessons observed I noted (see FN 13/15 24:3:99 above) a series of lessons based on the story of "The Gingerbread Boy". Mrs. C commented on the use and importance of stories during her interviews with the researcher.

Mrs. C: At college, the lecturer used to say we must first begin with a story so that they can get used to English and then we must express it, afterwards, we can just ask them to bring a favourite part in it ...

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C: ... because usually the children ask "Teacher, can you tell us again about the story ... the Gingerbread boy", and you know they enjoy it and sometimes in the Bible, when I tell them a Bible story, they ask me "Teacher when will you tell us again about that story". They ask for it. So that they tell you that they enjoy it. (I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

Mrs. C: Ek sal [I will] . I shall tell the story in Afrikaans when it's time to go

home, you can stay for 10 minutes and I'll tell it in Afrikaans, hey. If you want to listen, to hear it in Afrikaans. [in response to a learner asking to hear the story of the Gingerbread Boy in Afrikaans]

(T5/13 16:3:99)

Ellis & Murray (1995:2) argue that “it follows that the best way to start teaching children a new language is to expose them to plenty of *oral input* which they are motivated to listen to carefully. In other words, it must be interesting and enjoyable. Telling stories is one of the best ways of supplying oral input”. Stories used to stimulate language acquisition accomplish many aims. Primarily, stories are an important source of comprehensible input especially if the stories chosen are read over and over again. Stories generally provide an authentic, natural context for input. The familiarity of the story because of its repetition offers enormous listening opportunities for learners. Knowing that they can hear the story again, reduces anxiety. Krashen (1985:71) emphasises the importance of comprehensible input provided in sufficient quantity to facilitate acquisition. The re-cycling of the vocabulary contained in the story during reading gives learners ample opportunity of internalising the new words.

Furthermore, the repetition of the story gave learners the time to assimilate and build on the language resources that they have. Cazden (1988:106-107) emphasises the importance of scaffolding in L2 acquisition (see section 2.5.2.1). Krashen (1982:21) describes the building on the known as the “*i + 1*” factor in language acquisition (see section 2.5.2.1 for a more in depth description). The “enjoyment factor” for learners in listening to stories must not be underestimated. While learners are enjoying listening to an interesting story, the ‘affective filter’ (Krashen 1982:31 section 2.5.2.1) is lowered and they are motivated to make sense of the story. Moreover, after the story is read, the “*i + 1*” factor is intensified by the teacher’s simplified speech during questioning, her comprehension checks, her non-linguistic cues and the extra-linguistic support through the visual stimuli of the pictures (Krashen 1985:66).

In addition to the comprehensible input provided by the story, stories help in developing pre-literacy in learners of an additional language. Fraser (1998:25-26) attests to the idea

that stories are “the best thing” to help learners. Fraser (1988:30) states that stories have a positive effect on learner’s literacy and linguistic development and cites Meek (1982) who writes “early contact with stories and poems has the greatest single effect on a child’s linguistic development”. Krashen (1999:3) argues that “books stimulate not only children’s cognitive and linguistic development, but also affective and social growth”.

At the beginning of the lessons the children were marched onto the activity mat while singing choruses. After being seated, the teacher began with the story. She indicated that she would be starting the story by using a formulaic starter, either a long pause or clapping her hands. The learners were familiar with this strategy and kept silent, stopped fidgeting and sat more quietly. Wong-Fillmore (1985:27) suggests that clear markers used by teachers to indicate lesson transitions aids comprehension for learners (see discussion of Mrs. C’s use of markers in section 4.3.1 above) .

It was noted however, that the learners behaved differently during Bible stories read in Afrikaans than during English stories (see F/N 4/5 section 3.3.1). This can be attributed to two factors: firstly, the Bible stories were read in the learners’ primary language and was therefore understood more clearly and secondly, “The Gingerbread Boy” was read in English and was less understood because of the unfamiliarity of many of the words. T5/13 16:3:99 quoted above in section 4.3.3, illustrates how one learner made a specific request to hear the story of “The Gingerbread Boy” in Afrikaans. This, I believe, was his strategy to make the story more accessible and comprehensible to himself (see section 2.5.4).

The choice of storybook is interesting. Mrs. C chose a book to read to the learners which relied heavily on illustrations. Key words were substituted by a picture of the word. Ellis & Murray (1995:2) write “to make sure the children do understand, the new language has to be presented in ways that make its meaning clear. One of the best ways of doing this is by using pictures”.

This was, I believe, an attempt to make new words more accessible to the children as she explains clearly below.

Interviewer: I want you to tell me what type of visual material you use in your classroom for your English lessons.

Mrs. C: Oh, I use the flannel board, but I didn't bring them today but if you want them just tell me.

Interviewer: Other than the flannel board, what other things do you use.

Mrs. C: I use these pictures [pointing to the posters] the tape recorder and I make use of the children too.





Interviewer: Can you tell me why, why you have chosen posters, flannel board pictures, the children and the story book?





Mrs. C: I think, uh, that it's good to make use of the same things so that they can grasp everything you say, if you don't use the pictures a certain child doesn't know English will not learn very good if you don't use apparatus. It is the best thing to help them.

(I3 Mrs. C. 28:7:99)

An extract from the story book is printed below as an illustration.

THE GINGERBREAD MAN

Once upon a time a little old  and a little old  lived together in a little old  in the country. Their children were grown up and had homes of their own and they had only their  to keep them

company. Sometimes the  and the  were very lonely. So one day while she was baking, the  decided to make a little  out of gingerbread.


She rolled out the dough and cut it in the shape of a little . She gave

FIGURE 15 Extract from *‘The Story of the Gingerbread Boy’* illustrated by Tom and Blonnie Holmes. London: Award Publications Ltd.

However, because there was only one copy of the book, the teacher held it at an awkward angle while she was seated in front of the class reading the story. This strategy held no benefits for the children in light of the discussion above. They were unable to identify the pictures and substitute them with words because they could not see the book clearly. When asked why she did not make copies of the story for the learners Mrs. C gave the following answer:

Interviewer: When you read the story to the children, you only use the one book and I noticed that when you are reading it you try and show them the pictures as well.

Mrs. C: Yes.

Interviewer: Why did you choose to use only the one copy? For example,

you could have photocopied it and handed out photocopies to the children?

Mrs. C: You know what, uh uh it's ok if you have enough paper, but we do not have enough paper at school ... the principal buys the paper sometimes people go ask the person whose in charge he will always tell that's there's not enough paper so we can't always do your very best ...

(12 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

It might be argued that the learners would not benefit from individual copies of the story at this stage in their acquisition of the L2 because they would not be proficient in reading. However, I would like to argue that exposure to books and the physical act of handling printed pages would begin to encourage a reverence for books and a desire to read. Voluntary reading in turn leads to further language development. Krashen (1999:1) states that “research into cognitive processes, educational practices and social environment has demonstrated strong links between access to print, reading habits and academic success”. Krashen (1998:8) further argues that “reading ... is the source of much of our vocabulary knowledge, writing style, advanced grammatical competence and spelling”. In addition, the creation of a resource/print rich environment for readers is one of the goals of the *Curriculum 2005* which will ultimately lead to learners demonstrating COs iv and v (RSA 1997e:13) (see section 2.2.2). Language and visual literacy is emphasised within the goal of “affective communication” in the Foundation Phase Policy Document (RSA 1997e:13) (see Figure 1, section 2.2.2).

The story of “The Gingerbread Boy” was read to the class every lesson. The learners knew the story almost off-by-heart and repeated set phrases and words with the teacher. When questioned about this behaviour Mrs. C responded in the following way:

Interviewer: ... when you read the story to them, they chorus, some of the learners know the words to the story and ...

Mrs. C: Yes?

Interviewer: They repeat it after you

Mrs. C: Yes?

Interviewer: How do you feel about this?

Mrs. C: I feel it's very good, then you know those who are ... say it with me, they are beginning to grasp the uh, the story, but uh, when they go on, the other group will ... that's why I allow them to say that, because they can get a conceptual, they grow ...

Yes, then the children like stories like "The Gingerbread Boy", things are repeated over and over and over again ...

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

Krashen (undated:4) claims that "children will learn more and retain more from an activity like hearing entertaining stories read aloud than from working at contrived exercises". The importance of stories in SLA is that they provide their own authentic context and a place for genuine interaction between learner and teacher (Malamah-Thomas (1987:6-7); Allwright & Bailey (1992:123) described in section 2.5.2.2).

4.3.2.1 QUESTIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN STORYTELLING

In addition to reading the story to the grade 2s everyday, Mrs. C also led the children through a sub-activity of questions based on the story. Cazden (1988:106-107) (section 2.5.2.1) defines this strategy in the classroom as "scaffolded instruction". Cazden cites research by McNamee (undated) who "analyzed the series of questions by which the teacher talked a child through a story retelling until the child could tell it alone". With each retelling of the story, questions were designed to ask for general answers and later to lead to the provision of more specific answers. The following pattern was uncovered by McNamee (undated) and which is relevant to Mrs. C's strategy of storytelling:

1. The teacher repeats the last sentence back to the learner.
2. Questions such as "What happened next?" are asked.
3. "Wh-" type questions are asked frequently to explore learners understanding.
4. Teachers would give the learner information in the form of a "tag question".

The pattern described above can be seen in the way in which Mrs. C asked questions about the story of "The Gingerbread Boy". Throughout the questioning sessions on

the story Mrs. C used referential question to see if the learners understood the content of the story. The questions were generally “wh-“ type questions. Learners responded with one word answers or where necessary the phrase from the story. Often learners would chorus the answer together. When they did not know the answer, Mrs. C would give them a hint in the form of a “tag question”. Menke & Pressley (1994:642) suggest that meaningful learning can be achieved if certain types of questions during an activity are asked. They argue that remembering facts was greatly improved when learners answered questions, particularly “why” type questions. Although the aim of Mrs. C’s lesson was not the memorisation of facts, but rather to recall the story and add to the learners’ vocabulary, her use of “why” questions can be seen to add to and aid the learners’ vocabulary and cognition. In themselves, “wh-“ type questions are important forms to learn in a L2 .

Transcription conventions for classroom discourse – Allwright, D. & Bailey K.M. (Eds.). (1991:222)
 See **Appendix 1**
 Researcher’s comments based on IRE sequencing (Cazden 1988:29) and Wong-Fillmore (1985:23-42)

TABLE 2 Lesson transcript 4 of questions based on “The Gingerbread Boy”

LINE NO.	ACTOR	TRANSCRIPT	RESEARCHER’S COMMENTS
1 2 3 4	T	And ... where did the little old woman and the little old man live? The little old woman and the little old man?	Teacher initiates a question. Teacher repeats for confirmation
5	L L	A little old house	Learners respond with chorus
6 7	T	A little old house. What did the little old woman say?	Teacher repeats as confirmation. Initiates another question
8	M1	I will make a Gingerbread boy.	Individual learner steals a turn
9 10	T	Why does she want to make the Gingerbread Boy?	Teacher indicates accepting answer by initiating another
11	<u>LL</u>	To eat	Group of learners responds with chorused answer

12 13	T	She wants to eat him. What did she make first?	Teacher repeats as confirmation. Initiates another question
14 15	<u>LLL</u>	His head, his body, his two legs, his two arms	Learners chorus predetermined answer
16 17	{ T <u>LLL</u>	His two ears, his two eyes, his mouth and last of all his nose.	Teacher and learners repeat answer together indicating "lesson script" is well known to all actors. Teacher indicates subset of question is complete by answering with the learners.
18 19	T	What did she lay him in? Where did she lay him in	Teacher initiates another subset of questions.
20	F1	n` pan [a pan]	Learner responds in main language
21	T	She laid him in a ...	Teacher does not accept answer and indicates this by repeating the question.
22	<u>LLL</u>	Pan [Afrikaans]	Class responds in main language
23 24 225 26	T	A pan [English]. She first laid the Gingerbread boy in a pan. And afterwards, she put the Gingerbread boy, the pan, into the ...?	Teacher accepts and translates into English. Teacher elaborates on the word for clarity. Teacher initiates another question.
27	<u>LLL</u>	Oven	Learners chorus predetermined answer
28 29	T	What did she ... Soon she heard something.	Teacher initiates another question

The type of questions asked by Mrs. C in the transcript above do not encourage divergent or creative answers, but they do extend the learner's repertoire of English through scaffolding. The questions succeed in providing real communicative opportunities for the learners. In section 2.5.3 the importance of questions as interaction initiators is discussed. The above extract demonstrates that the questions asked by Mrs. C, whether referential or display type questions, extend and scaffold learners' discourse capabilities. In providing quite detailed answers, the learners show a very good grasp of English. The questions accomplish a major goal for Mrs. C: each learner began to remember and understand the story. The learners were also able to understand and answer quite difficult questions

about the story in English.

Mrs. C: I feels it's good, then you know those who are ... say it with me, they are beginning to grasp the uh, the story ...

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

For Mrs. C, learners repeating the story or set answers to questions was synonymous with learning English. Cazden (1988:107) emphasises the importance of this type of scaffolding by suggesting that firstly, it makes it possible for the novice learner to participate in tasks from the very beginning of instruction and that secondly, it is not permanent and can be adjusted to suit the learners level of development.

In addition, Mrs. C's use of questions are good examples of simplified teacher talk needed for comprehensible input. Even though many of the questions are directed at individual pupils, the rest of the class benefits from the interaction by listening to the questions and the answers. In the transcript above the following characteristic of comprehensible input, defined by Krashen (1985:64) discussed in section 2.5.3, can be identified: Mrs. C uses simple, often repeated words and phrases e.g. "What did she ...?". In addition, Mrs. C displays all of the 6 interactional features identified by Long (1983) cited in Ellis (1992:23) in section 2.5.3. She frequently checks for confirmation of comprehension. She frequently repeats her own questions and the answers provided by the learners. She expands on the answers given by learners. This all leads to comprehensible input for the learners and generates an "acquisition-rich" classroom (Ellis (1992:39-47) discussed in section 2.5.2.

In addition, the Foundation Phase Policy (RSA 1997e:LLC:23) document emphasises the importance of stories, story telling, rhymes and songs. Under SO 3, learners will respond to the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts. The assessment criteria and performance indicators for this SO suggest that the learner must be able to actively and attentively listen to a variety of texts. The level of complexity in the stories, rhymes and songs should increase as learners are exposed to different genres. The stories, songs and

rhymes chosen by Mrs. C reflect the above criteria.

4.3.2.2 STORIES AS COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

Ellis & Murray (1995:1) state that it is “now generally recognised that children learn a language by listening to other people speak the language and attending to the words they hear”. It is proposed that the stories in Mrs. C’s English lessons constitute comprehensible input in the form of listening opportunities. Mrs. C is aware of the value of developing listening skills in the learners to facilitate L2 acquisition.

Interviewer: ... in your classes you do a lot with the children that you do with listening, listening skills as opposed to reading or writing skills. Why have you chosen to concentrate on, why did you choose to concentrate so much on the children’s listening skills, especially during the Gingerbread story and the role-plays?

Mrs. C: Uh, Vivian, it’s very important for them to listen, that’s why we make use of the listening stage. The listening stage is uh, that will help the children, because if you neglect the listening stage you will have problems. Uh. Because, I’m a grade 1 teacher, I know that the children have very big problems to listen.

Interviewer: What advantages do listening skills give the children?

Mrs. C: Uh, Vivian, I think they will always listen to other children that is speaking English they, if they, they love trying to listening to English then it’s best because then they will be able to speak English I think.

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

Another aspect to consider in the importance of stories in the classroom is the way in which stories presented to learners contribute to their exposure of the language which often enhances and encourages their ability to read. Mrs. C illustrated this in her discussion of how she had begun to teach the grade 2 class to read.

Mrs. C: They will write the words so they can use the words in sentences. This is my head, this is my leg, this is my eye. I wanted to show you, I tried to make, I used a jelly pan, I draw the eyes, then the ear, then the nose then the mouth, I just wanted to draw it first. I draw it on the left-hand side then the word, then they can do it.

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

I noticed that the story of “The Gingerbread Boy” contained many of the same words used in the role-play activities and also when Mrs. C made use of other resources such as the flannel board or the posters and flashcards. This re-cycling of vocabulary provided comprehensible input for learners and consolidated vocabulary in which the learners were already proficient. Mrs. C used flashcards illustrating the parts of the body, such as head, eyes, ears, nose and mouth to teach learners how to identify written words. During this activity, Mrs. C would pin a poster of a boy onto the chalkboard. Next to the poster she would pin up a list of flashcards. On each flashcard would be a printed word.

The following extract illustrates the activity in which pupils are taught to identify written words. The words (on flashcards) have already been presented to the learners in the form of oral input during the stories and rhymes. The section of work entitles “The Body” also forms part of the LLC component in grade 1. The learners therefore have also been exposed to the cognitive concepts in their primary language. Mrs. C, during an interview, explicitly states that this is why she chose “The Body” in English. She felt because of the learners’ previous exposure, it would be an “easy” topic for them to be introduced formally to English (see I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99 section 4.3.2 above).

It is important to note the use of lots of Total Physical Response (TPR) methodology (Lightbown & Spada (1994:89-90) described in section 2.5.3) in this extract. TPR, briefly defined, is the participation in activities by learners who physically respond to commands and instructions. By responding correctly they demonstrate their comprehension. Lightbown & Spada (1994:91) emphasise the relevance of TPR for beginner learners and cite Krashen (undated) who says that TPR prepares learners to “go out into the target language community to get more comprehensible input, which will carry their language acquisition further”. TPR provides comprehensible input for learners in the context of Mrs. C’s class. Together with the visual poster, Mrs. C’s simplified teacher talk, the beginner learners had 3 important sources to aid comprehension. The combination of the spoken word and the physical response provide intensive, sustained learning opportunities for the learner.

TABLE 3 Lesson transcript 7 of drill exercise featuring flashcards and poster of “The Body”

LINE NO.	ACTOR	TRANSCRIPT	RESEARCHER’S COMMENTS
16 17 18 19	T	Thank you. Uh. Show me where is the word “nose”. You. Come and show me.	Teacher evaluates and initiates new question. Nominates new learner
20	M2	[points to correct flashcard]	Learner responds non-verbally using extra linguistic cue [pointing]
21	T	Very nice	Teacher evaluates, accepts and praises learner
22	T	What does this word mean?	Teacher initiates new question
23	<u>LLL</u>	Nose	Learners respond in chorus
24 25 26	T	Nose Show me the word “cheek” Come on Sally.	Teacher accepts answer. Initiates new question Nominates learner
27	F1	[points to correct flashcard]	Learner responds non-verbally using extra linguistic cue [pointing]
28	T	Thank you	Teacher evaluates, accepts learner
29	<u>LL</u>	Cheek	Group of learners respond in chorus
30 31	T	Thank you. You can help each other. What is this word’s name? Cheek.	Teacher evaluates and accepts answer. Teacher initiates new question and gives the answer.
32	<u>LLL</u>	Cheek	Learners respond in chorus
33	T	One cheek, two cheeks	Teacher evaluates by adding additional information
34	<u>LLL</u>	One cheek, two cheeks	Learners respond in chorus
35	F2	Me, Me	Learner bids
36 37 38	T	Ok. You will get a turn. You come and show me where the word “Mouth” is, “mouth.	Teacher accepts bid. Initiates instruction.
39	F2	[walks to poster and points out mouth]	Learner responds non-verbally using extra linguistic cue [pointing]

40 41	T	That's very nice. What does this word say?	Teacher evaluates, accepts and praises learner. Teacher initiates new question
42	{ T LLL	Mouth	Teacher and learners respond in chorus
43	T	Show me the word "face". Jerry, "face"	Teacher initiates new question. Nominates learner.
44 45	M3	[walks to poster, points out the word on flashcard "face"]	Learner responds non-verbally using extra linguistic cue [pointing]
46 47	T	Very nice. What is this word's name [indicating whole class]	Teacher evaluates, accepts and praises learner. Teacher initiates new question and nominates whole class.

4.3.3.3 STORIES AS LINKS TO OTHER LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Mrs. C showed great skill in integrating the chosen story of "The Gingerbread Boy", the songs and rhymes and the activities based on posters. All contained a similar theme that focussed on the body and identifying parts of the body. They all featured pictures quite strongly. This all led, I believe to comprehensible input for the learners. Krashen (1985:66) writes that "providing extra-linguistic support in the form of realia and pictures for beginning classes is not a frill, but a very important part of the tools the teacher has to encourage language acquisition". This is because they help a beginner learner in understanding the messages that are "a little beyond them" (see section 2.5.2.1 for a full discussion on the Input Hypothesis Theory). Ellis & Murray (1995:2) confirm this viewpoint by stating "listening only works for language learning if children can understand the language they hear".

The way in which Mrs. C co-ordinated the use of resource material in the lessons reflected OBE methodology (see section 2.5.5). This however, I believe to be coincidental. It rather illustrates the hallmark of good teaching practice based on experience and former training. Even though Mrs. C had access to the minimum of resources, she understood the value of varying the resource material in planning her lessons to benefit

the learners. By using pictures and even the learners themselves, she accessed the learners' prior knowledge and activated their schema. Again, this sub-activity showed positive aspects of CLT in that learners were encouraged to take part in interactional contexts for genuine communicative purposes. She also kept them interested in the lesson and continually focussed on the content of the lesson. This was seen quite strongly in a humorous incident recorded in a lesson. The learners and teacher were concentrating on a large poster of a kitchen. The teacher was asking children to identify aspects of the kitchen e.g. utensils and appliances with which they were familiar

Mrs. C: She is helping her mother. Do you know what, what do you call this thing?

Learner 1: A apron

Mrs. C: A apron, yes, she wears a apron. There's mine. [points to her apron hanging behind the classroom door]. A apron.

Learner 2: My mother made me a apron.

Mrs. C: Oh, did your mother make you a ... three aprons. That's very nice. You must bring and let us see hey? And what else do you see there?

Learner 3: A vodacom!

Mrs. C: Where is the vodacom?

Learners [chorus]: a telephone, a telephone [very animated]

Mrs. C: For what do you use the telephone?

Learners shout out their answers. [Indistinguishable on tape]

Mrs. C: Thank you, thank you, Simon. Don't speak together, its not nice when you speak together.

[Researcher's cell phone rings in briefcase]

[learners and teacher look towards the back of the classroom]

Researcher: Oh, there's my vodacom going. [very embarrassed]

Mrs. C and learners: [laughter]

Mrs. C: Yes, we are talking about the telephone. Yes ... Where's the telephone?

Learner 4: [points out my briefcase]

Learner 5: [points out the telephone in the poster]

Mrs. C: Will you be able to hear this telephone? [pointing to the telephone in the poster]

Learners [call out animatedly talking but researcher can't make out what they say. They are speaking too quickly, but they are speaking English]

(T9/13 25:3:99)

The 4 lessons in which Mrs. C used the poster of the kitchen as a visual resource were very successful in generating creative language from the learners. This “pushed language use” based on the learner’s prior knowledge was evidence of “comprehensible output” (see Swain (1985) cited in Ellis (1992:45) discussed in section 2.5.2.1).

The following examples of the roleplay activity and the drill exercise, are examples of the less successful sub-activities of Mrs. C’s lessons. I believe that they are unsuccessful in the L2 acquisition process for the learners in grade 2 because of the following reasons. Firstly, they do not provide comprehensible input. For example, in the roleplay extract the difficult vocabulary as well as the predominant status of the teacher does not allow the learners to interact in an authentic situation or for communicative purposes. The next extract (Table 4) is representative of a portion of one of the role-play sessions. In the extract it is important to note the following. Learners generally repeat the predetermined answers in chorus fashion. Very seldom does one learner give a creative answer or a variation on the answer anticipated by the teacher. When the learner does, it is evaluated and acknowledged by the teacher by paraphrasing it to resemble the predetermined answer (lines 9-10). The aim of the role-play is to increase the learners’ vocabulary. However, in a later semi-unstructured conversation between the teacher and the learners (Table 5) needing similar words and grammatical constructs, the learners struggle for the correct words and appropriate answers. This is not surprising as the grade 2 class is beginning to learn how to speak English. I have called the conversations “semi-unstructured” because the teacher genuinely does not know the answers to the questions, but hopes that the learners will use the grammatical constructs she has drilled in the

previous activity in their answers. The learners answer using reduction behaviour (Faerch & Kasper (1980) cited in Ellis 1992:25) with monosyllabic answers or with extra-linguistic gestures such as nodding their heads. At this level, where learners are only beginning to learn the target language, this type of behaviour can be anticipated. By using extra-linguistic cues, the learners demonstrate that they understand the language being spoken by the teacher. The learners' inability to produce the language does not reflect the lack of success on behalf of the teacher or the learner. Krashen & Terrell (1982:35) specifically caution about the "silent period" and its impact on language learners i.e. learners will speak in the target language when they feel confident enough (see section 2.5.4 and 2.5.2.1).

TABLE 4 Extract from Transcript 7 to illustrate role-play activity

LINE NO.	ACTOR	TRANSCRIPT	RESEARCHER'S COMMENTS
1 2	T	Thank youCome Themba. Bruce. Agnes. Come, they must have a turn	"Thank you" is the teacher's formulaic starter to indicate change in lesson focus. Here it frames the beginning of a new classroom event.
3	M1	They are a family.	Learner steals a turn; his answer implies he is familiar with the "lesson script" used by the teacher in role-play situations
4	<u>LL</u>	Me, me!	Systematic bidding by learners
5	T	Ok., ok. You'll have a turn. Sit down.	"Ok." Pragmatic particle used as discipline marker
6	M2	Ek ook [= me too]	Learner bids
7	T	Come Rachel	Teacher nominates learner
8	T	This is a family	Teacher initiates a topic
9	F1	A family	Learner responds

10	T	This is a family. They live in a house.	Teacher evaluates and
11		This is father. He is Mr. White ... David	confirms F1's statement
12		White. This is the mother. Come mother	Teacher nominates learner.
13		...This is the mother. Her name is Mrs.	Teacher initiates additional
14		Heather White. This is the son. His	information to the topic.
15		name is Brian. This is the daughter. Her	
16		name is Alice.....	
17		This is Grandfather White and this is	
18		Grandmother White. This is Grandfather	
19		Brown and this is Grandmother Brown.	
20		This is Auntie Maggie.	
		[loud laughing and giggling from class]	Learners respond
21	T	And this is Uncle ... Uncle Mike	Teacher initiates additional
			information
22		[loud laughing and giggling from class]	Learners respond
23	T	And Auntie Maggie is the sister of Mrs.	Teacher introduces
24		Heather White. And Uncle Mike is the	additional information
25		brother-in-law of Auntie ... of Mrs.	
26		Heather White. Auntie Maggie is the	
27		children of ... Grandfather White and	
28		Grandmother White	
		[lots of laughing and giggling]	Learners respond
29	T	What is the name of the father? His	Teacher initiates turn
30		name is ...?	Uses display question
31	<u>LLL</u>	Grandfather	Learners respond
32	T	His name is David White. What is the	Teacher evaluates and adds
33		name of the father? His name is David	additional information.
34		White.	
35	<u>LLL</u>	His name is David White.	Learners respond
36	T	What is the name of the Mother? Her	Teacher initiates additional
37		name is Mrs. Heather White.	information.
			Uses display question
38	<u>LLL</u>	Her name is Mrs. Heather White.	Learners respond
39	T	What is the name of the son? His name	Teacher initiates additional
40		is Brian.	information
			Uses display question
41	<u>LLL</u>	His name is Brian	Learners respond

TABLE 5 Semi-structured conversation between learners and teacher

LINE NO.	ACTOR	TRANSCRIPT	RESEARCHER'S COMMENTS
1	T	Alistair, what is your sister's name?	Teacher initiates a question
2	M1	Her name	Learner responds by using words from teacher's question to indicate indecision
3	T	Come on, her name ...	Teacher evaluates by using "Come on" and offering the first portion of a desired answer
4	M1	Her name is [indistinct]	Learner responds
5	T	Nelly, do you have a brother?	Teacher initiates a question
6	F1	[nods]	Learner responds by using extra-linguistic cue
7	T	Say, yes teacher, I have a brother.	Teacher affirms and evaluates the answer by translating the extra-linguistic cue into words
8	F1	Yes, teacher, I have a brother.	Learner confirms and accepts help
9	T	Amy, do you have a brother?	Teacher initiates a question
10	F2	[nods]	Learner responds by using extra-linguistic cue
11	T	My brother's name ...	Teacher affirms and evaluates the answer by translating the extra-linguistic cue into words
12	F2	My brother's name is [indistinct]	Learner confirms and accepts help
13	T	Caroline, do you have a sister?	Teacher initiates a question
14	F3	Yes, teacher	Pupil answers by using reduction behaviour characterised by the use of the word "yes"
15	T	Yes, I have a sister	Teacher affirms and evaluates the answer by translating the extra-linguistic cue into words
16	F3	Yes teacher, I have a sister	Learner confirms and accepts help
17	T	Abel, is your sister big or small?	Teacher initiates a question

18	M2	I don't have a sister	Learner responds using achievement strategy by adding additional information
19	T	You don't have a sister. Oh sorry.	Teacher accepts and evaluates pupils answer.

These extracts and findings are lent support by Jansen (1999b:210) who states that “teachers claimed that their practices did not change very much: they were still doing the three Rs; they were still concentrating on their phonics; they still did drilling of basic skills; they have always used activities to structure the learning tasks in grade 1; and they have not really followed the specific outcomes closely, even though teachers are aware of them”.

Similarly, the next extract (Table 7) also demonstrates a less positive aspect of the lessons observed. The use of the outdated textbook (see section 2.5.5) does not create an authentic situation for the learners to gain comprehensible input. The monotonous drill exercise places limitations on the learner in the form of a) the lockstep grammatical approach and b) the genuinely uninteresting context and content of the lesson. The following is an extract from the textbook followed by an extract of a transcription of a lesson where the extract had been implemented.

TABLE 6 Extract from textbook in use in Mrs. C's classroom

<p>FIRST TERM</p> <p><i>1st week</i></p>
<p>Lesson 1</p> <p>THE BODY</p> <p>The teacher points at her head, her face, etc. to teach the following parts of the body:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">This is my head. This is my face. This is my neck. This is my arm. This is my hand. This is my leg This is my foot This is my body.</p> <p>Repeat four to five times on presentation. Speak slowly and pronounce clearly</p>
<p>Lessons II and III</p> <p>Repeat the above four or five times for each lesson in order to accustom pupils to the unfamiliar sound, remembering to indicate the different parts of the body while speaking.</p>
<p>Lessons IV and V</p> <p>Pupils are taught to point at the various parts of their bodies while the teacher is talking</p>
<p><i>2nd Week</i></p>
<p>Pupils point at parts of body and say in unison. This is my head, this is my face, etc. Repeat four to five times during each lesson.</p>
<p>Lessons III,IV and V</p> <p>Start imperative group drill. The teacher must assist the class to grasp the idea of a Command.</p> <p><i>Teacher:</i> Show me you head.</p> <p><i>Pupils,</i> pointing at their head and saying in unison: This is my head.</p> <p>The same with: <i>face, neck, arm, hand, leg, foot, body</i></p>
<p>Source: Swanepoel, W.J. (1973) <i>English Oral for the Primary School. Second Language. Book 1. Sub A.</i> Cape Town: Maskew Miller Ltd</p>

TABLE 7 Lesson transcript 6 of drill exercise on “The Body”

LINE NO.	ACTOR	TRANSCRIPT	RESEARCHER’S COMMENTS
1 2	T	Thank you. Thank you. This is my ear	“Thank you” is the teacher’s formulaic starter to indicate change in lesson focus. Here it frames the beginning of a new classroom event.
3	<u>LLL</u>	This is my ear	Pupil’s respond with chorused repetition
4	T	These are my ears	Teacher initiates new information
5	<u>LLL</u>	These are my ears	Learners respond with chorused repetition
6	T	This is my cheek	Teacher initiates new information
7	<u>LLL</u>	This is my cheek	Learners respond with chorused repetition
8	T	These are my cheeks	Teacher initiates new information
9	<u>LLL</u>	These are my cheeks	Learners respond with chorused repetition
10	T	This is my eye	Teacher initiates new information
11	<u>LLL</u>	This is my eye	Learners respond with chorused repetition
12	T	These are my eyes	Teacher initiates new information
13	<u>LLL</u>	These are my eyes	Learners respond with chorused repetition
14	T	This is my shoulder	Teacher initiates new information
15	<u>LLL</u>	This is my shoulder	Learners respond with chorused repetition
16	T	These are my shoulders	Teacher initiates new information
17	<u>LLL</u>	These are my shoulders	Learners respond with chorused repetition
18	T	This is my hand	Teacher initiates new information
18	<u>LLL</u>	This is my hand	Learners respond with chorused repetition
20	T	These are my hands	Teacher initiates new information

This less positive section of the lesson can be discussed many ways. However, the most immediate criticism is the amount of grammatical content. Not only is the learner exposed to the vocabulary but is also exposed to singular and plural forms, possessive and demonstrative pronouns (this, these, those). The lessons is only possibly manageable by the learners because of the similarities in the grammatical structures of English and Afrikaans. The teacher does not seem to be aware of the demands placed on the learners in this sub-activity of the lesson. An incident recorded as FN5/13 12:3:99 and described in section 4.2.3 adds an interesting conundrum to the sub-activity. Was the learner's use of the word "this" deliberate or co-incidental? She certainly succeeded in communicating with me. Krashen (1985:70) suggests that this type of lesson is less successful because it "reduces the quality of comprehensible input and distorts the communicative focus". While Mrs. C was telling the story or asking questions on the story, she and the learners were interacting in a genuine communicative context. But, the transcript above shows that the communicative context has been removed and replaced by an emphasis on producing "correct" or grammatical speech.

Nevertheless, Mrs. C is utilising the resources she has to try and implement what she perceives to be learner centred activities. By asking the learners to stand up and join in the drill exercise physically she understands herself to be creating learner-centred activities. Mrs. C initiates and evaluates learner responses, thereby taking up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the time allocated to the English lessons. Learners never get the opportunity to ask questions but respond to most teacher questions or prompts in unison. Mrs. C however, does try to tutor individual responses by giving positive feedback by repeating the learners correct answer. We can see that her choice of topic also fits comfortably into two of the learning programmes for grade 2, "Personal development" and "Health and Safety". When questioned on how she feels about the learners' repetition and chorused answers she gave the following answer in which we also see her heavy reliance on her former training in grade 1:

Interviewer: Because the children are learning to speak English for the first time do you see any value in repetition in their learning of English?

Mrs. C: Yes, I think it's of great importance that they must say things that have repetition, repetition is very good, because in sub A some of

them can't speak Afrikaans properly, then we make use of repetition in sub A.

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

In conclusion, the lessons observed produced both positive and negative implications for SLA acquisition. The positive aspects of the lessons focussed on genuine, communicative interactions focussing on listening to and answering questions about stories. Singing songs and reciting rhymes were also positive characteristics in that they provided comprehensible input in the form of re-cycled and consolidated vocabulary. The less positive aspects were the roleplay sub-activities and the drill exercises because they lost the meaning of the communicative aspect of language and the provision of comprehensible input for the beginner learners. Central to understanding Mrs. C's lessons and their obvious lack of OBE methodologies, however, is the genuine lack of training in OBE for Mrs. C.

4.3.4 THE LACK OF OBE TRAINING FOR THE TEACHER, THE SCARCITY OF SUPPORT MATERIALS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Another theme which developed while analysing the data from the observations of the lessons, the interviews with Mrs. C and the OBE training workshop, was the emphasis on the lack of intensity and quality of teacher training in OBE and its impact on the lessons in Mrs. C's classroom. Mrs. C. in her interviews continually alludes to her dissatisfaction in the way in which the ECDE has begun to implement OBE in grades 1 and 2. She feels that the process has been too hasty.

Interviewer: Do you think OBE should have been implemented in grades 1 and 2 in 1998/99?

Mrs. C: No, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Why?

Mrs. C: Because we, the people who do the workshops for us they didn't even know, so they couldn't tell us, equip us. If they equip us, then we could've started but it is very difficult because we are not fully

equipped with it.

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Interviewer: Do you think you have had enough training in OBE, do you think the Department has given you enough training?

Mrs. C: No, I don't think so, I don't think so.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

She also believes that the training has been slipshod with very little support for teachers.

Interviewer: If you had the opportunity of say, speaking with the MEC for Education, what would you say you need as a teacher to make OBE work in your classroom?

Mrs. C: I should say that they, ... it would be very good if they could equip us with the information, so if we can see what someone else is doing in her class and how to go about doing it ...

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C: ... I feel that the other teacher's would be very comfortable with that too because if you don't know something, then you ... it's difficult you can't do your best if you don't know something, but if you know then you just know from the start, yes, I must just do this and then that and then that but we try but we don't know whether it's the correct thing to do.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C: If I had the proper [training], if I had some more practical advice then I think I will be able to do that because I think I ... if we have help about how to do it then we will be able to go on with it.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C: If they could just tell us how to do the things then how to go about it, then we will do our very best, but they did not.

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Mrs. C also speaks about her frustration at the quality of the workshops presented by the ECDE. She emphasises two aspects about the workshops with which she has had problems: the content and the apparent lack of training in the workshop facilitators.

Mrs C: You know, it is difficult for us now because we haven't, didn't learn

as much when we had those workshops...

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C: ... It seems to be that the people who is helping us they don't know too much to help us, because they just tell us this is the way but they don't tell us what to do, [they] just tell us just a little.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C: ... because we, the people who do the workshops for us they didn't even know so they couldn't tell us, equip us.

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Part of the training strategy in workshops by the ECDE has been the “cascade model” approach in disseminating information to teachers. This system has proved to be highly problematic. The difficulties of the cascade method are illustrated and highlighted by Potenza & Monyokolo (1999:239) in a discussion of a Media in Education Trust training workshop for teachers in the Gauteng district of Benoni/Brakpan. This suggests that the findings of this research project is not an isolated example but seems to be applicable to training in all provinces. Mrs. C had the following to say about the “cascade model” approach:

Interviewer: Do those teachers who attend workshops that you don't, come back and give the rest of the teachers the information?

Mrs. C: They didn't give us the information ...

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C's observations are lent support by Potenza & Monyokolo (1999:239) who agree that the cascade model has been unsuccessful because of the lack of training in “master trainers” and the lack of support at school level to cascade the information to other teachers at school level. Christie (1999:283) writes that most teachers have not been actively involved in the new curriculum and for most teachers, its implementation has been a top-down process reminiscent of the apartheid curricula. She further argues that the hasty introduction of the new curriculum led the government into providing emergency training and material for teacher and schools. She states that the in-service training for teachers and schools has been minimal and totally inadequate.

Mrs. C also mentioned the fact that much of the first workshop she had attended in 1998 as part of the grade 1 training, had been conducted in isiXhosa by the SA. Although the LiEP (1997a) and the ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training (1995) outline the basic principle of non-exclusionary practice in the medium of instruction used for education, the incident described below could be described as exclusionary. On the other hand, the relatively low profile given to African languages as mediums of instruction can counterbalance the argument. If African languages are to reach the status of English (and to a lesser extent Afrikaans) as mediums of instruction, the facilitator of the workshop had cause to choose isiXhosa as the language of learning, thereby catering for the majority of the learners present at the workshop. The dilemma that many teachers and learners face can be understood. The LiEP (RSA 1997a:4) further states that “language in education policy must accommodate the right to be instructed in a language chosen by the learner, where this is reasonably practicable’.

Mrs. C: ... you know, I'm not a racist, but they when there are only a few of us coloured people they just speak Xhosa to each other and I don't understand and we just sit there and I said [to the workshop facilitator] “How would you like it if I spoke in Afrikaans and you could not understand?”...

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Another considerable area of stress for Mrs. C was the policy documents on OBE distributed by the ECDE.

Interviewer: What literature have you got, what books have you got from the department on OBE?

Mrs. C: Thick books, but there is only one, because our principal says he hasn't got money to copy those books, but the other lady [reference to the Subject Advisor at the OBE workshop 11:3:99] said we can copy those books but it's impossible because its too thick and last year there are 14 junior primary teachers, for a small school its maybe can do it, but maybe with a school with 12 or more it's a bit difficult ...

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

In the first place, she was frustrated that she did not have her own personal copy.

The original copy was kept in the principal's office, which was highly inconvenient for her to access. This lack of access had added to her feelings of inadequacy about her own implementation of OBE in her classroom. When asked whether she felt confident about applying an OBE approach she replied that she did not feel adequately equipped to do so.

Interviewer: Personally, do you feel that you are progressing with your grade 2's in the new approach? Do you feel confident to continue teaching in an OBE way?

Mrs. C: If I had proper, if I had some more practical advice then I think I will be able to do that because I think if we have help about how to do it then we will be able to go on with it.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Secondly, Mrs. C also spoke about the language in which the policy documents were written. As a L2 English speaker herself, albeit relatively fluent, she felt that she could not fully understand the documents because they were written in English. She felt that she had been placed at a distinct disadvantage.

Mrs. C: ... because you see, there's books, it's thick books and what's so uncomfortable about it it's in English and you know it's better if you read in your mother tongue so you will know how to apply but if it's in a language you are not comfortable with then it's a bit difficult ... uh problematic.

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Mrs. C: If English is not your mother tongue it's very difficult to understand what is meant in those books that they gave to the school. It's ... one of my friends in XX, I used to phone her, and I thought I'd ask her how did she feel about the books, so she said, "You know for an English person it's difficult, I don't know how you're going to find it because you're an Afrikaans person". So I thought, I'm glad, because I thought I'm stupid that I doesn't understand those things.

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

These statements are very much in line with the observations of Jansen (1997:2; 1999a:147) who has argued that OBE will not be successfully implemented because of its difficult discourse (see section 2.2.3).

The lack of training for Mrs. C in OBE has had far-reaching implications. These

can be observed in the day-to-day organisation and planning of her lesson activities. At the outset, the researcher wishes to emphasise that at all times she understood Mrs. C to be a highly competent, diligent and enthusiastic teacher. The comments which follow are meant to illustrate the lack of training in OBE for Mrs. C and in no way is meant to denigrate her training and competence in other methodologies.

Firstly, Mrs. C has not developed any materials of her own based on learning programmes designed to suit her learners. This statement is lent support by Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:157) which cites the GICD evaluation of *Curriculum 2005*. Statistics in the evaluation show that “two-thirds of teachers believe that *Curriculum 2005* materials assist them to integrate subjects and promote experiential learning, but when requested to demonstrate an OBE lesson, most teachers produced mediocre replications of the ‘Four Seasons’ lesson which featured on their training programme” (Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:157)). Mrs. C depends heavily on her former training, the previous syllabus content and materials to drive her English lessons and to match learning programmes for grade 2. She is also heavily reliant on a textbook based on drill exercises. Although she understands the concept of material development and the use of real life situations to facilitate language learning, her lack of understanding and training in the implementation of the learning programme policies for the Foundation Phase and the appalling lack of resources in schools, does not allow her to demonstrate any creativity. Czerniewicz (1999:35), writes that while “many schools do have some books in stock, many of these are not usable – either because they do not meet the requirements of outcomes-based education or because they are of poor quality, reflecting the inadequacy of apartheid education”.

Mrs. C has voiced her frustrations about this matter in the extract below. At first glance, the envisaged activity has little to do with language development, but on closer scrutiny it shows Mrs. C is beginning to think about ways in which she could place learners in authentic situations which would invite interaction, provide comprehensible input and encourage learners to use the L2 in context (see section 2.5.4).

Interviewer: Mrs. C, I remember one lesson, you brought a gingerbread biscuit and you asked the children what it was.

Mrs. C: Yes, Vivian, because, uh, because so that you can make use of their senses. They can see the biscuit and they can taste it and uh if you have a stove you could have baked some and they could have joined in to bake. I should have asked the children to get some ingredients to make the gingerbread boy, but it's difficult ...

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Her lack of support from SA's has created a catch-22 situation. For example, she often uses role-play in the English lessons (see table 4 in section 4.3.3.3 above). Out of the 15 lessons observed 5 contained role-plays which lasted on average 8 minutes of a 40-minute lesson. Role-plays can be used most effectively in classrooms to generate real life situations. However, the role-plays in Mrs. C's classroom are teacher driven. The learners are not expected to do anything but repeat what she tells them. Although the learners seem to enjoy the activity hugely (they laugh and make bids to participate), the basic outcome is rote-memorisation and drill work. I queried with Mrs. C how she evaluates the learners to see if they have learnt anything in the English lessons. She bases her evaluations on what the learners can do with the language and whether they can understand instructions using the vocabulary she has drilled. Assessment in OBE takes the form of qualitative, diagnostic, criterion referenced principles (Draft Document on Assessment Guidelines for the Foundation Phase, ECDE:1997:6). In the Draft Document, teachers are encouraged to assess learners' achievement in relation to envisaged outcomes seen demonstrated in classroom activities. Mrs. C indicates that she is beginning to apply criterion referenced assessment techniques in her class (see Key Principle 3 & 4 in section 2.2.2) although she does not have the terminology or the meta-language to describe her methodology.

Interviewer: OK, I've asked you about getting learners to repeat things and you've explained that to me. How do you know or how do you, I don't want to use the word "test" that's old language, no, I'm going to. How do you "test" to see that children have picked up the word you want them to know? Have you a method that you use?

Mrs. C: Yes, I ... I get that with the uh ... the flashcards.

Interviewer: OK, yes, I remember you using the flashcards.

Mrs. C: I do that with the flashcards and sometimes I just write a sentence, not in that English period ...

Interviewer: Mmm?

Mrs. C: ...but, during the day and I just say, I just want to see if they knew the words, because sometimes I wrote the words on the board, and then sometimes when I read something else, I just ask them [learners], who can tell me ... who can show me the word “can”, who can show me the word “see” then I just take note of will they be able to tell.

(12 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

Mrs. C. tends to focus on what she has seen demonstrated in workshops she has attended and imitates them.

Mrs. C: So we went for a course, a bridging class for sub A [grade 1] ... and there I hear the lady say, she said they must always feel the forms, so I thought that if they must feel the forms ... so she just ask us to cut triangles and rectangles and circles out of the cardboard. So I thought that well, if this is the way then I must teach my sounds and the numbers too that same way ... so I thought that’s how you do the “s” with your body then they will understand, so I just understand and applied those things that I have learned in the past and I just tried to do ... so afterwards, then, the things they used ... so I don’t know, so I thought maybe if that’s what the lady from the teacher’s centre asked me to do, so I thought I will do that ...

(11 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

This finding is lent support by a similar finding by Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:157) which cites research carried out for the Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development. In the report it was noted that two-thirds of the teachers interviewed when asked to demonstrate an OBE lesson produced only mediocre versions of a lesson which had been presented to them in their training programme.

When asked direct questions on aspects of OBE during the interviews Mrs. C found it difficult to articulate her thoughts.

Mrs. C: ... the lady, she just tell me I must do a ... she gave me a

picture and I just ask her if I gave my knowledge would it be ok, so the things she wants us to do that's what I thought we already do that ... so I just applied those things that I have learned in the past and I just tried to do ...

(I1 Mrs. C 14:6:99)

Interviewer: Can you tell me in your own words how you see the difference between a classroom that is learner centred and a classroom that is teacher centred?

Mrs. C: That's a bit difficult. I think you'll not catch their attention if it's only you that's doing the talking, but if you ask them to join in, you'll spark them, because if they try, if it's right or wrong, they'll be able to tell you what they like to tell you, sometimes they use Afrikaans words to tell you.

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Mrs. C has a restricted understanding of the principles of OBE and CLT. What she perceives to be OBE, is rather an interpretation based on the limited information she has received during her elementary training. Christie (1999:283) observes that it is the complex and sophisticated procedures for creating learning programmes which restrict teachers in fully understanding the discourse of OBE and leads to their feelings of inadequacy. Mrs. C does however, recognise the function of group work and the importance placed on the position of the learner in the classroom. She also identifies the value of discovery learning for learners.

Mrs. C: ... the children – usually they don't take part in the class but now they must go outside the classroom. They didn't do that in the past, they didn't go outside. Out of the classroom. Because when they are in grade 3 they must go out and find out how can we ... they must no ... must come and tell us how we can use water ... In grade 2 we didn't do that before.

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Curriculum 2005 defines quite strongly the viewpoint that teachers introducing OBE should aim at a strong learner-centred approach to teaching and learning (see section 2.2.2). However, O'Neill (1991:302) vigorously questions the efficacy of such an approach and he argues, as does Wong-Fillmore (1985:25), that

... even the best teachers cannot really know what works or does not work for students. All they can do is sharpen their intuitions and instincts, and try out various

new ideas, but not abandon too quickly the things that seem to have worked well in the past. And particularly in language teaching, they have to be aware of how important their own use of language in the classroom is.

(O'Neill 1991:302)

Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:156) cite Maja (undated:126) who suggests “whether the teacher’s lesson is ‘learner-centred’ or teacher-centred’ does not seem to relate in any way to performance, - what seems critical is whether the lesson promotes understanding of the subject being taught”.

There is a trend observed in current research in South African schools in which teachers are finding it difficult to express thoughts on OBE and the philosophies of *Curriculum 2005*. Kindon (undated), cited in Potenza & Manyokolo (1999:242) writes that “the documents are far too complicated to understand and work with. The language is not user-friendly and they feel that they should not be expected to cope with the theory and philosophies of OBE in their everyday teaching. Many of these teachers are giving up and doing nothing”. Jansen (1999b:207) writes that teachers are displaying great uncertainty about what they are doing in their classrooms, whether or not it is OBE, irrespective of their years of experience. Taylor & Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:161) agree and state that “few teachers are able to translate the very complex logic underlying *Curriculum 2005* and its vaguely stated outcomes into appropriate learning programmes, and to effectively mobilise student-centred learning”.

Although Mrs. C has arranged her classroom to facilitate group work, no group work was accomplished in the English lessons. Rather, the activities were contained on the activities mat and were restricted to question and answer sessions led by the teacher; drill exercises and the use of posters and a flannel board to develop vocabulary. Curious as to why this was so, I asked Mrs. C about it in an interview.

Interviewer: I see that in your classroom, you put the desks together in groups.

Mrs. C: Yes, Vivian.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. C: It's, it's the best to do that in groups so that I ... I group the children, but they are ... so that ... some of them are good, so that they can help each other when they are doing their work. They are not grouped like "A" group, they are grouped, how can I explain myself, ABC and Ds too, so that the one pupil can help the other one if they have a problem. Because I usually ask them to ask help from me and sometimes the children are like that, those who knows they just say "Teacher, I'd like to help him", so then I tell them...

Interviewer: Why, why did you choose for English to bring them onto the mat instead of leaving them at their tables, especially when you read them stories?

Mrs. C: Vivian, It's the best to have them sit on the mat, then they're relaxed and on the mat I think they're relaxed and I think they will listen properly, but if they sit, sit at their tables then they uh, children won't listen ... (12 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

The limited use of group work is not surprising in beginner classes. There would be limited opportunities for successful, interactional group work in the target language with beginners given their limited proficiency. Research done by Pile and Smyth (undated) cited by Taylor & Vinjevoold in the PEI Report (1999:142) describes how teachers in interviews quote discovery learning, prior knowledge and group work as elements which assist children to learn. However, in practice, there was little evidence of what they had described occurring in classes. Taylor & Vinjevoold in the PEI Report (1999:142) suggests that "all indications are that these teachers have accepted the desirability of learner-centred pedagogy, but are unable to practise it". Mrs. C can be included in this category.

Mrs. C used one specific textbook from which she derived her language lessons (see Table 6 and 7 above in section 4.3.3.3 for a full discussion). The textbook concentrated on drill exercises and memorisation techniques. Earlier, in section 2.5.5, it has been advocated that the prudent use of textbooks aids teachers and learners in the classroom. The proviso attached to this claim is that the textbook should be of good quality aimed at generating a learner-centred environment. The textbook used by Mrs. C is outdated and does not fit this criterion.

Again, because of the lack of sufficient resources in schools, teachers and learners are placed at a distinct disadvantage having to use outmoded and obsolete textbooks. Czerniewicz (1999:35) asserts that OBE has been described “as the most resource-hungry system in the world”. Because of this, she argues, teachers need ongoing help. In addition, she writes that books become an essential resource for the effective implementation of *Curriculum 2005*. The supply of textbooks or of departmental resource materials in the Eastern Cape does not meet the demand as has been described by Mrs. C earlier (pp. 100). Krashen (1999:6), however, warns that “no matter how methodologically up-to-date the textbook may be, a poorly trained teacher will fall back on rote learning, which may be the only way she knows how to teach”.

Mrs. C clearly demonstrates that her understanding of CLT and OBE is limited. This factor can be attributed to two causes established in this research project: poor training in OBE methodologies and the fact that this is the first year Mrs. C is teaching English as a second language. Her previous experience in language teaching has been Afrikaans First Language to mother-tongue speakers. This drawback in Mrs. C’s lessons is not an isolated incident. Taylor and Vinjevold in the PEI Report (1999:143) states that many research projects undertaken by the PEI “link teachers’ knowledge of the discipline they are teaching to their pedagogic knowledge and practices. In other words poor conceptual (propositional) knowledge is accompanied by a superficial understanding of what makes for good teaching and learning. The result is teacher-centred practices and very superficial engagement with pupils’ conceptual development”.

In CLT and OBE, there is the common belief that the most appropriate situation for learning is in creating an open classroom, where activities take the form of real life events. These concepts are described in section 2.4.2. However the perceived value of this methodology must be taken into consideration especially where young learners are concerned when engaged in learning an additional language. Jansen (1999b:209) argues that very young children need to acquire general principles of discipline to benefit from formal education e.g. sitting still, listening, turn-taking. He states that research shows

that teachers see OBE as removing these “prerequisite learnings” (Jansen 1999b:209) or assuming that young learners come to school already proficient in the culture of school behaviour as defined by OBE. Besides, researchers such as Wong-Fillmore (1985:24) and O’Neill (1991:299) are becoming increasingly aware of the value of teacher directed lessons in the acquisition of a L2 because they provide the necessary scaffolding and comprehensible input for learners. Where a teacher follows a rigid, consistent format in lesson planning, as does Mrs. C, Wong-Fillmore argues the learner can follow the lesson without having the additional anxiety of trying to decipher innovative lessons every day in an inaccessible language (Wong-Fillmore 1985:27-31). The learner therefore concentrates on the language and content of the lessons. The input from these lessons therefore becomes “comprehensible” to the learner (see section 2.5.2.1). In this light, it can be argued that on the surface it appears that Mrs. C’s lessons, their rigid format and pattern can lead to a limited L2 acquisition for her learners. It can further be argued that at the level of grade 2, the learners’ proficiency in the L2 is minimal, and that interaction with peers who have the same limited proficiency is not conducive to maximum comprehensible input. The teacher, in essence, is the only proficient speaker in the classroom, and it is the language provided from the teacher which can be fully utilised by the learner. This is even truer in the context in which we find the school. The school, is situated in a previously disadvantaged community, with the parents of learners often unemployed. It is therefore unlikely that many of the learners would have ready access to electronic and print media input.

Mrs. C: I would like to ask them [referring to the ECDE] to try to see that they, ... every sub A goes to a pre-primary class, and from the word go you can carry on with your work because most of the children uh, don’t even know what a book is ... because they don’t have money to buy, and if they see them then they page through it, they doesn’t even know, they are shy to tell you what’s on the page...

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

The success of Mrs. C’s methods in her classroom must be weighed upon the success of the learner’s output. There is sufficient evidence to suggest in this research, that Mrs. C is trying to accomplish a mammoth task in the most difficult of situations.

Mrs. C: Uh, Vivian, I think they will always listen to, to the children

that is speaking English they, if they, they love trying to listen to English, then its best because then they will be able to speak English I think. Now I can refer children to go to grade 3. I can see that there are children who can start English in grade 3 because you do not get the child that is so very good.

(I2 Mrs. C 28:6:99)

In a final discussion with Mrs. C, she indicated that four of her learners felt confident enough to apply to the principal to be transferred to the English medium classroom.

Mrs. C: Because, your English. You must try your utmost to help them to speak English. About four children want to go to the English class next year.

Interviewer: Really?

Mrs. C: One is ready. I don't know what the principal will say about the other three. They must ask the principal, I can't do that.

Interviewer: Who are the learners?

Mrs. C: Albert, Alison, Nelly and Elizabeth.

Interviewer: I just wanted to know whether they might be the two isiXhosa-speaking learners.

Mrs. C: No, they didn't even want to leave me and go to standard 1 [grade3]!

(I3 Mrs. C 28:7:99)

Furthermore, it must be stated that the glaring lack of training for Mrs. C in OBE has forced her into a situation where she is unable to introduce the new curriculum successfully into her class. In addition, the deficiency of resource material and support from the ECDE has exacerbated the situation. The result of this is that Mrs. C is resorting to old methods of teaching, perhaps based on her experiences of teaching Afrikaans First Language to mother-tongue speakers in grade 1. Until she has been given further intensive training this pattern will continue. Unfortunately, Mrs. C is at the mercy of the administrators of the ECDE.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Research into the implementation of OBE in a grade 2 classroom has afforded the researcher many opportunities for reflection, personal and professional growth. The process of data collection and analysis thereof has been extremely enlightening both as process and product. In particular, the researcher found it very challenging to place the findings of the data within the arena of already established academic research. In retrospect, the limitations of this thesis are numerous. The most obvious limitation being the small data base. Only one teacher was used for the study and no generalisations can be made from the data. However, the ethnographic approach of this study places a higher value on the depth of the data, rather than the breadth. In addition, although every attempt has been made, it has not been possible to include all the very latest research on the implementation of OBE which was emerging in South Africa as the thesis was being written up.

However, after carefully considering my experiences within Mrs. C's grade 2 classroom, I would like to make the following tentative observations about the implementation of *Curriculum 2005* and an outcomes-based approach to education in general and ESL teaching in particular which might be useful in further research. It is suggested that there are many continuing difficulties a teacher implementing OBE and interrogating the concepts of *Curriculum 2005* is facing on a day-to-day, term-to-term basis in school. It appears that individual teachers are finding it difficult to balance the art of good teaching and becoming familiar with the pedagogy of the new curriculum. Because of this problematic situation they find themselves in, they are becoming increasingly vulnerable to despondency. However, this teacher carries on drawing on her previous knowledge base to try and make sense of the new curriculum. The teacher in this study seems to be working from tacit knowledge. She is in need of help in the form of INSET to become more reflective about her teaching practices and more conscious of why she is using

particular methodologies and activities within her lessons. With INSET she will become more aware of why certain activities work in her lessons and why some do not. By building on her reflective experiences, she could establish a basis for incorporating OBE methodologies. This would reduce the anxiety and helplessness she sometimes expressed during the study.

The data presented in this research project points to the following tentative recommendations: firstly, it is suggested that teacher training and development should become the national and provincial Department of Education's first priority. The limited data suggests that if a teacher is not efficiently trained at length in the new pedagogy and its challenges (understanding, designing and implementing learning programmes through a variety of resource materials) it is unlikely that it will be successfully implemented. A teacher, who tries to rise above the circumstances, finds himself or herself floundering in a quagmire of policy documents with no real guidance. Their lesson plans consequently show little or no shift in perspective towards a learner-centred approach to teaching and language development as envisaged by the new curriculum. Unprepared teachers who are not proficient or confident in OBE methodology will not be able to understand their present practice in terms of how to proceed. As a result, the alleged benefits of OBE for learners will not be visible or measurable as the 7 critical outcomes of *Curriculum 2005* intend.

Secondly, the timeous supply of relevant resource materials (e.g. policy documents, learning programmes, teacher and learner workbooks etc) by the national and provincial Departments of Education to teachers and schools is imperative. The new curriculum is hugely dependent on resources for its successful implementation. Teachers experience great difficulties in implementing OBE in schools which lack the basic resource materials such as appropriate reading texts, writing books, textbooks and equipment to design and produce learning support materials. Indications are that even if these resources are available, teachers are unable to utilise them appropriately without expert direction and training. In addition, teachers need to be guided through the Phase documents by suitably trained facilitators who will not only paraphrase the contents of the documents, but also

give teachers hands-on experience in interpreting the policy directives. It is suggested that without continuous, sustained support for teachers, the *status quo* in many classrooms might remain unchanged. Language teaching in schools is likely to remain teacher-centred and the envisaged real-life situations to enhance learner-centred education are likely to remain unattainable.

APPENDIX 1

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS FOR CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

Source: Allwright, D. & Bailey, K.M. (Eds.). (1991). : *Focus on the Language Classroom: An introduction to Classroom Research for Language Teachers*.

GENERAL LAYOUT

1. Leave generous margins, at least at first, to permit legible annotations as transcriptions gets [sic] refined.
2. Double space everything, for the same reason
3. Number every fifth line in the left-hand margin, *but* do so only in pencil until transcription is complete, unless you are using word-processing with automatic line numbering.
4. Identify transcripts at the top of each page with some economical reference number.
5. Number all pages in the top right corner.
6. Identify participants, date and location on a separate sheet (separate in case participants' identities need to be kept confidential).
7. Decide whether to supply pseudonyms for participants' names, or to substitute numbers.
8. Enter participants' pseudonyms, where used, with gender, classroom layout, etc. also on a separate sheet (especially if using a computer, since computer analysis must not include this page as data).
9. If using numbers, enter real name and associated numbers (with gender information) on a separate sheet.
10. On transcript pages, justify identifying material to the right justify text to the left, as below.

SYMBOLS TO IDENTIFY WHO IS SPEAKING

T teacher

A aide

M1 identified male learner, using numbers (M1, M2 etc.)

F1 identified female learner, using numbers (F1, F2 etc.)

Su use such two-letter abbreviations for pseudonyms, where used (note: gender information may be lost by this method.)

M unidentified male learner

F unidentified female learner

MV male voice from, for example, an audio or videotape

FV female voice, as above

LL unidentified subgroup of class

LL Unidentified subgroup speaking in chorus

LLL Whole class

LLL Whole class speaking in chorus

SYMBOLS FOR RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LINES OF TRANSCRIPT

M3
F7 use curly brackets to indicate simultaneous speech

M
T
M use to indicate same unidentified male speaker

F
T
F use to indicate same unidentified female speaker

-T use hyphen to indicate continuation of a turn without a pause, where overlapping speech intervenes

SYMBOLS TO USE IN TEXT

- [] use for commentary of any kind (e.g. to indicate point in discourse where T writes on blackboard)
- [=] use to introduce a gloss, or translation, of speech
- / / use for phonemic transcription instead of standard orthography, where pronunciation deviant. Use with gloss if meaning also obscured.
- () use for uncertain transcription
- (/ /) use for uncertain phonemic transcription
- ([] use for uncertain gloss
 - X** incomprehensible item, probably one word only
 - XX** incomprehensible item of phrase length
 - XXX** incomprehensible item beyond phrase length
- X---X** use optionally at early stages to indicate extent of incomprehensible item, as guide to future attempts to improve transcription
- use dots to indicate pauses, giving length in seconds in extreme cases, if potentially relevant to aims
- “ “ use to indicate anything read rather than spoken without direct text support

FURTHER NOTES

1. Use indentation to indicate overlap of turn, otherwise start all turns systematically at extreme left of text space.
2. Use hyphen in text to indicate an incomplete word (for example, Come here, plea-)
3. Omit the full stop (period) at the end of a turn, to indicate incompleteness (for example, As I was going to)

OTHERWISE PUNCTUATE AS NORMALLY AS POSSIBLE, AS IF WRITING A PLAYSCRIPT

4. Use “uh” for hesitation fillers, or give phonemic transcription if meaning differences are

potentially important.

5. Use underlining for emphasis, if using typewrite, or **bold** if word-processing (for example, Come **here!**).

GENERAL PRINCIPLE: THE LAW OF LEAST EFFORT

AVOID REDUNDANCY. Use only the conventions that are necessary for your particular purposes, to record the information you are sure you will need. If you are word-processing it will always be possible to update the transcript later (though admittedly this will be much more laborious if only typewriting facilities are available).

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